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Media release

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Catholics least homophobic religious group: New analysis

A new study of homophobia has identified Catholics as among the least homophobic people in Australia. The Australia Institute study, *Mapping Homophobia in Australia*, is based on a survey of nearly 25,000 Australians aged 14 and over carried out by Roy Morgan Research.

Among those who declare a religious affiliation, Catholics are the *most* tolerant of homosexuality, with only 34 per cent believing that homosexuality is immoral (although those affiliated with the Anglican and Uniting Churches have similar scores).

The least tolerant are Baptists (of whom 68 per cent believe homosexuality is immoral) followed closely by evangelical Christians (62 per cent).

“The Catholic Church has taken a strong stance against gay priests and gay marriage”, said Institute Director Dr Clive Hamilton. “These survey results suggest that the Catholic Church has less doctrinal authority over its congregation than some other Christian and non-Christian churches.”

The report also found:

- The three most homophobic areas in Australia are the Moreton area of country Queensland, the Central/South-West area of Queensland and the Burnie/Western district of Tasmania;
- The three least homophobic regions are the Inner City of Melbourne, Central Perth and Central Melbourne;
- Older Australians are considerably more homophobic than young adults;
- Men are consistently more likely to view homosexuality as immoral than women; and
- Homophobic attitudes are closely related to levels of education – 25 per cent of those with tertiary education hold homophobic views compared to 40-50 per cent among those who did not complete high school.

*The paper may be read under What's New on the Australia Institute's website,
www.tai.org.au.*