

MEDIA RELEASE

Call for Church funding for support services for child sexual abuse survivors



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Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, has called on Catholic Church leaders to consider funding two Victorian-based child sexual abuse support services.

Speaking at the Pioneer Room in St Mary's Parish, Geelong, Mr Sullivan said organisations like Lifeboat and In Good Faith, the pastoral support services for victims and survivors of Church-related sexual abuse, are working hard with limited resources.

"It is now more important than ever for Church leaders to think creatively about how the Church can best help survivors," Mr Sullivan said.

"And in many cases that could mean providing support, including financial support directly to organisations, like Lifeboat and In Good Faith, which are doing good work on the ground."

At a meeting with more than 100 local Geelong Catholics and others to discuss the Royal Commission and the future of the Catholic Church, Mr Sullivan talked about the history of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, the reality of what it means for survivors and provided an update on what has been learnt over the past five years as the Royal Commission has gone about its work.

"What is brutally clear is that the damage done to people who have been abused as young children is often life-long and completely debilitating.

"And what is just as clear is that the Church has a long way to go before it will go close to being able to say it has done all it can to right the wrongs of the past.

"We all have a responsibility, as far as possible, to do what we can to help survivors re connect with their communities and to help them feel part of and not separated from the people around them," Mr Sullivan said.

Mr Sullivan was also in St Mary's Parish in Greensborough in Melbourne's north-east where another group of 100 plus parishioners and others discussed the Commission and the way forward for the Church.

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The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.