
Media release

14 August 2019

Maurice Blackburn welcomes mandatory reporting laws for priests who hear confessions of child abuse

Lawyers for abuse survivors have today welcomed legislation that will introduce mandatory reporting laws that include child sexual abuse disclosures made in the confessional.

Maurice Blackburn Abuse Law Principal Michelle James said the Victorian Government had done the right thing by ensuring there were no exemptions made for the confessional in introducing new mandatory reporting requirements.

“The Royal Commission made clear that admissions of abuse made in the confessional must be reported, and the Victorian Government is to be commended for legislating to make this a reality, despite the Catholic Church continuing to fiercely resist this,” Ms James said.

“Sadly in any state where this important reform is being implemented the Catholic Church has had to be dragged to meet its obligations to protect children from sexual abuse, arguing that the confessional should remain exempt from mandatory reporting requirements.

“The Catholic Church claims that it acknowledges its shameful past and is committed to doing the right thing, but its continuing resistance to accept that the confessional must be included in mandatory reporting requirements shows that it still yet to learn that the safety of children must come first.

“We also continue to call on states still yet to act on this important reform to do so with urgency,” she said.

Media inquiries:

Paddy Murphy at Maurice Blackburn

T 0490 297 391

E pmurphy@mauriceblackburn.com.au