

nsw-lrc@justice.nsw.gov.au

Draft Proposals

Open Justice: Court and Tribunal Information: access, disclosure and publication.

Proposal 4.2: Principles

Indicates that the principle of open justice is to administer justice, to ensure that justice is seen to be done in order to maintain public confidence.

Paragraph 1.17 indicates the draft proposals were reviewed subsequent to the case against Cardinal George Pell.

I note the ultimate outcome from the case against Cardinal George Pell was his acquittal.

I also note the criticism of the conduct of Victoria Police, the DPP and the Court of Appeal judges resulted from the High Court verdict. Paul Kelly wrote that Pell had been treated in an irrational way, police had failed to properly test witness evidence before laying charges and the trial had been politicised.

Ultimately the affect of these charges on Cardinal George Pell was to have his reputation and career irrevocably tarnished. There will undoubtedly be a public element who have chosen to take the view that Pell must have done something wrong in order to be charged but ultimately the court has not upheld this position and instead by virtue of their decision have chosen to criticise the police, the DPP and the court of appeal.

From these outcomes any sane and reasonable person would seek to offer more protection of the innocent against the incompetence and prejudice of the authorities responsible for this injustice. Instead of offering the innocent greater protection, the Law Reform Commission seeks to prosecute anyone *accused* of sexual assault or domestic violence in the court of public opinion whilst offering more protection to victims or accusers.

Most people accused of sexual assault or domestic violence are men whilst most victims of sexual assault are women. The selection of these crimes for special "reforms" by the review committee is testament to the gender prejudice of the law reform committee and testament that the law reform committee will discard the principles of justice in order to achieve this aim.

It is clear these reforms will serve to persecute the innocent and offer further protection to those who would unjustly accuse. The reforms will undermine public confidence that our judicial system will protect the innocent and prosecute the guilty.

It is clear the law reform committee are intent on the pursuit of prejudice at the expense of justice and I call for the immediate dismissal of all those involved.