

# MEDIA RELEASE

## TJHC submission to Royal Commission examines causes of child sexual abuse in Catholic Church



17 March 2017

In a wide ranging submission to the Royal Commission, issues such as compulsory celibacy and clericalism have been identified as contributing to child sexual abuse over more than five decades in the Catholic Church.

The Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council submission to the final public hearing into Catholic Church held in February deals with issues including current Church child protection policies, safety standards, and responses to allegations of child sexual abuse.

The submission also looks at factors that may have contributed to child sexual abuse in the Church and the way in which Church authorities responded.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, said the submission provides insight into several of the key issues which have been examined by the Commission over the past four years.

"There are many issues within the church that the Commission has dealt with but most significant of these include compulsory celibacy, clericalism, inadequate training and formation, denial and secrecy and, very significantly, the Church's culture," Mr Sullivan said.

"Much of the dysfunction, crime and cover-up of child sexual abuse in the Church, in one way or another, can be linked back to one or more of these issues.

"The Royal Commission will now use much of the testimony, evidence and submissions from the TJHC and others to understand why clergy and religious abused children on such a massive scale and why the response within the church was so flawed," Mr Sullivan said.

The submission also includes material on:

- History and development of Church responses to child sexual abuse
- Canon Law,
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation,
- Policies for dealing with convicted perpetrators,
- Assisting litigants, and
- Catholic Professional Standards Limited.

Read full submission [here](#)

**Media contact:** Michael Salmon 0417 495 018

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