



SACEC (South Australian Catholics for an Evolving Church) is a diverse group of Adelaide Catholics who share a love, care, concern and hope for our Church in the Archdiocese. We come together, under the heading *SA Catholics for an Evolving Church* to reflect on the world, the Church, the Gospel and the spiritual life of our people.

We have examined, reflected on and considered the **EXPOSURE DRAFT OF THE COMMUNICATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (COMBATTING MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION) BILL 2023**. This is a critical issue for all Australians and, particularly for Catholics in this country. The Church is in the throes of coming to terms with the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a vital evolutionary step for its relevance, credibility and effectiveness as a force for good. Acceptance of the measures proposed in the DRAFT EXTRACT would be a positive step in this regard.

The following statement by Dr. R. G. Pols summarises the SACEC position.

'As a retired academic, consultant psychiatrist and as a member of the SA Catholics for an evolving church (SACEC), a member group of the Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform (ACCCR), I would firstly like to congratulate the authors in C4R for the usually high quality of their submission.

'They state very clearly the consensus view of contemporary psychiatric thought regarding LGBTQI+ orientation, being a part of the normal variation in human sexuality.

'It also clearly documents the level of harm that has been shown to be associated with communications to the contrary of the empirical evidence, particularly when voiced by authoritative institutions. The example provided in Appendix 3 of the behaviour by some Catholic hierarchy and in the public sphere, shows a case in point.

'Of greater concern, is the potential for such teaching, being or becoming, part of the curricula of religious schools in Australia, where the most vulnerable adolescents are, or could become, the targets of such teachings. This is particularly so if such teachings are defined as 'excluded content'. I strongly support their view that there should be "no exemptions". In the case that the bill does unwisely grant this as 'excluded content', I would strongly support that such teaching **must always be accompanied by the following words: 'It is acknowledged that this teaching is at odds with modern psychiatric opinion'** in order to minimise harm to students.

'I urge all Coalition member groups to endorse and strongly support the excellent submission in solidarity with Rainbow Catholics Australia, one of our coalition members.

Yours faithfully,

Dr RG Pols MB,BS; FRANZCP; FAFPHM; FACHAM; FFPMANZCA.  
Senior Lecturer, Flinders University of SA,

Department of Psychiatry.  
6 August 2023

We (SACEC) note the submission on the Exposure Draft by *Catholics for Renewal*, dated 3 August 2023.

We hereby support the position advocated by Catholics for Renewal. In addition we note that the current official teaching of the Church does not come under the mantle of infallibility and so is open to change.

If further information or clarification is required, please contact Kevin Liston at:

Em. [Catholicsforanevolvingchurch@gmail.com](mailto:Catholicsforanevolvingchurch@gmail.com)

Ph. [REDACTED]

Kevin Liston

Convener, SACEC

19 August 2023