

What's New

AUSTRALIA'S AMBASSADOR GOES TO ROME WITH MISSION ON HER MIND AND FOCUS ON CATHOLIC HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

16 September 2020

It has to be one of the more unusual postings - a state the size of an Australian suburb with a global community equal to the population of China. But as Chiara Porro, Australia's newly-installed Ambassador to the Holy See says it is every bit as important as a conventional state.

The 36-year-old mother of two officially presented her credentials to Pope Francis last month, in this her first posting as an ambassador.

During her half-hour meeting with His Holiness - at which they spoke Italian - Chiara discussed the role of the Catholic church during the pandemic and how she can be an interlocutor between the Australian people and the Vatican.

"I'm here to represent the Australian government. I don't represent the Catholic church. I represent all Australians. I'm here to be able to provide that bridge to the Holy See. There's lots of erroneous reporting [about the Vatican], so where I can try to explain certain things I will."



"What is often forgotten is the reach and influence of Pope Francis globally. He is probably if not the then one of the most recognised world leaders and he is very influential in global politics and foreign affairs."

"I was thinking about this the other day, he has the same sort of population community as China. The reach of the church and its network on the ground is huge."

It is worth remembering that it was the Holy See and Pope John XXIII in particular who brought the US and the USSR back from the brink of nuclear war during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Its network of embassies and its diplomatic relations with the world date back to the late 15th Century.

Nevertheless, being the Ambassador to the Holy See is one of the more unique roles in the diplomatic corps - you are there to represent the interests of the Australian government - and by dint of that the Australian people - but there is also the recognition that she must consider the interests of the more than 5 million people in Australia who identify as Catholic.

"I am very conscious that we have this huge community back in Australia. So [my job] is also working very closely with the Catholic community to demonstrate what they are contributing to society."

In her audience with Pope Francis she raised health - including the work that Catholic Health Australia is doing - and education as key areas where Catholic agencies and aligned bodies are making significant contributions to society.

"You know whenever people [in the Vatican] think of Australia they think immediately about Cardinal Pell and the Royal Commission. So my aim here is to change that narrative. I look and I see there is so much more to Australia than that. I don't think it's even that well known here the degree to which Catholic healthcare and aged care are so important to the sector."

The church's role is of course not confined to the temporal. She recognises that promoting Catholicism is not an easy task and yet the global pandemic has provided an opportunity of sorts, as faced with the threat of death from disease people are forced to examine their lives and very existence.

"People are looking for answers, they are looking for other avenues and I think the Church can really help guide them during this time."

It was one of a number of areas she discussed with the Pope during her initial meeting. "I wanted to get his views on how to engage youth when there is a crisis of confidence in the Catholic Church, particularly in Australia.... How do you go about regaining trust and re-establishing those links," she says.

She admits she was very nervous prior to her audience but that quickly evaporated as His Holiness quickly put her at ease and asked her the questions. And, despite him graciously telling her that his door is always open, she politely reminded him that she has to go through "quite a few other doors first", no easy task for a woman in an overwhelmingly male environment.

Not that she is shy or reserved. She says meeting the Pope was one of the most nerve-wracking for this career diplomat who has experienced more than her fair share of interesting and challenging situations.

Her own career seems almost tailor-made for the role, given the truly international character of the Holy See itself. Ms Porro was born in Italy, brought up in suburban Sydney, lived in Indonesia as a child, studied in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom before entering the diplomatic corps.



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(<http://www.linkedin.com/company/24558817>)



(<https://twitter.com/#!/chaaustralia>)

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She helped set up a hospital in the West African nation of Sierra Leone to deal with the Ebola virus; was in Delhi when the Australian mission there doubled in size, and was posted to New Caledonia for the referendum in 2018. In between she has been back and forth to Canberra, working in the heart of government advising the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet on the Trump administration and the Middle East, and back at Foreign Affairs and Trade when the coronavirus epidemic struck, throwing the world of trade and travel into total chaos.

"It was fascinating to be working there when the coronavirus struck - to see the response by government, how we managed our network [of embassies] and managing all these returning Australians... it was a really intense period," she recalls

She is the only ambassador from the Pacific region in the Holy See (she is also the youngest ambassador in the Vatican) and as such, she feels strongly that the wider Pacific region is given a voice. Other than the obvious areas such as trade and international relations she will also be talking to the Holy See about issues that are close to her heart and those of the wider Catholic community, such as modern slavery and human trafficking, conflict resolution and human rights. And, of course, the environment - an issue close to the heart of His Holiness (this year marks the fifth anniversary of the publication of Laudato Si, his encyclical on the environment, among other things).

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the canonization of Mary MacKillop. At her audience with His Holiness, she presented him with a relic given to her by Sister Maria Casey, the postulator for the cause of Mary MacKillop. Celebrations to mark the anniversary next month are planned by her embassy but, because of COVID, they are likely to be muted.

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Thursday, 17 September 2020 7:11 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc:
Subject: RE: Story on ambassador [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii) s 47C(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 17 September 2020 1:42 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Story on ambassador [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

See link below to feature on Catholic Health Australia website. s 47C(1)

From: s 47F(1) @cha.org.au>
Sent: Thursday, 17 September 2020 9:26 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Story on ambassador

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

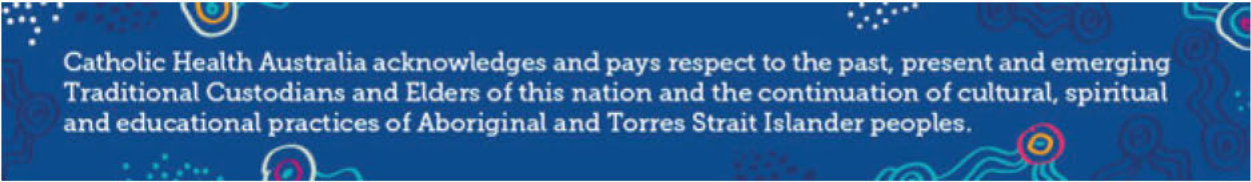
The story is published here <https://cha.org.au/news/what-s-new/861-australia-s-ambassador-goes-to-rome-with-mission-on-her-mind-and-focus-on-catholic-health-education-and-social-justice>

s 47G(1)(a)

Thanks

s 47F(1)

s 47F(1) | Communications & Media Director | CATHOLIC HEALTH AUSTRALIA
M: s 47F(1) | E: s 47F(1)@cha.org.au | W: www.cha.org.au



Catholic Health Australia acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and emerging Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>

Date: Thursday, 22 April 2021 at 7:34:59 pm

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following page (5) contain a duplicate email chain that has been removed
- see Document 4 - email Thursday, 22 April 2021 7:35 PM

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Sent: Thursday, 22 April 2021 7:35 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: RE: Senator Kitching - QoNs [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi all

I've sent draft responses to the three questions about my comments to Catholic Health Australia through to John s 22(1)(a)(ii) Happy to chat on phone John if easier once you have had a look.

This is the newsletter that the Senator is referring to:

[AUSTRALIA'S AMBASSADOR GOES TO ROME WITH MISSION ON HER MIND AND FOCUS ON CATHOLIC HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE \(cha.org.au\)](http://cha.org.au)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Australian Embassy to the Holy See
Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 349 00186 Rome Italy
Tel s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Fax s 22(1)(a)(ii) | <http://holysee.embassy.gov.au/>

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Thursday, 22 April 2021 10:07 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: RE: Senator Kitching - QoNs [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} I will send the draft responses to John to clear. ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

From: ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} @dfat.gov.au
Sent: Thursday, 27 April 2021 7:59 AM
To: ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} @dfat.gov.au
Cc: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} @dfat.gov.au; ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}
Subject: Senator Kitching - QoNs [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} I hope all is well with you and the team. You'll note I have assigned 5 QoNs (#60-64) to you in PDMS in relation to questions from Senator Kimberley Kitching. ^{s 47C(1)}

^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

responses are due for Dep Sec clearance by COB 27 April (AEST). Regards, ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} Please note

^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

a/g Director | UK, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Holy See Section (UIS)
 Europe and Latin America Division
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 Phone ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} | Mobile ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}
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revised signature block - Acknowledgement of country.png



From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [John Geering](#)
Subject: RE: Estimates QONS [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Wednesday, 28 April 2021 6:13:24 PM

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Thanks John – fine by me. s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 28 April 2021 9:31 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Estimates QONS [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

s 22(1)(a)(ii) can I propose an alternate answer to a QON? s 47C(1)
Regards john

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To:
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [ohn.geering](#)
Subject: FW: Story on ambassador [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Wednesday, 19 May 2021 1:50:15 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

OFFICIAL

This was the original link to the interview that was sent by Catholic Healthcare Australia to DFAT^{s 47G(1)(a)}

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 47F(1) [@cha.org.au](#)>
Sent: Thursday, 17 September 2020 9:26 AM
s 22(1)(a)(ii) - duplicate email chain removed - see Document 2 - email Thursday, 17 September 2020 9:26 AM

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To:
Subject: FW: Holy See SE May 2021.DOCX [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 20 May 2021 9:52:16 PM
Attachments: [QoN 60 Holy See Ambassador erroneous reporting.DOCX](#)
[QoN 61 Holy See Ambassador narrative.DOCX](#)
[QoN 62 Kitching Ambassadors aims at Holy See.DOCX](#)
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 20 May 2021 6:49 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Cc: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Holy See SE May 2021.DOCX [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Perfect, many thanks ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} and final QoNs attached. Regards, s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 20 May 2021 12:14 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Cc: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Holy See SE May 2021.DOCX [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

You may have seen my message saying we looked everywhere yesterday but couldn't find a hardcopy – and then I realised I had one in my recycling pile that I had printed out to answer the QoNs.

Here it is attached.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 19 May 2021 2:20 AM

To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: RE: Holy See SE May 2021.DOCX [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Many thanks ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} I have made those edits. Noting the link to the interview is no longer live, happy to receive a hard copy - if you have one. Regards, ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Sent: Wednesday, 19 May 2021 1:49 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: RE: Holy See SE May 2021.DOCX [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

Thanks for sending through – a few comments in the attached.

I see the link ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} interview is no longer working ^{s 47C(1)}

^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Sent: Monday, 17 May 2021 8:48 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: FW: Holy See SE May 2021.DOCX [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

H ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} hope all well with you and the team. I've drafted the attached senate estimates brief to include the most recent Parliamentary Questions from Senator Kitching. Grateful for your review, including any updates where noted. I was also unsuccessful in finding a copy of the Catholic Health Australia interview – hoping you are able to send a copy. Many thanks ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION IN WRITING FOR: SENATOR THE HON MARISE PAYNE

s 47E(d)

Question Submitted by:	Kimberley Kitching	
Question Number:	3545	
Question Date:	21 April 2021	
Due for Tabling:	21 May 2021	
Subject:	SENATOR KIMBERLEY KITCHING Question No. (3545) - Australian Ambassador to the Holy See's aims at the Vatican –erroneous reporting	
Clearance:	Chris Langman	Date: 11 May 2021
	Deputy Secretary	
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)	Phone: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Background for Advisers:

The attached response to this question is

APPROVED / NOT APPROVED

MARISE PAYNE

...../...../.....

SENATE

SENATOR KIMBERLEY KITCHING Question No. (3545) - Australian Ambassador to the Holy See's aims at the Vatican – erroneous reporting

(Question No. 3545)

Kimberley Kitching : asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on **21 April 2021** :

With reference to the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See's aims at the Vatican – erroneous reporting:

In an interview in the Catholic Health Australia newsletter, dated 16 September 2020, Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See, Ms Chiara Porro, stated: "I am here to represent Australia. I don't represent that Catholic church. I represent all Australians," then added, "There's lots of erroneous reporting [about the Vatican]. Where I can try to explain certain things, I will.":

- a. what are these certain erroneous things that Ambassador Porro has tried to explain since her arrival in the Vatican in August 2020;
- b. how is it Ambassador Porro or the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's role to correct "lots of erroneous reporting" [by others] about the Vatican;
- c. why does Ambassador Porro see these explanations as one of her primary roles as Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See;
- d. is this one of Australia's primary diplomatic priorities and outcomes at the Vatican;
- e. what is the benefit to Australia of undertaking these explanations; and
- f. how does that work fit with Ambassador Porro's own statement that "I am here to represent Australia. I don't represent that Catholic church. I represent all Australians.".

Minister Payne - the answer to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:

Answer to all questions: Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See was explaining that it was important her role was understood (ie that she is a representative of Australia and of all Australians). It was not a reference to the role or actions of the Vatican.



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION IN WRITING FOR: SENATOR THE HON MARISE PAYNE

s 47E(d)

Question Submitted by:	Kimberley Kitching
Question Number:	3546
Question Date:	21 April 2021
Due for Tabling:	21 May 2021
Subject:	SENATOR KIMBERLEY KITCHING - Question No. (3546) - Australian Ambassador to the Holy See's aims at the Vatican -changing the narrative
Clearance:	Christopher Langman Date: 29 April 2021 ELD - Europe Trade United Kingdom and Ireland Branch
Contact Officer:	John Geering FAS ELD Phone: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Background for Advisers:

The attached response to this question is

APPROVED / NOT APPROVED

MARISE PAYNE

...../...../.....

SENATE

SENATOR KIMBERLEY KITCHING - Question No. (3546) - Australian Ambassador to the Holy See's aims at the Vatican - changing the narrative

(Question No. 3546)

Kimberley Kitching : asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on **21 April 2021** :

Senator Kimberley Kitching: asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on 21 April 2021—

With reference to the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See's aims at the Vatican – changing the narrative:

In an interview in the Catholic Health Australia newsletter, dated 16 September 2020, Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See, Ms Chiara Porro, stated: “You know whenever people [in the Vatican] think about Australia, they think immediately about Cardinal Pell and the Royal Commission,” then added, “My aim here [in the Vatican] is to change that narrative.”:

- a. does Ambassador Porro’s aim to change the narrative away from Cardinal Pell and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse represent the position of the Australian Government;
- b. prior to presenting her credentials, or subsequently, did the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade brief Ambassador Porro that her aim, on arrival at the Vatican, was “to change that narrative” away from Cardinal Pell and the Royal Commission issues;
- c. prior to presenting her credentials, or subsequently, did the Minister for Foreign Affairs brief Ambassador Porro that her aim, on arrival at the Vatican, was “to change that narrative” away from Cardinal Pell and the Royal Commission issues; and
- d. on what basis does the narrative need to be changed.

Minister Payne - the answer to the honourable Senator’s question is as follows:

- a. No.
- b. No.
- c. No.
- d. The role of the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See is to advance Australia’s interests with the Holy See across a broad range of issues.



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION IN WRITING FOR: SENATOR THE HON MARISE PAYNE

s 47E(d)

Question Submitted by:	Kimberley Kitching		
Question Number:	3547		
Question Date:	21 April 2021		
Due for Tabling:	21 May 2021		
Subject:	Question No. (3547) - With reference to the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See's aims at the Vatican		
Clearance:	Christopher Langman	Date:	29 April 2021
	ELD - Europe Trade United Kingdom and Ireland Branch		
Contact Officer:	John Geering – FAS	Phone:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)
	ELD		

Background for Advisers:

The attached response to this question is

APPROVED / NOT APPROVED

Choose a Minister.

...../...../.....

SENATE

SENATOR KIMBERLEY KITCHING - Question No. (3547) - With reference to the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See's aims at the Vatican

(Question No. 3547)

Kimberley Kitching : asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on **21 April 2021** :

Senator Kimberley Kitching: asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on 21 April 2021—

With reference to the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See's aims at the Vatican: In an interview in the Catholic Health Australia newsletter, dated 16 September 2020, Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See, Ms Chiara Porro, stated that in her first meeting with the Pope (to present her credentials) , she sought his views on “how to engage youth, when there is such a crisis of confidence in the Catholic Church, particularly in Australia,” and further asked the Pope, “How do you go about regaining trust and re-establishing those links?” Given that in the same interview Ambassador Porro indicated she understands that her primary responsibility as Ambassador is “to represent all Australians”:

- a. why is she seeking the Pope’s advice on “how to engage youth, regaining trust and re-establishing links” with the Catholic Church in Australia;
- b. given the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse about the actions and failures of the Catholic Church in Australia, how is this consistent with Ambassador Porro seeking the Pope’s formal advice on “how to engage youth, regaining trust and re-establishing links” with the Catholic Church in Australia;
- c. how does seeking the advice on these matters fit with Ambassador Porro’s own statement that, “I am here to represent Australia. I don’t represent the Catholic Church. I represent all Australians”;
- d. what is the benefit to Australia of Ms Porro seeking the Pope’s advice on these matters; and
- e. how is that "engaging youth, regaining trust and re-establishing links" with the Catholic Church in Australia", consistent with the proscriptions set out in s.116 of the Australian Constitution

Minister Payne - the answer to the honourable Senator’s question is as follows:

- a. The role of an Ambassador is to seek views on issues of interest to Australia.
- b. As above.
- c. As above.
- d. The Pope, as the leader of the Catholic Church, has influence around the world, including in Australia. Understanding his perspective is of interest to Australia.
- e. Seeking the views of a foreign leader by an Australian Ambassador is consistent with the proscriptions set out in s.116 of the Australian Constitution.

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this page and the following pages (19-26) are irrelevant and has been removed

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [John Geering](mailto:John.Geering@dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [James O'Brien](mailto:James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au)
Subject: Re: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm/Christopher Knaus/The Guardian/Comments by Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 27 May 2021 3:47:03 PM

OFFICIAL

Hi John,

s 47C(1), s 47E(d)

s 47E(d)

If you need anything further from me, let me know.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>

Date: Thursday, 27 May 2021 at 7:03:11 am

To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, "James O'Brien" <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au

Subject: RE: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm s 8(2)(g)(i)
Comments by Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Here are my thoughts. s 22(1)(a)(ii) I think you should look at this too. This will come up at Estimates.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Regards

John

From: s 8(2)(g)(i)

Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 11:11 AM

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following page (29) contain a duplicate email chain that has been removed - see Document 15 - email Thursday, 27 May 2021 11: 11 AM

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [Media](#)
Cc: [John Geering](#); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [James O'Brien](#); s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: RE: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm, s 8(2)(g)(i) Comments by
Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 27 May 2021 4:58:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

OFFICIAL

Thanks ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} we're comfortable with the edits below. Regards ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

From: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 4:52 PM

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following pages (31-34) contain a duplicate email chain - see Document 11
- email Thursday, 27 2021 4:52 PM

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following pages (31-34) contain a duplicate email chain - see Document 11 - email Thursday, 27 2021 4:52 PM

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following pages (31-34) contain a duplicate email chain - see Document 11 - email Thursday, 27 2021 4:52 PM

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following pages (31-34) contain a duplicate email chain - see Document 11 - email Thursday, 27 2021 4:52 PM

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following pages (31-34) contain a duplicate email chain - see Document 11 - email Thursday, 27 2021 4:52 PM

From: s 8(2)(g)(i)
To: [Media](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 27 May 2021 5:37:54 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks - do you have any idea when a response will be ready?

Obviously keen to have it in there, but I do already have those responses from the minister to the QoNs.

Cheers.

s 8(2)(g)(i)

On Thu, 27 May 2021 at 17:12, Media <media@dfat.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Hi s 8(2)(g)(i)

Hope you're well.

I'm sorry, but we won't be able to meet your 6pm deadline tonight.

Thanks,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Media Liaison Section

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

P: +61 2 6261 1555 E: media@dfat.gov.au

Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.

From: s 8(2)(g)(i)
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 11:41 AM
To: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly [SEC=OFFICIAL]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender.

Thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii) appreciate it.

s 8(2)(g)(i)

s 8(2)(g)(i)

On Thu, 27 May 2021 at 11:35, Media <media@dfat.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Thanks s 8(2)(g)(i)

Acknowledging receipt of your enquiry.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Media Liaison Section

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

P: +61 2 6261 1555 E: media@dfat.gov.au

Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.

s 8(2)(g)(i)
From:

Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 11:11 AM

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following pages (38-40) contain a duplicate email chain that has been removed - see Document 15 - email Thursday, 27 May 2021 11:11 AM

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: John Geering s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Re: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm s 8(2)(g)(i) Comments by Ambassador Porro
 [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 27 May 2021 7:40:28 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

OFFICIAL

No red lines from my end as discussed now on phone. Just some typos which I've changed below (significance and nor).

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Thursday, 27 May 2021 at 11:31:07 am
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: Re: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm s 8(2)(g)(i)
 Comments by Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]

s 47C(1)

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Date: Thursday, 27 May 2021 at 7:21:21 pm
To: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>, "Media" <media@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, "James O'Brien" <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, "Chris Cannan" <Chris.Cannan@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm s 8(2)(g)(i)
 Comments by Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi all

I've just discussed with s 22(1)(a)(ii) s 47C(1)

Grateful if you could flag any red lines only on the below to ASAP
 allow David will seek FM clearance tonight.

Cheers
 s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 47C(1)

s 47C(1)

OFFICIAL

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Thursday, 27 May 2021 at 6:28:23 pm
To: "Media" <media@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 <dfat.gov.au>
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 <dfat.gov.au>, "James O'Brien" <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 <dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) <dfat.gov.au>
Subject: RE: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm s 8(2)(g)(i)
 Comments by Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

s 47C(1)

From: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 6:16 PM
To: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 <dfat.gov.au>
Cc: Tom Connor <Tom.Connor@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 <dfat.gov.au>; James O'Brien <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 <dfat.gov.au>; Media <media@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 <dfat.gov.au>
Subject: RE: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm s 8(2)(g)(i)
 Comments by Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi John

Thank you for sending this through and for your call. Apologies, but the revised text at 4.52pm was sent to the FMO for clearance – please let us know if major revisions must be made and we can relay to the FMO tomorrow morning.

We have managed the journalist's expectations and advised that we will not meet his deadline of tonight.

Kind regards,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director, Media Liaison Section
Communications Branch|Executive Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
P: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |E: media@dfat.gov.au

Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.

From: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 6:07 PM
To: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; James O'Brien <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: RE: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm s 8(2)(g)(i) Comments by Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

s 47C(1)

From: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 4:52 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; James O'Brien <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Media <media@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: RE: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm s 8(2)(g)(i) Comments by Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Much appreciated.

We've made a few minor changes – see below s 47C(1)

We'll also seek FMO clearance, and manage the journalists expectations around his deadline.

s 47C(1)

Thanks,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Media Liaison Section

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

P: +61 2 6261 1555 E: media@dfat.gov.au

Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s 22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 3:13 PM
To: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>
Cc: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s 22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>; James O'Brien <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s 22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>; James O'Brien <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s 22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>
Subject: RE: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm s 8(2)(g)(i) Comments by Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} apologies for the delay. Please find below the FAS ELD cleared response to The Guardian enquiry. Regards, s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 47C(1)

s 47C(1)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 11:51 AM
To: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>
Subject: RE: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm s 8(2)(g)(i) [SEC=OFFICIAL]
 Comments by Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Received, thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii) We will respond by 2.30pm. Thanks, s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

a/g Director | UK, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Holy See Section (UIS)

Europe and Latin America Division

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 Phone s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mobile s 22(1)(a)(ii)

DFAT.GOV.AU | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Flickr](#) | [YouTube](#)



From: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 11:34 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>
Cc: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <[s22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)@dfat.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@dfat.gov.au)>
Subject: **Media enquiry for action** Due to MLS 2.30pm s 8(2)(g)(i) [SEC=OFFICIAL]
 Comments by Ambassador Porro [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Good morning,

Please see below a media enquiry from **s 8(2)(g)(i)** regarding comments by Ambassador Porro to the Catholic Health Australia newsletter.

MLS would be grateful for a draft response to this enquiry by 2.30pm to allow for FMO deadlines.

I would also appreciate confirmation of receipt of this request.

s 47C(1)

Thanks,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Media Liaison Section

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

P: +61 2 6261 1555 E: media@dfat.gov.au

Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.

From: **s 8(2)(g)(i)**

Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 11:11 AM

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following pages (48-50) contain a duplicate email chain that has been removed - see Document 14 - email Thursday, 27 May 2021 11: 11 AM

From: [John Geering](#)
To: [James O'Brien](#); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [Media](#)
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Saturday, 29 May 2021 12:18:47 PM

Can we do a statement from department **OFFICIAL**
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: "James O'Brien" <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Saturday, 29 May 2021 at 10:20:52 am
To: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii)
<dfat.gov.au>, "Media" <media@dfat.gov.au>
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii)
<dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly
[SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

as John Has indeed already identified we should be prepared s 47C(1)
should it come up at estimates, with as short and succinct a response as possible.

Can someone ensure s 22(1)(a)(ii) and I have whatever lines you prepare for estimates, so
we can pass to the secretary should she want to deal with it herself.

OFFICIAL

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Saturday, 29 May 2021 at 9:35:54 am
s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following pages (51-55) contain a duplicate email chain that has been
removed - see Document 14 - email Saturday, 29 May 2021 at 9:35:55 am

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [John Geering](mailto:John.Geering@dfat.gov.au)
Subject: Re: Background for Senate Estimates [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Sunday, 30 May 2021 7:24:24 PM

s 47E(d)

OFFICIAL

 OFFICIAL

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Sunday, 30 May 2021 at 11:00:01 am
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Background for Senate Estimates [SEC=OFFICIAL]

s 47E(d)

OFFICIAL

 OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Sunday, 30 May 2021 at 6:41:44 pm
To: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>, "James O'Brien" <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Background for Senate Estimates [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi John,

I've prepared some more detailed background as requested. If you need anything more on any of the specific points, let me know.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Catholic Healthcare Australia (CHA) interview

During my preposting consultations, I met with the head of CHA s 47F(1) in Canberra and he asked if I would be willing to be featured in their newsletter. I said it would have to wait until I had presented my credentials to Pope Francis. I was then approached by CHA's s 47F(1) in early September and we organised a Zoom call to have a chat. s 47G(1)(a)

He subsequently

emailed DFAT Canberra on 17 September with the article ^{s 47G(1)(a)}
^{s 47E(d)}

Their interest in my work was in the first few months of arrival at post. I haven't received any requests for interviews for some time.

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following page (58) are irrelevant and has been removed

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To:
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 31 May 2021 5:14:05 PM

Thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii) s 47C(1) OFFICIAL s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Monday, 31 May 2021 at 4:53:16 am
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Many thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii) all very useful background. s 47C(1), s 47E(d) OFFICIAL

Regards, s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Saturday, 29 May 2021 at 9:35:55 am
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>, "Media" <media@dfat.gov.au>
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>, "James O'Brien" <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly [SEC=OFFICIAL]

s 47C(1), s 47E(d)

OFFICIAL.

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>

Date: Saturday, 29 May 2021 at 7:14:38 am
To: "Media" <media@dfat.gov.au>
Cc: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 <dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly
 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Link to article below:

<https://www.google.com.au/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/may/29/australias-holy-see-ambassador-under-fire-for-saying-she-wants-to-change-narrative-away-from-george-pell>

OFFICIAL

From: "Media" <media@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Friday, 28 May 2021 at 10:42:07 am
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <dfat.gov.au>
Cc: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 <dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) <dfat.gov.au>, "Chris
 Cannan" <Chris.Cannan@dfat.gov.au>, "Media" <media@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly
 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii) will do.

Cheers
 s 22(1)(a)(ii)

DFAT Media

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 28 May 2021 6:29 PM
To: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>
Cc: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 <dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <dfat.gov.au>; Chris Cannan
 <Chris.Cannan@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi all,

Just for awareness, the journalist contacted the Embassy by email also. We won't respond.

I have provided John with background s 47E(d)
 if you need anything further from my end, please let me know.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Australian Embassy to the Holy See

Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 349 00186 Rome Italy

Tel s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Fax s 22(1)(a)(ii) | <http://holysee.embassy.gov.au/>

From: HolySee Embassy <holysee.embassy@dfat.gov.au>

Sent: Friday, 28 May 2021 9:24 AM

To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>

Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>

Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

From: s 8(2)(g)(i)

Sent: Friday, 28 May 2021 3:38 AM

To: HolySee Embassy <holysee.embassy@dfat.gov.au>

Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi team,

Hope you're well.

I've been liaising with DFAT about comments made by the ambassador to Catholic Health Australia about her aim to change the narrative away from the child abuse royal commission. Please see the below exchange.

I just wanted to confirm that she is aware of my questions and check whether she wanted to make any additional comments beyond what was said below?

Many thanks,

s 8(2)(g)(i)

s 8(2)(g)(i)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Media** <media@dfat.gov.au>

Date: Thu, 27 May 2021 at 20:54

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Query Chiara Porro comments in Catholic Weekly [SEC=OFFICIAL]

To: s 8(2)(g)(i)

Cc: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>

OFFICIAL

Hi s 8(2)(g)(i)

Please find response below.

//

Attributable to a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade spokesperson:

In her interview with the publication, the Ambassador was not seeking to detract from the importance and significance of the Royal Commission's findings, and nor was she suggesting Australia would take action to engage Australian youth in the Catholic Church. Rather, she was emphasising that Australia has a broad relationship with the Holy See and that her responsibilities are to put forward the interests of Australia across the breadth of that relationship.

//

Regards,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Media Liaison Section
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
P: +61 2 6261 1555 E: media@dfat.gov.au

Note to media: Unless otherwise specified, the information contained in this email is for background only.

From: s 8(2)(g)(i)

Sent: Thursday, 27 May 2021 11:11 AM

To: Media <media@dfat.gov.au>

s 8(2)(g)(i)

s 8(2)(g)(i)

Question on notice no. 3546

Senator Kimberley Kitching: asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs on 21 April 2021—

With reference to the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See's aims at the Vatican – changing the narrative:

In an interview in the *Catholic Health Australia* newsletter, dated 16 September 2020, Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See, Ms Chiara Porro, stated: “You know whenever people [in the Vatican] think about Australia, they think immediately about Cardinal Pell and the Royal Commission,” then added, “My aim here [in the Vatican] is to change that narrative.”:

- a. does Ambassador Porro’s aim to change the narrative away from Cardinal Pell and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse represent the position of the Australian Government;
- b. prior to presenting her credentials, or subsequently, did the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade brief Ambassador Porro that her aim, on arrival at the Vatican, was “to change that narrative” away from Cardinal Pell and the Royal Commission issues;
- c. prior to presenting her credentials, or subsequently, did the Minister for Foreign Affairs brief Ambassador Porro that her aim, on arrival at the Vatican, was “to change that narrative” away from Cardinal Pell and the Royal Commission issues; and
- d. on what basis does the narrative need to be changed.

Answer —

Minister Payne - the answer to the honourable Senator’s question is as follows:

- a. No.
- b. No.
- c. No.
- d. The role of the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See is to advance Australia’s interests with the Holy See across a broad range of issues.

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [John Geering](mailto:John.Geering@dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Re: Catholic Health Matters Magazine [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Monday, 31 May 2021 5:28:15 PM

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Hi John,
s 47C(1), s 47E(d)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Monday, 31 May 2021 at 5:30:17 am
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Catholic Health Matters Magazine [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

s 47C(1), s 47E(d)

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Monday, 31 May 2021 at 12:16:14 pm
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>, "James O'Brien" <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Catholic Health Matters Magazine [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

s 22(1)(a)(ii) Could you have a look at this draft? Im trying to keep it all to a page. Happy any changes.

s 47E(d)

Regards

john

From: [John Geering](#)
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Re: Catholic Health Matters Magazine [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Monday, 31 May 2021 7:36:00 PM

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

s 47E(d) so any changes until about 7am local tmw (when i get into work) will be put in. Want to keep it to a page however.regards john

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Date: Monday, 31 May 2021 at 6:09:49 pm
To: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au, "James O'Brien" <James.O'Brien@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Catholic Health Matters Magazine [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Thanks John. Looks fine to me.

s 47E(d), s 47C(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Monday, 31 May 2021 at 4:16:27 am
s 22(1)(a)(ii) - duplicate email removed - see Document 15 - email Monday, 31 May 2021 at 12:16:14 pm

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [John Geering](#)
Subject: Fwd: The article on the internet [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 31 May 2021 9:20:11 PM

OFFICIAL

An overview of the coverage of the Guardian article, my team will continue to monitor closely.

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) dfat.gov.au>
Date: Monday, 31 May 2021 at 12:46:07 pm
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) dfat.gov.au>
Subject: The article on the internet [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

I have scanned a little the internet to see the resonance of the article.

Newspapers: Thankfully, it seems that - aside from the original one - the article was republished twice:

- [Australian Holy See Ambassador accused of wanting to change the "story" away from George Pell | Australian News - Eminentra New Zealand](#)
- <https://www.pontificalsecret.com/sack-vatican-ambassador-porro/>
- The article didn't appear in the homepage of the Guardian over the weekend

Twitter: There are multiple tweets with limited engagement, but the biggest ones are:

- Paul Bongiorno (journalist): [Paul Bongiorno su Twitter: "I cannot believe the comments of Australia's ambassador to the Vatican. She should be recalled. She is putting the interests of the institutional Catholic church and George Pell ahead of victims and the findings of the Royal Commission @MarisePayne @ScottMorrisonMP." / Twitter](#)

Paul Bongiorno @PaulBongiorno · 29 mag

So @ScottMorrisonMP and @marisepayne appoint a head in the sand right wing Catholic to represent secular Australia to the Vatican and she opts to ignore Pell's appalling record as documented by a Royal Commission and turns a back on victims. This is reprehensible.

46 484 1,701

Paul Bongiorno @PaulBongiorno · 29 mag

I cannot believe the comments of Australia's ambassador to the Vatican. She should be recalled. She is putting the interests of the institutional Catholic church and George Pell ahead of victims and the findings of the Royal Commission
@MarisePayne @ScottMorrisonMP

72 600 2,309

Paul Bongiorno @PaulBongiorno · 29 mag

Australia's Holy See ambassador under fire for saying she wants to change 'narrative' away from George Pell
She should be immediately recalled. Thinks she is there to represent Pell and not an outraged nation post the Royal Commission.



Australia's Holy See ambassador under fire for saying she wants to change 'na...
Abuse survivors say Chiara Porro should be working to avoid a repeat of the child abuse scandal exposed by the royal commission
theguardian.com

29 198 490

- Louise Milligan retweet: [Louise Milligan su Twitter: "Australia had a 5-yr Royal Commission & moving apology from the PM. The RC went to great trouble to interview Pell from Rome bc of his terrible heart condition. It found Pell knew about several paedophile clergy & did nothing. Lives destroyed by those men. We should never forget" / Twitter](#)



- David Shoebridge (Greens):
<https://twitter.com/ShoebridgeMLC/status/1398427336911900674>



Facebook: No major post asider from Derryn Hinch's Justice Party: [Facebook](#)



Derryn Hinch's Justice Party

2 g · 🌐

...

Australia's new ambassador to the Vatican has committed a terrible faux pas. And insulted victims of child sex abuse by Catholic priests.

The Ambassador to the Holy See, Chiara Porro, has said her job in Rome is to 'change the narrative' away from George Pell and the Royal Commission into paedophilia. Bullshit. She does not represent the Vatican nor the Catholic Church. She is meant to represent all Australians.

And 'changing the narrative' is not her job. Church leaders of all denominations -- but especially the Catholic Church -- must not be allowed to forget the venal cover-ups of child abuse for decades.

In an interview with Catholic Health Australia, Porro said: 'You know whenever people [in the Vatican] think of Australia they think immediately about Cardinal Pell and the royal commission. So my aim here is to change that narrative.'

People, some conveniently to forget or ignore, that Pell was not found innocent by the High Court. He was found not guilty beyond reasonable doubt after two other courts had convicted and upheld a finding that he was guilty of sexual assault of choir boys.

Thankfully, Foreign Affairs Minister Marise Payne told a Senate Estimates committee the ambassador does not represent the government's view. Let's hope the phone line to Rome has been running hot.

Footnote: An Irish-born Catholic priest, a convicted paedophile, has lost an appeal to retain his Australian passport and again faces deportation. Finian Egan was convicted of sexually abusing three young girls between 1961 and 1987 and was sentenced to eight years in prison. Peter Dutton tried to cancel the Irish dual-citizen's Australian passport in 2016 on the grounds the former priest was 'a horrible individual' and 'not a worthy member of our society'. Egan has now lost his final appeal. On your bike.

Visualizza traduzione



👍👎👤 526

Commenti: 177 Condivisioni: 84

👍 Mi piace

💬 Commenta

🔗 Condividi

I will keep an eye if something else comes out.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Best,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [John Geering](#)
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Draft Senate Estimate response on Guardian article [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 3:03:53 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

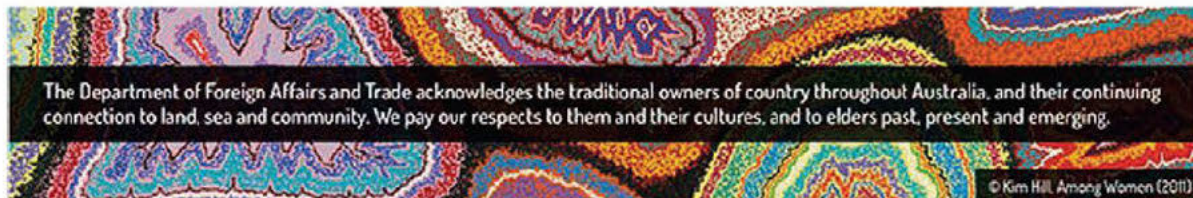
OFFICIAL

John – please find draft senate estimate brief on the Guardian article for your review. Thanks

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

a/g Director | UK, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Holy See Section (UIS)
Europe and Latin America Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Phone s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mobile s 22(1)(a)(ii)
DFAT.GOV.AU | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Flickr](#) | [YouTube](#)



s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 5:20 PM
To: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Document1 (005).docx [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

s 47E(d) OFFICIAL:Sensitive

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 at 7:13:40 am
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Document1 (005).docx [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

s 47E(d)
what happens. Regards john

I will take the questions. We will see

Holy See – Ambassador Interview with Catholic Health Matters Magazine

Lines: pro Catholic bias of Ambassador, lack of respect for victims of sex abuse, promotion of religion by Ambassador, Twitter comments, Change.org petition against ambassador

Evidence: Interview with Catholic Health matters (16 September 2020). Key quotes:

- “There is allot of erroneous reporting (about the Vatican), so where I can try to explain certain things, I will”
- “So my job is working very closely with the community to demonstrate what they are contributing to society”
- “You know whatever people (in the Vatican) think of Australia, they think immediately about Cardinal Pell and the Royal Commission. So my aim here is to change that narrative. I look and I see there is so much more to Australia than that. I don’t think its even that well known here the degree to which Catholic healthcare and aged care are to important in that sector”
- “People are looking for answers, they are looking for other avenues and I think the church can really guide them at this time”
- “(of the Pope) I wanted to get his views on how to engage youth when there is a crisis of confidence in the Catholic Church, particularly in Australia.. how do you go about regaining trust and re-establishing those links”

s 47C(1), s47E(d) - this section and the following page (76) are exempt and has been removed

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: [Media](#)
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [John Geering](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] changing the narrative [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 8:28:23 PM

OFFICIAL

Hi media team,

Grateful for advice on the below. I will forward s 47E(d) emails we have received separately.

Thanks
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 at 11:57:52 am
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] changing the narrative [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

I think this is ok but go to media team to check. I think its worth doing that first.

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 at 7:49:17 pm
To: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](#)>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] changing the narrative [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi John

We have received another email from an individual today asking for clarification s 47C(1)

Are you happy for us to respond? I've drafted this below:
s 47C(1)

s 47C(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <media@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Monday, 31 May 2021 at 3:54:57 pm
To: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Cc: "Media" <media@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) <media@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] changing the narrative [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi John (cc media team)

We have received the below email (from an individual and not a journalist) s 47C(1)
Are you comfortable if we respond (from our general inbox) with the statement that DFAT put out (copied below)?

Thanks

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

In her interview with the publication, the Ambassador was not seeking to detract from the importance and significance of the Royal Commission's findings, and nor was she suggesting Australia would take action to engage Australian youth in the Catholic Church. Rather, she was emphasising that Australia has a broad relationship with the Holy See and that her responsibilities are to put forward the interests of Australia across the breadth of that relationship.

s 47F(1)

s 47F(1)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To:
Subject:
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 8:28:36 PM

s 47C(1), s 47E(d)

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <dfat.gov.au>
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 at 7:13:36 pm
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Document1 (005).docx [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Thanks for sharing the brief, which I think is very comprehensive.

s 47C(1), s 47E(d)

Thanks for your work s 47C(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <dfat.gov.au>
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 at 9:42:16 am
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <dfat.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Document1 (005).docx [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii) I understand John has shared the attached with you earlier. I had also worked on a version (attached) and we will consolidate both documents tomorrow. On my brief, grateful s 22(1)(a)(ii) any comments on what should be included into John's final version. Regards, s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: John Geering <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 3:34 PM

To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>

Subject: Document1 (005).docx [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

These are the notes ive been using for holy see s 47E(d)
Ive shared with s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this page and the following pages (83-85) are irrelevant and has been removed

From: John Geering
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Re: Story on ambassador [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 8:30:05 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

s 47C(1)

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 at 8:27:30 pm
To: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Story on ambassador [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Yes it was published on the website but not shared yet in the newsletter. s 47G(1)(a), s 47C(1)

OFFICIAL

From: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 at 12:00:33 pm
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Story on ambassador [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

s 47C(1), s 47E(d)

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Tuesday, 1 June 2021 at 7:34:16 pm
To: "John Geering" <John.Geering@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Fwd: Story on ambassador [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi John

The article was sent to ELD s 22(1)(a)(ii) for clearance, who then forwarded to me.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 17 September 2020 11:11 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Story on ambassador [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} looks fine to me. Will let him know.
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} @dfat.gov.au
Sent: Thursday, 17 September 2020 1:42 AM
To: ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} @dfat.gov.au
Cc: ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} @dfat.gov.au; ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} @dfat.gov.au; ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} @dfat.gov.au
Subject: FW: Story on ambassador [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

See link below to feature on Catholic Health Australia website. ^{s 47C(1)}

cheers

From: ^{s 47F(1)} @cha.org.au
Sent: Thursday, 17 September 2020 9:26 AM
To: ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} @dfat.gov.au
Subject:

Hi ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

The story is published here <https://cha.org.au/news/what-s-new/861-australia-s-ambassador-goes-to-rome-with-mission-on-her-mind-and-focus-on-catholic-health-education-and-social-justice>

^{s 47G(1)(a)}

Thanks

^{s 47F(1)}

| Communications & Media Director | CATHOLIC HEALTH AUSTRALIA

M: ^{s 47F(1)} | E: ^{s 47F(1)} @cha.org.au | W: www.cha.org.au

Catholic Health Australia acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and emerging Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To:
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [John Geering](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] changing the narrative [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 8 June 2021 8:24:44 PM

OFFICIAL

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

FYI below the response (which was approved by Media) that we have sent to s 47E(d) individuals who wrote to the Embassy regarding the Guardian article.

s 47F(1)

s 47C(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 47F(1)

s 47F(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: HolySee Embassy <holysee.embassy@dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 12 July 2022 3:43 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Promoting Relationships between Australia and the Holy See
[SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

H s 22(1)(a)(ii) just to flag this to you. s 47F(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 47F(1) - this section and the following pages (91-93) are exempt and has been removed

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: 4:06 PM
To: CHCH.HOM SES
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject:
Attachments:

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Good afternoon HOM/SES colleagues,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 47F(1)

I would be grateful for your advice on responses to questions raised on our appointed heads of mission s 47E(d)

Please let me know if you have any questions, grateful for your input.

Kind regards,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Policy Officer | Western and Southern Europe Section
Western Europe Branch | Europe Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 8 January 2024 7:44 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc:
Subject: erial correspondence[SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks for sending this through s 47C(1), s 47E(d)

we continue to do a lot of work on this issue. I haven't had any contact to date with the correspondent, and I can't understand why this is coming up now.

When is the response due? s 22(1)(a)(ii)

and will send through some suggested wording.

s 47C(1)

And yes - keen to catch up - this week is a little busy with a few of these new year audiences so next week would be better if that is ok?

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Thursday, 4 January 2024 at 5:37:10 am
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) <@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Input request on ministerial correspondence [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

sending this through

while we're at it and will discuss upon your return.

We've received the attached (PDF) ministerial correspondence s 47E(d), s 47C(1)

I have attached our first draft of the departmental reply, and would be grateful for your input s 47E(d), s 47C(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thank you s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Kind regards,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Policy Officer | Western and Southern Europe Section
Western Europe Branch | Europe Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section and the following pages (98-102) are irrelevant and has been removed

Estimates:

22. Holy See – Ambassador Porro’s Catholic Health Australia interview ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

Handling Note: ELD has overall responsibility for Holy See diplomatic relations. ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

Key issues:

On 21 April, Senator Kitching submitted 6 parliamentary questions on comments made by Ambassador Porro regarding her role; ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

Key Facts:

Senator Kitching’s questions to Ambassador Porro refer to a September 2020 Catholic Health Australia interview on the Ambassador’s role and priorities for her appointment. Senator Kitching sought details on ‘erroneous reporting’, ‘changing the narrative’ and ‘engaging youth’. ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

Key Dates:

n/a

Key responses:

PQ60 – Erroneous Reporting. Ambassador Porro was explaining the importance of her role, as a representative of Australia and all Australians. It was not a reference to the role or actions of the Vatican.

PQ61 – Changing the narrative. It is **not** the aim of the Minister (Payne), the department or the Ambassador to change the narrative away from Cardinal Pell and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The role of the Ambassador is to advance Australia’s interests across a broad range of issues.

^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} - this section and the following page (105) are irrelevant and has been removed

Estimates:

Division: ELD - ETB	
Prepared by: s 22(1)(a)(ii)	Cleared by Branch Head: John Geering
Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)	Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Date: 19 May 2021	
Consultation: ELD/ETB/UIS	Date: 19 May 2021