Appendix: 1

Royal Commission Recommendations

In relation to mandatory reporting to child protection authorities: State and territory governments should amend laws concerning mandatory reporting to child protection authorities to ensure that people in religious ministry are included as a mandatory reporter group in every jurisdiction (Volume 7, Recommendation 7.3).

In Volume 7, Improving institutional responding and reporting, we include a similar discussion in relation to exemptions from laws requiring mandatory reporting to child protection authorities. We conclude and recommend that there also should be no exemption from laws concerning mandatory reporting to child protection authorities for people in religious ministry who have knowledge or suspicions formed, in whole or in part, on the basis of information disclosed in, or in connection with, a religious confession (see Recommendation 7.4).

The Government intends to change the Children and Community Services Act by amending its Section 124A and inserting Section 124BA as follows:

Section 124A amended
In section 124A insert in alphabetical order:
minister of religion —
means a person who is recognised in accordance with the practices of a faith or religion as a person who is authorised to conduct services or ceremonies in accordance with the tenets of the faith or religion

124BA. Provisions for ministers of religion
In this section
religious confession means a confession made by a person to a minister of religion in the minister’s capacity as a minister of religion in accordance with the tenets of the minister’s faith or religion.

Appendix: 2

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph:

1131 The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.

1120 The ordained ministry or ministerial priesthood is at the service of the baptismal priesthood. The ordained priesthood guarantees that it really is Christ who acts in the sacraments through the Holy Spirit for the Church. The saving mission entrusted by the Father to his incarnate Son was committed to the apostles and through them to their successors: they receive the Spirit of Jesus to act in his name and in his person. The ordained minister is the sacramental bond that ties the liturgical action to what the apostles said and did and, through them, to the words and actions of Christ, the source and foundation of the sacraments.

1467 Given the delicacy and greatness of this ministry and the respect due to persons, the Church declares that every priest who hears confessions is bound under very severe penalties to keep absolute secrecy regarding the sins that his penitents have confessed to him. He can
make no use of knowledge that confession gives him about penitents' lives. This secret, which admits of no exceptions, is called the "sacramental seal," because what the penitent has made known to the priest remains "sealed" by the sacrament.

Code of Canon Law.

Canon. 959 In the sacrament of penance the faithful who confess their sins to a legitimate minister, are sorry for them, and intend to reform themselves obtain from God through the absolution imparted by the same minister forgiveness for the sins they have committed after baptism and, at the same, time are reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by sinning.

Canon. 983 §1. The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason.

§2. The interpreter, if there is one, and all others who in any way have knowledge of sins from confession are also obliged to observe secrecy.

Canon. 984 §1. A confessor is prohibited completely from using knowledge acquired from confession to the detriment of the penitent even when any danger of revelation is excluded.

Canon. 1388 §1. A confessor who directly violates the sacramental seal incurs a latae sententiae excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See; one who does so only indirectly is to be punished according to the gravity of the delict.

Appendix: 3

History of the sacrament of confession

Confession arises from Jesus' words to his apostles in John 20:21–23: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you". After saying this he breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained".

After his Resurrection, Christ sent his apostles "so that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations."[Luke 24:47]

In the early Church, public sins (such as apostasy) were sometimes confessed in public, and private confession was used for private sins.

The church has had confession as a sacrament since apostolic times.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 " 18 It is all God's work; he reconciled us to himself through Christ and he gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

19 I mean, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not holding anyone's faults against them, but entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

20 So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were urging you through us, and in the name of Christ we appeal to you to be reconciled to God."

We still have very early evidence of confession in apostolic times and through the Church Fathers.
“Confess your sins in church, and do not go up to your prayer with an evil conscience. ….. On the Lord’s Day gather together, break bread, and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions so that your sacrifice may be pure”. Didache 4:14, 14:1 [A.D. 70].

“With regard to penance, ….. it is sufficient that the guilt of consciences be indicated to priests alone in a secret confession.” St Leo 1, Pope. Letter to the bishops of Campania. [ AD 459].

The Council of Trent [A.D. 1545-1563] put it this way:

“Penance has rightly been called by the holy Fathers "a laborious kind of baptism." This sacrament of Penance is necessary for salvation for those who have fallen after Baptism, just as Baptism is necessary for salvation for those who have not yet been reborn.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, para 982, states: “There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive. "There is no one, however wicked and guilty, who may not confidently hope for forgiveness, provided his repentance is honest. Christ who died for all men desires that in his Church the gates of forgiveness should always be open to anyone who turns away from sin.”

Appendix 4

The Constitution.

Let's get one point clear at the beginning: Australia does not have a legally entrenched principle, or even a vague set of conventions, of the separation of church and state.

What Australia does have is a principle of state neutrality, or equal treatment, when dealing with churches. This principle dates back at least to Governor Bourke (if not to Macquarie) in colonial NSW, and extends all the way into contemporary Australia.

(Constitutionally, State governments could still conceivably nominate an established church; only the Commonwealth is forbidden to do so by Section 116 of its Constitution!)

16 May 2001

Separation of church and state?
Michael Hogan, The University of Sydney

AUSTRALIA CONSTITUTION ACT – SECT 116:

Our separation of Church and State is in black and white in the COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA CONSTITUTION ACT – SECT 116: Commonwealth not to legislate in respect of religion

Section 116 of the Commonwealth Constitution forbids the Commonwealth parliament to pass a law establishing a religion, imposing a religious observance, or prohibiting the free exercise of religion, and forbids a religious test to be required as a qualification for office in the Commonwealth Thus, freedom of religion is supposed to be a recognised human right in multicultural Australia.

Appendix 4 - cntd

There are four essential points about keeping the State separate to religion.

First, it ensures a secular State and alleviates tensions that can arise between different faiths by not fuelling religious sectarianism and factions.

Second, it limits the risk that the State can intrude between an individual and their God.

Third, it does not create barriers for individuals that have no faith.

Fourth, it protects faiths from the intrusion of government into its activities. Both ultimately advance the interests of religion. Again, quoting Benjamin Constant:

The only separation between the Church and State in Australia is in place to allow the free exercise of any religion (and none) and to make it clear that faith is not relevant to hold Commonwealth office.

And on a larger scale, one of the ways the Church can best serve our country is by reminding Catholics that part of being a faithful Catholic is being a faithful citizen who participates in the "cultural, economic, political and social life of the civil community… with view to the common good" (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, n. 189.)
Appendix: 5 – PERTH Leads the way.

http://www.perthcatholic.org.au/Organisations__Services-Safeguarding.htm

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Office

The Archdiocese of Perth is the first of Australia’s Catholic dioceses to begin to establish Safeguarding Officers across its network of parishes. The Safeguarding Office is responsible for ensuring the safety of children, young people and the vulnerable within the confines of the Catholic Church across the Archdiocese of Perth, educating the Catholic community on child protection and protective behaviours, and establishing Safeguarding Officers within Perth’s metropolitan and rural parishes.

Director Safeguarding Program: Andrea Musulin

29 Victoria Square, Perth WA 6000
Telephone: +61 (0)8 9221 7762
Email: safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au

How to Stay Connected Safely Online
Any interaction with children and young people under 18 years of age via a social media platform can only be facilitated with parent permission.

Part 1: Perth leads the way on facing abuse
In a two-part series, leader and pioneer in child protection, Andrea Musulin, talks of dramatic changes taking place in the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth to face abuse head on and to minimise future opportunities of its reoccurrence.

Part 2: Perth leads way on facing abuse
Comparing her present role to her previous work, Musulin said that the Catholic Church is a very different place to working with the Police.

Safeguarding Downloadable Forms
Please click on the link above to download the relevant Safeguarding forms (all files are PDFs)

Resources
Catholic Parents Resources for keeping their Children safe
Appendix: 5 – cntd.

Plus the CRA Report:


Report to the National Office for Child Safety on the Catholic Church’s implementation of the Royal Commission’s recommendations

December 7, 2018
Statement on the Seal of Confession

By the Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth
Thursday 5 December 2019

On Thursday November 28, while I was attending the annual November meeting of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in Melbourne, the Western Australian Government issued a media release announcing its intention to expand the categories of people designated as mandatory reporters in relation to child sexual abuse. Included now as mandatory reporters in the proposed arrangements are ministers of religion who will be required by law to report to the authorities any belief founded on reasonable grounds that a child is being or has been abused. This includes any belief formed on the basis of information received during the hearing of a religious confession.

As the Catholic Archbishop of Perth I fully recognise that the intention of the government in seeking to make ministers of religion mandatory reporters of knowledge about the sexual abuse of minors, including knowledge acquired in religious confessions, is to protect children and young people from sexual abuse. I am in full agreement with such a goal. As a society we now understand much better than in the past how destructive such abuse is, and how long-lasting the terrible damage caused by this abuse can be. We must do all we can to prevent such abuse from occurring, or continuing.

The serious nature of the crime of sexual abuse means that only in the most extreme of cases should there be any exceptions to the rule of mandatory reporting. Our greater knowledge of the destructive nature of sexual abuse leads to the inevitable conclusion that such exceptions should be narrow as much as possible.

Prior to this proposed legislation mandatory reporters of sexual abuse in Western Australia included doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers, police officers, boarding supervisors, the Principal Registrar, a registrar or a deputy registrar of the Family Court, family counsellors, family consultants, family dispute resolution practitioners and arbitrators or legal practitioners independently representing the child’s interests. It did not include, among other groups, the legal profession (other than for those independently representing the child’s interests) those practising in the area of psychological counselling (other than those mandated under the Family Court Act 1997, WA) and ministers of religion. These exceptions have until now been maintained to safeguard values important to society: the right to legal representation and to the presumption of innocence until proven guilty; the right to privacy in seeking psychological treatment from professionals so as to ensure that such treatment is accessible; and the right to manifest one’s conscience before God and seek divine forgiveness and healing. Behind all these exceptions is the principle that people have a right to access help of a legal, psychological or religious nature.

In the case of the ritual of Confession (the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation) in the Catholic tradition, the priest only receives any information in his capacity as a minister of Jesus Christ: the person making the confession does so to God through the ministry of the priest. One of the most fundamental purposes of sacramental confession is to receive divine forgiveness for sins committed. This forgiveness is dependent on the sincerity of the person making the Confession and therefore requires a firm commitment not to sin in this way again. Such a commitment may later, tragically, be broken, but it must be present and sincere if the divine forgiveness sought by the sinner is to be received.
It is this nature of Confession as a personal encounter between a sinner and God, mediated by the priest, which gives rise to the requirement in Catholic teaching that the priest has no right to reveal to anyone anything he learns in the course of this ministry. In the case of serious sin, including the terrible sin of the sexual abuse of minors, to remain in this “state of sin” is to risk one’s salvation. For believers, therefore, this is quite literally a matter of life and death. The Church’s insistence on the inviolability of the Confessional Seal is an inescapable consequence of its belief in the destructive power of sin and the forgiving and healing power of the Sacrament of Confession. Anything which would compromise the freedom of a person to seek divine forgiveness in Confession, or discourage them from doing so, could put at risk a person’s eternal salvation.

For those who do not share the belief of the Catholic Church in regard to the fundamental questions of sin, eternal salvation, and the divine nature of the sacramental encounter between the priest and the person confessing sin, such considerations may seem laughable or superstitious at best, and dangerous and deluded at worst. Many will dismiss them as patently inadequate to justify the continuing insistence on the inviolability of the Confessional Seal. Nevertheless, these are the sincerely held and firm beliefs of the Catholic Church, and are fundamental to the practice of the Catholic Faith. They explain why the Catholic Church is unable to change its teachings on this matter; they explain why I, as the Archbishop of Perth, have no authority to abolish the requirement on Catholic priests to maintain the absolute confidentiality of the Confessional.

The proposed changes to the law, which would effectively make priests who remain faithful to their obligations liable to criminal prosecution, are aimed at making children and young people safe from sexual abuse. There are a number of matters to be considered in evaluating this proposition.

The first is the presumption, widely held by many, that the confessing of the sin of child abuse is common. In reality, of course, people only confess what they acknowledge to be wrong. Many abusers do not recognise the evil of their actions and so would not seek absolution in the Confessional for their sins.

The second presumption is that priests know the identity of those who come to them for Confession. In practice Catholics are free to go to any priest to confess their sins. People who are particularly ashamed of their sins, or conscious of the terrible gravity of their sins, will almost certainly seek out a priest who does not know them. Furthermore, people who are concerned about preserving their anonymity will seek out a setting where the traditional form of anonymous confession is available. The priest hearing the Confession in such a setting will not see the person making the Confession and will have no idea of the person’s identity.

The third presumption is that people will be very specific in the details they disclose in the course of the Confession. Often, however, the sin will be confessed in general rather than specific terms.

These are all aspects of the Church’s practice of Confession. Therefore the likelihood of the priest having enough knowledge to make any kind of meaningful report is minimal.

Notwithstanding the above, if priests are designated as mandatory reporters of information they gain in the Confessional, the already slim likelihood that a child abuser will come to Confession will be further diminished. The risk of exposure to criminal proceedings would be too great. This will mean that there will be no opportunity for a priest hearing the Confession
of a child abuser to do his best to convince the penitent that he or she must take every step open to them to ensure that the abuse stops, including seeking professional help and handing him or herself over to the authorities. Similarly, if a young person comes to Confession seeking advice and support from the priest in dealing with the situation of abuse in which he or she finds themselves, but is desperate not to have their situation shared with anyone else, it is no help to the young person if he or she knows that the priest is legally obliged to report this matter to the authorities.

Every priest knows that in the case of sexual abuse, whether it is confessed by a perpetrator or raised by a young person seeking help, the priest has a right and an obligation to do everything he can to provide counselling and practical assistance. Apart from insisting with a perpetrator that he or she must take steps to bring the abuse to an end, including handing him or herself over to the authorities, the priest will always make it very clear to the perpetrator, or to the young person disclosing his or her abuse, that he is ready to provide any assistance he can and that, once the ritual of the Confession is completed, if the person is willing to raise the matter again, even immediately, the priest will be able to take action. Of course, in such a scenario, with the Confession itself completed, the priest is no longer bound by the Seal of Confession and any subsequent disclosures fall under the mandatory reporting provisions.

In relation to an abuser acknowledging his or her abuse of a child, and the priest having the opportunity to insist that the abuser takes immediate steps to bring this abuse to an end, I have no idea how often, if ever, this has happened. It nevertheless remains a possibility and could lead, and may in the past have led, to a person stopping the abuse.

We, therefore, do not know how many children and young people may have been spared the horrors of abuse because an abuser, confident in the anonymity of the Confessional, was assisted by the priest hearing the Confession to get help, abandon his or her abusive behaviour, and make some attempts to repair the damage which had been caused. Nor do we know how many children and young people, confident in the anonymity of the Confessional, found the support and understanding of the priest, and his willingness to help them confront the terrible situation they were facing, invaluable in helping them bring the abusive situation to light. What we can be sure of is this: if the anonymity of the Confessional is compromised, these opportunities contained in the practice of Confession in the Catholic tradition will almost certainly be greatly diminished. It is not too much to say, therefore, that to make priests mandatory reporters of knowledge they gain in the Confessional may in some circumstances make children and young people less rather than more safe.

At the time of their ordination priests make a solemn and binding commitment to God and to God’s people. That commitment is to give their lives in service to God’s people with generosity, integrity and fidelity. The sexual abuse of the young by some clergy is a shocking and devastating betrayal of that commitment and must be condemned. We in the Church must continue to do absolutely everything open to us to ensure that the scourge of sexual abuse is eliminated from our communities. This has been and continues to be a fundamental commitment of mine as the Archbishop of Perth. The Catholic Archdiocese of Perth intends to work in harmony with the Western Australian Government to improve the safety and wellbeing of all young people. It is my firm belief that making priests mandatory reporters of information revealed to them in the Confessional will not achieve this shared objective.

+Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth
2 July 2020

Dear brothers in ministry and brothers and sisters in Christ,

Re: Inquiry into the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2019

On 1 July 2020 I was advised by the Hon Sally Talbot MLC that on 25 June 2020 the Legislative Council of Western Australia referred the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2019 to the Committee of Inquiry. This Committee will be chaired by the Hon Sally Talbot MLC and the current members are the Hon Nick Goiran MLC, the Hon Pierre Yang MLC and the Hon Simon O’Brien MLC. The Hon Jacqui Boydell MLC will be co-opted as a member.

The Terms of Reference are:
1. That the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2019 be discharged and referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation for consideration and report by no later than 15 September 2020.
2. The Committee has the power to inquire into and report on the policy of the Bill.


One of the main purposes of the amendments to the Children and Community Services Act 2004 is to introduce mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse for ministers of religion which includes “religious confession”. The proposed amendment states:

"Section 124BA. Provisions for ministers of religion.

(1) In this section —

religious confession means a confession made by a person to a minister of religion in the minister's capacity as a minister or religion in accordance with the tenets of the minister's faith or religion.

(2) For the purposes of section 124B(1)(c)(i), a minister of religion who forms a belief on the basis of information disclosed to the minister in the minister's capacity as a minister of religion is taken to form the belief in the course of the minister’s work.

(3) A minister of religion is not excused from criminal responsibility for an offence under section 124B(1) on the grounds that —

a. the minister's belief is based on information disclosed to the minister during a religious confession; or
b. disclosure of the minister’s belief or information on which the belief is based is otherwise contrary to the tenets of the minister’s faith or religion."

In short what this means is that any information disclosed to a priest during the course of Confession which leads the priest to believe that a minor is being sexually abused must be
Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
 Archbishop of Perth

reported to the authorities, irrespective of the wishes of the penitent. Failure to do so will constitute a criminal offence under the proposed amendment.

The Bill includes a number of amendments which relate to ministers of religion becoming designated mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse as detailed in Recommendation 7.3 the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. This is not limited to confession but to all aspects of a priest’s ministry.

As part of its consultation, the Standing Committee on Legislation has invited me to provide a written submission on matters relating to the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2019. I will be taking up the Chair’s invitation and will be lodging a submission by Friday, 24 July 2020 to the Committee of Inquiry.

My submission will be informed by my Pastoral Letter to the Archdiocese of Perth dated 18 May 2020 (Pastoral Statement). My Pastoral Letter outlined not only my views on these proposed amendments to the Children and Community Services Bill 2019 but also Catholic teaching and the fundamental theological reasons which underpin the Sacrament of Penance in our Catholic tradition.

As outlined on the Parliament of Western Australia’s website (CLICK HERE) individuals and organisations are invited to make submissions to the committee with the closing date for submissions being Friday, 24 July 2020. I invite you to consider lodging an individual submission or work with a group of parishioners and other interested people to lodge a joint submission. It is my hope that in doing so the widespread concerns of Catholics about this fundamental challenge to such an important aspect of our Catholic faith might be strongly communicated to our politicians.

This open letter has been made available across the Archdiocese of Perth through the eRecord of 2 July 2020 and on the Archdiocese of Perth’s website. Information will also be distributed to Archdiocesan staff, Agencies, Catholic Education Western Australia, the University of Notre Dame, St John of God Health Care and other members of the Archdiocesan community for their attention.

As I stated in my Pastoral Statement I remain fully committed to the safety of children and young people within the Archdiocese of Perth. Any person with allegations of sexual abuse by Church personnel should go to the police. Our Catholic Professional Standards Office stands ready to assist people to do so.

The sexual abuse of children and young people is an abhorrent crime wherever, whenever and by whomever it is perpetrated. I recommit the Archdiocese of Perth to its ongoing safeguarding initiatives that are in place across all our agencies.

Yours sincerely in Christ

Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth

Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB DD
Archbishop of Perth
Appendix 6.

The Religious Discrimination Bill 2019

Overview of the legislative package The Religious Discrimination Bill 2019 prohibits discrimination on the ground of religious belief or activity in key areas of public life. It also creates the new office of the Freedom of Religion Commissioner in the Australian Human Rights Commission. This Bill implements recommendations 3, 15 and 19 of the Religious Freedom Review. The Religious Discrimination (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019 makes consequential amendments necessary to support the implementation of the Religious Discrimination Bill. This Bill amends existing Commonwealth legislation to reflect the new prohibition of discrimination on the basis of religious belief or activity, as well as the new office of the Freedom of Religion Commissioner. Together with the Religious Discrimination Bill, this Bill implements Recommendations 3, 15 and 19 of the Religious Freedom Review. The Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Freedom of Religion) Bill 2019 amends existing Commonwealth legislation to better protect the right to freedom of religion. These amendments will bring certainty to charities, religious educational institutions, and the community at large, by clarifying ambiguities in the Charities Act 2013 and the Marriage Act 1961. These amendments will also ensure that existing Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation gives appropriate weight to all human rights, including the right to freedom of religion. This Bill implements Recommendations 3, 4 and 12 of the Religious Freedom Review.

Overview of the Religious Discrimination Bill The Religious Discrimination Bill will make it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of religious belief or activity in specified areas of public life. It will not create a positive right to freedom of religion. The provisions in this Bill are broadly consistent with existing federal anti-discrimination law. In particular, the: • Age Discrimination Act 2004 • Disability Discrimination Act 1992 • Sex Discrimination Act 1984. However, due to the distinct nature of religious belief or activity, there are some features of this Bill that differ from those Acts. Complaints of discrimination under this Bill can be made to the Australian Human Rights Commission. The Commission may inquire into and attempt to conciliate complaints under this Bill. Where a complaint cannot be successfully conciliated, an individual may apply to the Federal Court or Federal Circuit Court. Under this Bill, a person will be entitled to make a complaint to the Commission alleging that they have been subject to unlawful discrimination on the basis of their religious belief or activity if: • the person holds or engages in a religious belief or activity, or they are associated with someone who holds or engages in a religious belief or activity • the person has been subject to direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of their religious belief or activity, or the religious belief or activity of their associate • the discrimination occurs in a specified area of public life, and • the conduct is covered by this Bill and an exception does not apply. Religious belief or activity The Bill will protect against discrimination on the basis of religious belief or activity: The term ‘religious belief or activity’ is defined broadly in the Bill as: • holding or not holding a religious belief, or • engaging, not engaging or refusing to engage in lawful religious activity. This definition implements Recommendation 15 of the Religious Freedom Review. It recommended that the proposed Religious Discrimination Act make it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of a person’s religious belief or activity, including on the basis that a person does not hold any religious belief.

Religious activity The concept of religious activity is also not defined for the purposes of this Bill, and is not confined to religious observances (such as prayers, fasting, ceremonies or religious holidays). Religious activities may also include: Religious freedom reforms 3 • wearing religious dress (such as a hijab, kippah or kirpan) • not engaging in certain conduct in accordance with religious belief (such as not eating meat or drinking alcohol), or • expressing religious beliefs, such as through evangelising or making statements of belief, where adherents of that religious group are required, or encouraged, to evangelise. The definition of ‘religious activity’ is limited to lawful religious activities. The Bill does not protect religious activities that are prohibited by Commonwealth, state or territory law, including those which may constitute criminal conduct. For the purposes of determining whether religious activities are lawful, local by-laws will not be taken into account.
A religious priest is a member of an order (the Jesuits, the Paulists, etc). They are supervised by a superior in their order. The superior might confer with the local bishop on matters. A diocesan priest is supervised by the bishop of the diocese, who has control of all parishes in his diocese.

**Appendix Number 7.**

Questions for Groups

Guiding questions to help express a group’s argument in a “voice” better reflecting their respective communities in the submissions.

1. **Who?** Group or ministry briefly introduces itself; members and those it serves within or outside the parish.
2. **What?** The special meaning that the sacrament of reconciliation has in relation to its members or those it serves. Special circumstances which make the sacrament especially important e.g. people with disability, people with mental health issues.
3. **Why?** The reasons why the sacrament is critical to the physical, emotional/psychological and spiritual well-being of your community.
4. **How?** Cite how this will affect you if priests are not able to serve the laity’s religious needs and how this deprives the individual as well as the community of the sacrament (resulting directly from the breaking of the seal of confession) and how this will be detrimental to your community.
5. Clearly indicate what your community expects of a just law, both as an Australian and/or a person of conscience informed by your faith.