

Re: Royal Commission into Institutional response into child sexual abuse. esp.  
Reference to recommendations 7.3 and 7.4.

Dear Legislative Committee members,

I am a practicing catholic, a parishioner of St. Thomas More Church, Bateman. I am also a member of The Legion of Mary at the church. Our main body of work is visiting elderly

and sick members of the parish who are either housebound, or in nursing homes.

With reference to recommendation 7.3 I support reporting to Child Protection Authority on factual evidence.

However with reference to recommendation 7.4 I do NOT support mandatory reporting by priests on what is disclosed in the ' Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Australian Catholic Bishops have accepted 79 of 80 recommendation of the Royal Commission except for the 'Seal of Confession'!

My objection to recommendation 7.4 is basically because:

A) under the Constitution of Australia, we have the right to religious freedom( no 116).

This basically insures the separation of Church and State!

B) That it is basically denying us our human rights, the priests and the laity as well! This bill is discriminatory in targeting priests and the seal of confession. This is a violation

of the human rights of priests and of the laity who value this sacrament. It is one of the seven sacraments of the church, and we believe that a Sacrament provides us the grace

from Jesus to sanctify ourselves.

We value our priests who represent Christ as they perform their religious duties as part of their vocation.

C) More importantly, the Sacrament of Reconciliation was instituted by Jesus himself!

Before Jesus ascended into Heaven, Jesus told his apostles" Peace be with you. as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you" And when he had said this, he breather on them and said" Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain them, they are retained!"(John20:21-23)

As practicing Catholics, we highly value the Sacrament of Reconciliation, knowing that we are confessing to Jesus, begging for his grace to overcome our weaknesses, and grow in sanctity with His grace!

D) It was the initiative of our Archbishop Timothy Costello, that Safeguarding Officers were appointed in all parishes to protect children and young vulnerable adults from Sexual abuse. His initiative has been adopted by all parishes around Australia!

I urgently urge you to consider my arguments against recommendation 7.4 in the Amendment Bill!

Yours faithfully,  
Shera Lobo

22 July, 2020

From: Shera Lobo