

Parliament House  
4 Harvest Terrace  
West Perth WA 6005

Anton & Joan Louie,

22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

Attn: Legislative Committee

Sub: Royal Commission into Institutional responses into Child Sexual Abuse  
(Bill 157, Section 124BA), Recommendations 7.3 and 7.4

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We are making this submission to object to the implementation of the Children & Community Services Amendment Bill 2019, which introduces amendments to the Children & Community Services Act 2004, specifically Recommendations 7.3 and 7.4 of the final report by the Royal Commission, which are contained in Clauses 51 to 53 of the Bill 2019.

We wholeheartedly support the protection of children against any sort of abuse and especially against sexual abuse. However, we strongly feel the subject amendments to the Bill would be a mistake, ineffective and discriminate against Catholics, should this amendment be passed into law, for the following reasons: -

- Mistake – During the Sacrament of Confession, the victim can obtain healing, sound advice and counseling from the priest. However, if the priest is obligated to report the crime, a victim, who does not want the publicity, would choose to avoid discussing the abuse with a priest altogether. Currently, during the Sacrament of Confession, the victim knows that all Catholic priests have taken a Vow of confidentiality with regards to whatever is discussed during the Sacrament of Confession. If the Recommendation 7.4 becomes law, the victim will once again be frustrated and could lead to suicide, at worst. Priests are a great source of support for people with mental issues and many seek counseling during Confession.
- Ineffective - If a perpetrator does not wish to go to the police after committing this crime, the perpetrator would also avoid the Sacrament of Confession. Catholics can obtain sound and objective advice in analysing their sins and avoiding repetition. This opportunity for reform would be lost and could result in perpetuating the crime of sexual abuse.

We respectfully request you to seriously consider our submission – please do not break the seal of Confession. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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Anton & Joan Louie