

Media Release

Melbourne City Council Votes to Protect the Safety of Children

I applaud the Melbourne City Council's *Future Melbourne Committee* for unanimously adopting the principles of Cr Nicholas Francis Gilley motion – *Ensuring Safety of Children at Places of Worship in our Municipality*.

One of the key motivations for survivors and whistle-blowers in making their stories known to the *Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse*, was to ensure that the failure to protect children that has occurred is never again repeated.

Any formal apology issued to survivors, that does not recognise and acknowledge this motivation, frankly rings hollow.

There is an evident need to redress the power imbalance and ensure that all are held accountable to the law of the State – the truest sense of redress survivors can access.

The prevailing view amongst survivors, whistle-blowers and advocacy organisations, is that the governing bodies of institutions and places of worship need to show leadership and demonstrate their commitment to protecting children.

The clearest way to demonstrate this commitment is by signing onto the National Redress Scheme and by committing to upholding mandatory reporting requirements.

Institutions that fail to do so will be sending a clear message that there is still a clandestine attitude that prevails when it comes to ensuring the safety of children and protecting them against the threat of future sexual abuse.

It is important for these places of worship to not only acknowledge the past suffering and tremendous courage of survivors and whistle-blowers, but that they also do everything within their means to honour the sacrifice of so many survivors, through action.

For no place of worship can purport to value the safety of children – if they are not willing to satisfy the barest minimums of mandatory reporting.

Clare Leaney
CEO
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In Good Faith Foundation is national charity and support service providing advocacy services to individuals, families and communities impacted by institutional abuse for over twenty years.