

EDITOR'S NOTE: Parts of this response have been removed for legal and editorial reasons.

18 Oct 2026

Lloyd Grimshaw, Plymouth Brethren Christian Church

Reporting by Michael Bachelard

Journalist, Michael Bachelard, has run a biased campaign against the Plymouth Brethren for two decades.

Each time Ch 9 papers enquires about our church we provide fulsome, truthful answers, and each time these are largely ignored.

To try to stop the falsehoods, we have made ourselves available for interviews (refused), submitted opinion pieces (declined), written letters (ignored) and taken legal action.

So much for *The Age* being independent always.

And yet, despite the overt bias, as far as we know this is the first time in 20 years that we have heard from *Media Watch*.

We would like to think your enquiry might be a turning point to proper consideration of the issues. Here are some facts to inform your story and the broader context of the campaign against us:

- [Here](#) is the article on June 7, 2025 where Mr Bachelard said that women in our church are 'second class citizens'. **Attached** is an email four days later on 11 June 2025, which was recently forwarded to us by a member of our church, where Mr Bachelard says *"You have caught me out: I have not met a current female member of your church to discuss these matters. But I would be delighted to do so."*
- [Here](#) is the YouTube clip where Mr Bachelard did an interview about our church with a small, vocal and persistent group of anti-Brethren online activists, and called our 55,000 church members a "tumour", a "parasite" and "odious". So much for *The Age* being "Independent Always".
- [Here](#) is the article where Mr Bachelard called our church "brutal" and our parishioners "corpulent" (fat) in the final paragraphs. This actually happened. In an actual newspaper.

- And [here](#) is an article entitled “*Exclusive Brethren hidden homes all in the family*” where *The Age* actively draws attention to the details of homes that church members have deliberately kept confidential. Imagine if the headline said “Muslim secret homes”. Imagine if the article was about Jewish people.

The list goes on. In fact, even a senior source within *The Age* reached out to the church a little while back to express concern about the reporting and bias from Mr Bachelard.

In your news report, Mario, please don’t confuse bias or obsession with specialisation.

Joint Standing Committee

Now, to be fair you have written to us about the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.

Surely your enquiry is about the outright bias of the Committee Chair, and the complete lack of coverage about this in the Australian media?

Would you like a response on any of the following points:

- The fact the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters described participation in elections of people from our religion as an “[assault on democracy](#)”? He did this on Four Corners on September 15, 2025, as the Chair of an independent Committee, about a year before he invited us to a hearing.

The Joint Standing Committee leadership is more interested in playing dishonest, political games as part of its campaign against the Church.

This has included selective leaking to the media, dishonestly claiming our church has refused to appear before the Committee, suppressing submissions which make the argument for religious freedom (lest they undermine the narrative) and ignoring the serious conflict of interest of the Chair given the actions of him, his father and his staff.

Certain sections of the media have made the effort to report on our Church fairly and reasonably, but others, as expressed above, are clearly biased, flawed, and motivated to write in pursuit of clicks and royalties from books. We also have met some great ones over the years.

I hope you will consider our comprehensive answer and produce a fair report.