

MEDIA RELEASE

TJHC reiterates bishops' moral obligation to report CSA



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Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders are morally obliged to do everything they can to ensure police are aware of incidents of child sex abuse.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council made the statement today following the publication of an article in [Crux](#) magazine earlier this week and in [The Guardian](#) today.

The articles say that the Catholic Church is telling newly appointed bishops that it is 'not necessarily' their duty to report accusations of clerical child abuse and that only victims or their families should make the decision to report abuse to police.

The Truth Justice and Healing Council has called for a national provision in criminal law to oblige reporting.

Despite changes in some states, the law still does not require people who suspect a sexual offence has been committed, to report abuse, unless the child is under 16 years of age when the report is made.

"While bishops might not be obliged in all circumstances to report abuse, they are morally obliged to give as much information as possible to the police to ensure cases of abuse are dealt with in an efficient and timely manner to help ensure the offender is taken out of circulation and to limit the risk of further abuse," Mr Sullivan said.

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

For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

For more information on the Royal Commission go to: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>