

New CSA evidence laws in NSW, Blackfriars Speech and Blue Knot Day

This week the NSW Government introduced [new laws](#) to make it easier for child victims of child sexual abuse to give evidence in court.

Under the new laws child sexual abuse victims will be able to pre-record all of their evidence.

Importantly, children giving evidence will also be supported through the court process by a qualified expert who will help them and give advice on how they should be questioned.

This is a great initiative that will make an already very difficult process for young children just a little bit easier.

Hopefully it will mean more perpetrators will be brought to justice.

The new approach will be trialled for three years; hopefully it will be a success and could then be adopted by other jurisdictions.

This week I gave [a speech at the ACU in Canberra](#) where I spoke about many different issues confronting the Church as we come to terms with our history of child sex abuse.

I spoke about the church's culture, in particular clericalism and the misuse of power, which from nearly everyone I talk to from current archbishops to abuse survivors say is the weeping sore in the Catholic Church.

And from what I've seen and heard it is at the core of the crisis, we cannot hide from this. It needs to be confronted, as I think it is, and it needs to be acknowledged. The Pope is talking about it and I think we would do well to talk about it more as well.

I have had a bit of push back since giving the speech with people concerned I don't give enough credit to new child protection initiatives in the Church.

I have also been criticised for seemingly suggesting the negative way in which church officials treated abuse survivors in the past is the way in which they are treated now.

I don't agree with these comments but I'm always pleased to hear from anyone who has a view on what and how I'm talking about the Royal Commission. I always respond and I always take these views into account.

This coming Monday is [Blue Knot Day](#), the day in which survivors of child sexual abuse are acknowledged and the community is asked to support initiatives that help them recover.

This year's Blue Knot Day theme is "supportive communities help survivors recover".

The day is organised by ASCA which this year is asking local communities to unite in support of the adult survivors living among them.

Francis Sullivan
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