

The Honourable Simone McGurk MLA
Minister for Child Protection, Women's Interests;
8th Floor Dumas House
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West Perth WA 6005

Email: Minister.McGurk@dpc.wa.gov.au

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Dear Minister

I am writing to you to ask to respect and represent the Catholic Church's position on the sacredness of the Confessional Seal that is jeopardy if **Recommendation 7.3 of the Royal Commission is upheld.**

As a Catholic, confession helps me to heal and seek support as it does for all Catholics. Likewise confession is where a vulnerable child or adult victim can access without cost to talk with anonymity and privacy about their present or past trauma. Confession is a matter of conscience between the penitent and God with the priest as the mediate

Recommendation 7.4 of the same Royal Commission states:

Laws concerning mandatory reporting to child protection authorities should not exempt persons in religious ministry from being required to report knowledge or suspicions formed, in whole or in part, on the basis of information disclosed in or in connection with a religious confession.

The public has been misinformed or is ill informed on the role of the Confessional Seal. Confession is also viewed by the public as an avenue to escape justice of any criminal offence committed particularly by paedophiles who it has been found are unlikely to confess something about which they do not feel guilty.

The fundamental belief of the Confessional Seal is dismissed by 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. Their sentiment is that the Confessional Seal fails to protect victims of abuse, lacking the understanding that the penitent finds support and healing through this process of faith which they may not necessarily find through other conventional means.

The Confessional Seal is a fundamental practice of the Catholic Faith and changing it would be disregarding our religious freedom, in turn disregarding the constitutional rights of every Australian.

Margherita Amato