

Dear Legislation Committee,

I'm writing in connection with Clause 124BA of the Children and Community Services.

Survivors use the Confession as a safe space for counselling, support and healing.

I have viewed the videos and attended a session with James Parker, a child sexual abuse survivor. And I have seen the healing effect of Confession to him and other survivors.

- Taking out the 'safe place' is depriving the victim of the initial step for personal healing.
- With utmost privacy the victim can unburden the pain they are going thru to the Priest (in the presence of God), with the knowledge and understanding that they will not be judge. This is a very important factor for the victim to start the healing process and eventually can lead them to get the support they needed.
- Confession brings peace and joy. You feel a burden is lifted off your shoulders after the confession. How could anyone deprive someone of this gift?

The Seal of Confession is a universal church law that the Australian Church does not have the authority to alter. Only the Holy See in Rome has the authority.

- The Confession is one of the Sacraments (according to the belief and teaching of the Catholic church), it is sacred and holy hence breaking the 'seal of confession' is a sacrilege to the Catholic church. Please respect our faith and belief.
- The proposed legislation to compel the holy Priests to break the seal of confession, is a direct attack on the Catholic church faith and belief. This is an erroneous and unjust, it is only a pretense to protect the vulnerable.

Mandatory reporting places all Catholic and Orthodox priests in a dilemma, infringing on the free practice of religion.

- The Amendment Bill requires the Bishops and Priests to violate the law of the universal church, causing them to be automatically dismissed from their office according to the church law.
- This is unfair and unjust and violates the free practice of religion which is a right of every citizen.