

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.