**ATTACHMENT E**

**Submission on a Social Morality Policy for the Church**

Jesus gave his Church a mission to convince people to love one another by doing acts of kindness to their neighbour and by obeying his Ten Commandments. The other part of the Church’s mission was to convince society to adopt this Christian morality on a social scale. This involved society doing kind acts to other people (social welfare) and adopting Christian Morality by acting in accordance with the Ten Commandments (*see Attachments M & N*).

Prior to 1960, the Church was not in the Establishment because it was critical of governments’ codes of social morality. Governments’ codes of social morality sought to maximise business profits rather than achieve the common good as required by Christian morality. The Church looked for a replacement economic policy to replace Free Market Capitalism (e.g. the Catholic Rural Movement). In the 1940s, the Church was asked by the Labor Government for help to defeat Communism in the trade unions and in the Australian Labour Party. The ALP executive was only one position short of being controlled by the Communist Party and Australia risked becoming a Communist country. Due to good leadership, organisation and a strong of sense of purpose, the Church helped to defeat the Communist Party in the trade unions and in the ALP.

In the 1950s, there was a split in the ALP and the Church withdrew its support for lay Catholics fighting Communism. A ruling was made by Rome that in future the Church would not get involved with party politics.

Coincidentally, all of the major political parties around the 1960s adopted a new economic policy which was in favour of extensive government involvement in the economy to eliminate inequalities in society. For once governments had an economic policy which was attempting to pursue the common good. At the same time, these same parties granted state aid to Catholic schools. The Catholic Church was accepted as part of the Establishment as other churches had previously been and the Church adopted a policy of being apolitical. The problem was that, in doing so, it also necessarily opted for a social morality policy where its involvement in questions of social morality was kept to a minimum. To achieve this, it removed all effective leadership and organisation from this part of its social mission, while leaving its social welfare aspect of its social mission with its leadership and organisation in place. There have since been plenty of statements by Popes and bishops. Parishes have social justice committees which mainly dabble in social welfare, raise a few petitions on safe harbour issues but are mainly ineffective. The Church’s mission to promote Christian morality became all form and very little substance.

In the 1980s, all of the major political parties worldwide returned to Free Market Capitalism and this time on a global basis. Legislation was introduced to restrict the bargaining power of trade unions and the ability of unions to interact with their members. Jobs in Western nations were transferred to low wage countries and capital went the same way resulting in huge increases in profits and a huge reduction in the earnings of workers. Suddenly Catholic social policies were totally ignored. Running in parallel with this, we had the global sexual revolution where traditional Christian moral values were overturned. The Church was now in a compromising situation where the moral situation was moving away from Christian values but it was committed to being largely apolitical and amoral. It did not react by again providing leadership and organisation. It just “sat on its hands” and did very little.

As far as we am aware, this current policy on social morality is not backed up by any public Church documents. However, Cardinal Pell wrote his book in 2008 called “God and Caesar” where he tried to justify this policy. The bottom line is that responsibility for pursuing Jesus’ mission on social morality has been delegated by the Church to individual Catholics in their role as private individuals. They must determine the “Catholic view” on social issues, they must debate these issues in the public arena and the clerical component of the Body of Christ mainly stands on the sidelines in the role of a witness.

Not surprisingly, individuals do not take up this role, just as they would not take up the role of social welfare, if institutions like the St Vincent de Paul Society, Caritas and The Charitable Works Fund were not in existence.

What is needed is a new policy on social morality for the Church which involves leadership and organisation and a will to succeed.

Without such a policy, the Church has no realistic mission to offer to prospective or non-practising Catholics.