



## **2016 Child Protection Breakfast**

### **Speech**

**By the Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB  
Archbishop of Perth**

Duxton Hotel, Perth  
Tuesday, 6 September, 2016

Karen [Tighe] has already welcomed you all here to the 2016 Child Protection Breakfast, which for the first time, after a period of some years in which this breakfast was not held, is this year being hosted by the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth. All of you here this morning will be acutely aware that the Catholic Church in Australia has had a terrible record in the area of child protection.

The Royal Commission, even this week, is continuing to shine a light on the many failures which blight the history of the Catholic Church in Australia, with all the shocking consequences which continue to play out in the lives of those whose innocence was stolen from them. For too long the Church has been part, and a big part, of the problem.

Now as we try to respond with honesty, humility and compassion to those who have suffered so badly, we know that we can, and must be, also part of the solution. The organising and hosting of this annual breakfast is a small, but sincere sign of our determination to be at the forefront of child safety and child protection here in the geographical area, covered by the Archdiocese of Perth, and to collaborate as best we can with all those, so many of whom are represented here this morning, who are committed to ensuring that children are safe from those predators who would seek to rob them of their childhood.

The Royal Commission has shown, to our shame as a society that the Catholic Church is not alone in being an institution in which those who would harm our children have been able to operate with impunity. It seems to me that, in this area, there is a sickness at the heart of our society which is both frightening and destructive.

We must recognise this and commit ourselves, as a society, to whatever preventative and proactive strategies we can devise to lessen this evil in our society even if we cannot eliminate it completely.

But lest we become discouraged or even despairing over the challenge we face, we should look around us this morning and draw hope and confidence from the fact that all of us here are representative of communities, organisations and public and private agencies which, as we collaborate together, constitute an ever growing army of people who are prepared to put our children first and create a society which knows how to protect, care for and nurture our children and young people as they deserve.



Thank you all for being a part of this important celebration held during Child Protection Week. I hope you will continue to enjoy your breakfast and be encouraged by the few formalities we now have prepared for you.