



concerned Catholics

of the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese

A response to the Royal Commission

STATEMENT

Concerned Catholics question saccharine editing of reform call

12 July 2018

The Editor of the Catholic Voice invited feedback (150-200 words) from various groups within the Archdiocese following four recent public meetings in the lead up to the 2020 Plenary Council. The Editor asked specifically:

1. What does your group or community think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?
2. Did you and or members of your group attend last month's Plenary Council Listening Sessions in Canberra. If so, what further thoughts did the sessions provoke?

Concerned Catholics provided the following response:

1. God is asking us to explore how all the faithful can contribute to strengthen our church community in following Christ's example and teachings. (23 words)
2. Concerned Catholics has welcomed the opportunity provided by the Listening Sessions. The wide range of issues raised by the participants with strength and thoughtfulness (at the Listening and Dialogue Sessions) underlines the need for and value of a much more inclusive church. That would be an institution with a leadership open to the wisdom and honesty of the faithful and prepared to act accordingly. Pope Francis has proclaimed a central role for the laity. Concerned Catholics is seeking substantial reforms which are urgently needed to ensure the church restores its moral authority and relevance, particularly for young Australians. We are seeking reforms giving lay women and men equality in church decision-making with the clergy, the appointment of a woman co-chair of the Plenary Council and amendments of Canon Law 514 that restricts the laity's part in church decision-making to an advisory role. We seek greater accountability and transparency in the policy-making and administration of the church. (158 words)

Catholic Voice published the following heavily edited version of our response:

1. God is asking us to explore how all the faithful can contribute to strengthen our church community in following Christ's example and teachings (23 words)
2. The wide range of issues raised by the participants with strength and thoughtfulness (at the Listening and Dialogue Sessions) underlines the need for and value of a much more inclusive church (31 words)

The Chairman of Concerned Catholics of Canberra Goulburn, Professor John Warhurst, said:

“This reduced, saccharine version of our contribution has removed the central message of our response: the urgent need for substantial reform in the church.

“That our response was so heavily edited without consultation makes a mockery of the ‘listening’ process.

“Here’s hoping the Archdiocese’s submission, which will be written on the back of feedback from the four listening sessions, will more accurately reflect the rich range of views expressed during that process.

“While individuals and groups can make separate submissions, Concerned Catholics would like their contribution to the public consultation sessions in the Archdiocese to be reflected in the Archdiocese’s submission.

“This extensive, national consultation process, will only gain strength through an authentic, whole-of-diocese response. It’s important that the local submission reflects the views of all the people of God in the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese,” Professor Warhurst said.

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Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn is a group in the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese concerned about a number of governance, cultural and structural issues arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. We seek an effective voice for lay people in the administration and direction of our church.

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