



## **Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn**

---

### **Statement | 8 May, 2018**

---

#### **STATEMENT FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA GOULBURN VICAR GENERAL, FR TONY PERCY**

The Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn welcomes the ACT Government's extension of the Reportable Conduct Scheme to religious organisations.

Clergy, like other professionals, are bound to disclose child abuse.

However, the Archdiocese has grave concerns about the scheme extending to the sacrament of confession.

A priest, who hears a confession of a survivor of child abuse, would unequivocally impress upon the survivor that the matter be raised outside the confessional so that the abuse can be disclosed.

A priest, who hears a confession of a person who has perpetrated child abuse, would not grant forgiveness until the matter is raised outside the confessional.

In both cases, it is incumbent upon the priest to do everything he possibly can to have the child abuse disclosed outside the confessional.

The dignity of law and the sanctity of the confessional would be respected.

To ensure best practice the Archdiocese will continue its training and formation of clergy to ensure the highest standard of child protection.

The Archdiocese will continue to talk with the ACT Government on such an important matter.