



# **ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

2021

**The Catholic Church in Australia's Implementation of the  
Recommendations from the Final Report of the Royal  
Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**

December 2021

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Catholic Church in Australia takes full responsibility for the harm caused by the tragic history of child sexual abuse by clergy, religious and lay Church workers. The failings of Church personnel who offended grievously and the failings of Church leaders who responded wrongly – or not at all – have harmed victims, survivors<sup>1</sup>, their families and their supporters, and have led to a life of pain and suffering for so many. These same failings have hurt the community of the Church and disillusioned many in society.

The Church reaffirms its sorrow for the physical, emotional and spiritual wounds, often lifelong, that victims and survivors have suffered, and renews its commitment to building a better future. The Church has learned much about how to respond to victims and survivors. It continues to learn.

In a particular way, the Church has learned from victims and survivors themselves and acknowledges with gratitude all who have come forward and disclosed or reported the abuse they have suffered. Their courage is helping the Church to respond to them in better ways and to create safer Catholic communities.

The Church is committed to continuing to work with those harmed by child sexual abuse to bring about justice, to provide healing and restore trust where possible, and to help ensure that children and vulnerable people are cared for and protected. It encourages those who have not yet come forward to do so with confidence that they will be heard and responded to.

The Church recognises the many who have not been able to tell their stories and acknowledges with deep sadness those who took their own lives as a consequence of the harm they suffered, and the enduring grief of their loved ones.

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<sup>1</sup> The word 'survivor' in this report refers to a person who has experienced [child] abuse, after the abuse has occurred – such as when they are an adult reporting abuse or seeking treatment, support, justice or redress. The word 'victim' refers to a person who has experienced [child] abuse, at the time the abuse occurred. Some people who have experienced abuse prefer 'survivor' due to the resilience conveyed by this word. Some people do not feel they have 'survived' the abuse and prefer the word 'victim'. Others do not identify as either a 'victim' or a 'survivor'.



## FOREWORD

As we approach the fourth anniversary of the publication of the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, it is clear we must all remain vigilant in our pursuit of places that are safe for all people – especially children.

The Church values each child in our midst. Yet our shameful past reveals that we let down too many children and many thousands were abused in our settings. We are resolved to strengthen our commitment to children by placing their safety front and centre in our mission.

Indeed, the mission of the Church can only be carried out if we show, in concrete ways, that we have evolved, that we are deeply sorry for the abuse that has occurred and that we want to bring some healing, where that is possible.

This fourth annual report to the National Office for Child Safety is one way in which the Church is seeking to be more accountable and transparent in our ongoing response to the scourge of abuse.

We find within the following pages tangible examples of policies, procedures and practices that are keeping children and other vulnerable people as safe as possible. We find examples of Church entities that have undergone significant structural change and the cultural shifts that were needed to create child-safe environments.

In reading the dozens of reports we received, there was much in common in the approaches taken. The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards are now deeply embedded in the life of Church ministries. Induction and training systems are well established and constantly monitored. Children and young people are invited to help shape Church policies that help protect their safety.

But there are also innovative ways that some entities are responding, and those are some of the aspects this report highlights. There is also information on some key national initiatives, mindful that collaboration across the country, as well as within or between dioceses and religious orders, can strengthen the effectiveness of the response.

We commend to you the report and, once again, on behalf of our brothers and sisters in leadership and governance roles within the Church, pledge to do all within our power to have our ministries be places of welcome, of inclusion and of safety.

**Archbishop Mark Coleridge**

President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

**Br Peter Carroll FMS**

President, Catholic Religious Australia



# INTRODUCTION

One of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was that large organisations and governments provide an annual report on progress responding to those recommendations.

In August 2018, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) published a comprehensive response to the Royal Commission, considering each relevant recommendation individually. In that response, the Bishops Conference and CRA accepted Recommendation 17.3, which called for the provision of an annual report. The two entities agree it is critically important that ongoing responses to the Royal Commission are documented and that progress can be measured over time.

In December 2018, December 2019 and December 2020, the Bishops Conference and CRA submitted annual reports to the National Office for Child Safety on behalf of the Catholic Church in Australia. This is the fourth such report.

This report outlines some of the critical work being undertaken within the Catholic Church at all levels to respond to the Royal Commission's recommendations, but more broadly to ensure the safety of children and adults at risk in Catholic settings.

It also examines the creation and maintenance of a safeguarding culture, policies, protocols and structures that support child-safe environments and appropriate responses to allegations of child sexual abuse.

The Bishops Conference and CRA invited their members – bishops, eparchs, ordinaries and leaders of religious institutes – to provide feedback on their progress in the area of child protection and safeguarding, including (but not limited to) the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

Dozens of dioceses and religious institutes submitted information for the preparation of this report. The consistent response from those entities is recognition of the central importance of safeguarding in the life of the Church in Australia today.

The National Office for Child Safety contacted a number of Catholic schools directly, inviting them to submit their own annual reports. Some initiatives undertaken by schools or school systems are contained within this report.

This report has a particular focus on the period from October 2020 to October 2021. As has been evident from previous annual reports, much of the work being undertaken is a refinement and consolidation of the efforts in the preceding years and decades.



## CATHOLIC RESPONSES BEFORE 2012

### 1987

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference dedicated part of its biannual meeting in late 1987 to the topic of child sexual abuse. The Bishops Conference the next year established the Special Issues Committee, whose role included developing protocols if an allegation of criminal behaviour was made against a priest or religious.

### 1989

In 1989, the Special Issues Committee drafted the *Protocol for Dealing with Allegations of Criminal Behaviour (The Initial Protocol)*. It was the first official document to provide guidance for dealing with allegations of sexual abuse. It was mainly directed at disciplining priests and religious. It stressed any Church process must not interfere with any criminal justice process. It envisaged canonical consequences for the accused, including possible dismissal from the priesthood or religious institute.

### 1991

The Special Issues Committee proposed amendments to *The Initial Protocol* to make it more victim-focused and less concerned with the reputation of the Church. *The 1992 Protocol* applied to all dioceses and religious congregations.

### 1992-93

The Bishops Conference and CRA issued *A Pastoral Statement on Child Protection and Child Sexual Abuse*, which acknowledged Church failures in responding to sexual abuse, including too readily

accepting offenders' promises that such behaviour would not be repeated.

The Bishops Conference and CRA also issued *Sexual Offences and the Church*, acknowledging the serious and long-lasting harm caused by abuse and betrayal of trust. It pledged to give first consideration to victims and survivors and their families. Bishops and congregational leaders again promised to work with others "to bring healing to those who have been hurt".

## 1993

In November 1993, the Special Issues Committee drafted *The Catholic Church's Principles in Relation to Sexual Abuse and Professional Misconduct*. A precursor to *Towards Healing*, it was intended to be a victim-centred response. The public document announced the Church's view: it would not tolerate sexual abuse and would cooperate with police and victims.

## 1996-97

The Bishops Committee for Professional Standards presented a draft of *Towards Healing* to the Bishops Conference's plenary meeting in April 1996. *Towards Healing* departed from *The 1992 Protocol* in several significant ways, including: opening with an apology; being victim-orientated; simplifying the document's language; simplifying the process of receiving and responding to complaints; encouraging victims to go to the police; and providing for a facilitated meeting between a victim and the Church authority. The Conference approved *Towards Healing* in November 1996, to come into operation on March 31, 1997. CRA had also approved the document in principle. The first review of *Towards Healing* took place in 1999 and, by 2001, a revised version of *Towards Healing* was in operation. A second revision of *Towards Healing* was published in 2010.

In October 1996, the Archdiocese of Melbourne announced the establishment of a new initiative, which became known as *The Melbourne Response*, to respond to complaints of abuse committed by a priest of the Archdiocese or by any religious or lay person working within the Archdiocese. *The Melbourne Response* had three separate components: independent commissioners; a compensation panel; and Carelink, which provides uncapped, ongoing professional support for needs arising in relation to the abuse. As part of *The Melbourne Response*, spiritual support and guidance is also available at parish level.

The Bishops Conference replaced the Bishops Committee with the National Committee for Professional Standards (NCPS). The NCPS was set up as a joint committee of the Bishops Conference and CRA, equally responsible to both, charged with general oversight and policy development of professional standards in the Church.

## 1997

State-based professional standards offices began to emerge from 1997. After *Towards Healing*, a national network of contact persons, assessors, facilitators and reviewers was developed. Local professional standards reference groups advised Church leaders on changes to complaints handling procedures and pastoral responses to victims and survivors.

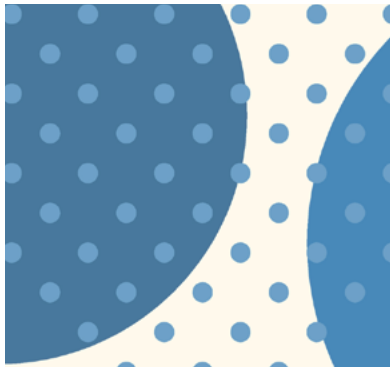
## 1999

The Church released the document *Integrity in Ministry*, which outlined expectations of appropriate behaviour for priests and religious. It was reviewed in 2004. *Integrity in Ministry* was compiled “as a resource for those preparing for ministry in the Catholic Church and as a code of conduct and guide for reflection for those already involved in ministry”. It sets out behaviour for clergy and religious to integrate into their day-to-day ministry and serves as a checklist against which they can review the quality of the ministerial activities in which they engage.

## 2011

*Integrity in the Service of the Church*, for lay employees and volunteers within the Church, was developed by the NCPS. The document was created as the “parallel” to *Integrity in Ministry*, and “outlines principles of conduct for any lay person who performs paid or unpaid work in the service of the Church”. The document is a resource for reviewing organisations’ guidelines and processes.





# THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE ROYAL COMMISSION

## **TRUTH, JUSTICE AND HEALING COUNCIL**

In February 2013, the Bishops Conference and CRA jointly established the Truth, Justice and Healing Council (the Council) to lead and coordinate the Catholic Church's response to and appearances at hearings of the Royal Commission. The Council was comprised of people with expertise across specialised fields of child sexual abuse, trauma, mental illness, suicide, psycho-sexual disorders, education, public administration, law and governance.

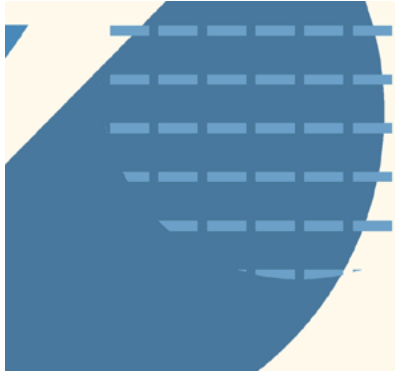
Throughout the life of the Council, four of its members were either survivors of clerical abuse within the Church or had immediate family members who have been abused. The majority of Council members were lay people; two of its members were bishops, and one was a former international leader of a female religious congregation.

Thirty-one dioceses and 97 religious institutes, commonly referred to as congregations and orders, had the Council represent and act for them during the Royal Commission process. The Council particularly worked with the three religious institutes, 10 dioceses and one school under the governance of a public juridic person that were involved in case studies during the life of the Royal Commission.

The Truth, Justice and Healing Council ceased following the conclusion of the Royal Commission, its final work being [a four-volume Final Report](#).

In preparation for the Royal Commission's final hearing into the Catholic Church, a voluntary questionnaire was sent to religious institutes and dioceses seeking information on the initiatives and protocols undertaken in recent decades to improve child safety and respond to allegations of child sexual abuse.

While the purpose of the questionnaires was to compile a response to the Royal Commission rather than for publication, the responses have been published in Volume 4 of the Truth, Justice and Healing Council's Final Report (with some minor redactions to remove personal identifiers such as contact details). The volume, which runs to more than 400 pages, considers: Ongoing formation matters for priests and religious; Structures, policies and procedures; Governance and personnel management; Litigation, settlements and policies for dealing with perpetrators. Some of that information is contained in the preceding and following pages.



## NATIONAL INITIATIVES

### **AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LIMITED**

In December 2020, the Catholic Church established a new company to oversee all safeguarding, child protection and professional standards in Australia, creating a more focused and streamlined model.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) was set up to reduce duplication and consolidate work previously undertaken by Catholic Professional Standards Limited, the Implementation Advisory Group and the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards.

ACSL works with Catholic entities to promote and oversee a nationally consistent, comprehensive and sustainable framework and culture within the Catholic Church in Australia. Church entities work to safeguard all who come into contact with the Church, especially children and adults at risk.

ACSL will continue to develop and maintain professional and safeguarding standards and assist Catholic entities to implement those standards. It will also develop risk-based review criteria to assist Catholic entities to arrange audit/reviews of their systems and processes.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia and the Association of Ministerial PJPs are members of ACSL.

### **NATIONAL CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS**

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (the Standards) create a framework for Catholic entities to promote the safety of children and adults at risk. They outline the policies and activities that will prevent, respond to, and support reporting of concerns regarding child abuse. The Standards work together to ensure that every entity, ministry and organisation across the Catholic Church places the safety of children and adults at risk at the core of how they plan, think and act.

The 10 Standards are taken directly from the final report Volume 6 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. They incorporate the Royal Commission's recommendations and also the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, contextualising these requirements for the Catholic Church in Australia. The Standards have been adopted by all Church Authorities, religious institutes, Catholic entities, ministries and organisations across Australia.

The first phase in developing the Standards focused on safeguarding practices to protect children. The second phase incorporates care and protection of adults, with a focus on adults at risk, in keeping with the recommendations of the Royal Commission. The second edition of the Standards refine the indicators and criteria and include considerations of adults at risk. They will be introduced in 2022.

## **AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC MINISTRY REGISTER**

The Australian Catholic Ministry Register (the Register) is a national database that supports communication between dioceses and religious institutes about the credentialing of clerics and religious in the practice of their ministry. This allows for Church entities to satisfy the requirements of National Catholic Safeguarding Standard 5.7.1 more easily.

The Register had initially been established with a focus on clergy and male religious, but Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd, which manages the Register, announced in October 2021 that women religious had been invited to participate. The expansion of the Register was made possible after significant improvements were made to the system.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd CEO Dr Ursula Stephens said the extension of the program to include women was a proud moment, “both because women religious will be able to benefit from the Register and because it means that the whole Church will now have equal access” to the Register.

## **SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY**

The Catholic Church in Australia marks Safeguarding Sunday (formerly Child Protection Sunday) on the second Sunday of September – at the conclusion of National Child Protection Week.

Safeguarding Sunday seeks to acknowledge the immense damage caused by the sexual abuse of children and adults at risk, including by priests, religious and lay people within Catholic contexts. It makes a commitment to practices and protocols that create and maintain safe environments for all people. It invites people to pray for those harmed by abuse directly and indirectly.

A number of national and local resources were created and events held to mark Safeguarding Sunday and Child Protection Week, which is a national commemoration across the whole community. Some Safeguarding Sunday and Child Protection Week initiatives are outlined in the local responses section of this report.

## **AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE**

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference was among the organisations whose audit into its safeguarding practices was published during 2021. The audit, led by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd, found the Bishops Conference has fully implemented or substantially progressed the implementation of 97 per cent of relevant safeguarding indicators.

ACSL published its findings after selective interviews with Conference staff, interaction with the

Conference's leadership and its Safeguarding Committee, and a review of policies and procedures.

The audit process helped the Bishops Conference further strengthen those policies and procedures, mindful that the Conference has relatively little direct contact with children, but does play a role in demonstrating a proactive approach for other Church entities.

The two areas where Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd recommended additional attention related to people attending events and monitoring the online environment.

Another first for the Bishops Conference in 2021 was the publication of its inaugural annual report, covering the activities of the Conference during 2020. The idea of publishing an annual report emerged from a desire to inform the Catholic community and wider society about how the Bishops Conference supports the mission of the Church in Australia. It also responds to the call for greater transparency within Catholic organisations.

## **NATIONAL RESPONSE PROTOCOL**

The National Response Protocol was adopted by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference at its November 2020 meeting, providing a framework for Catholic entities across Australia to respond consistently to people raising concerns or allegations of child sexual abuse.

The Protocol was the product of two years of work and widespread consultation within and beyond the Church. That consultation included engagement with victims and survivors and their advocates.

In preparing the National Response Protocol, various state and territory regulatory and legislative requirements, across different sectors and settings, were considered. The NRP sets a "national benchmark against which local policies and procedures should be aligned".

As well as outlining principles and processes for responding to concerns and allegations of abuse, whether historical or contemporary, the protocol also offers guidance on how to engage with those affected by abuse.

The National Response Protocol will be monitored regularly to allow for ongoing refinement and improvement. It was sent to the Holy See for approval.

The National Response Protocol is available at: [www.catholic.org.au/nationalresponseprotocol](http://www.catholic.org.au/nationalresponseprotocol)

## **CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS AUSTRALIA**

Catholic Religious Australia is the national organisation that represents leaders of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life. It is a key partner alongside the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in responding to matters related to child sexual abuse, with the two groups having collaborated on those issues for decades – including during and beyond the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Among Catholic Religious Australia's initiatives over the past year were:

- The development of a Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement, which has been published publicly on the CRA website;

- The development of a Child Safeguarding Policy (which includes policies and procedures related to information sharing and record keeping), Code of Conduct, Risk Management Strategy and a Complaint Handling Policy. CRA has also developed templates of these documents for its members;
- Training for members on the purpose, function and application of each model document, assisting members to adapt them to ensure that they are “owned” by the member religious institute and its community. A former NSW Deputy Ombudsman assisted with the drafting of and training on the documents;
- National Day of Sorrow and Promise: Each year since 2019, CRA has organised the National Day of Sorrow and Promise on October 24, for religious communities to unite in prayer and remembrance of those who have been hurt by sexual abuse;
- Partnerships with member religious institutes to design and develop a database program for their recording and maintenance of safeguarding credentials, including Working with Children Checks, safeguarding training completion and Australian Catholic Ministry Register number;
- In support of Standard 3.5 (The entity takes a leadership role in raising community awareness of the dignity and rights of all children) and Standard 4.3, (The entity pays particular attention to the needs of .... children of diverse sexuality), CRA held a webinar with James Martin SJ exploring with over 200 participants from across the Church how and why the Church should improve its ministry to LGBTQIA+ peoples. The webinar particularly noted that LGBTQIA+ youth are at increased risk of marginalisation, within and beyond the Church, resulting in increased depression and suicide, verbal, physical and sexual harassment and abuse.
- Supporting religious institutes with their supervision program options, arranging a religious institute leader, an expert in supervision, to lead a Zoom session for CRA members, to explain the benefits of reflecting intentionally and regularly on their ministry;
- Hosting a Safeguarding Community of Practice for safeguarding personnel to discuss freely particular topics of group interest within the professional standards and safeguarding space;
- Continuing to work collaboratively with the Bishops Conference to respond to the Royal Commission recommendations to support compliance with the recommendations.

## **CATHOLIC CHURCH INSURANCE**

Catholic Church Insurance (CCI) has been supporting Catholic parishes, schools, community services and other ministries for more than 100 years. Since the 1990s, that collaboration has included finding ways to provide financial compensation to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.

During 2020, CCI reported that recent and projected compensation claims for historical abuse had necessitated an increase in the company’s capital levels.

In October 2021, it was announced that a capital injection from Catholic dioceses and religious orders had strengthened Catholic Church Insurance's and the Church's ability to make financial reparations for abuse carried out by priests, religious and lay people.

"The recent work we have undertaken together means we can assure the Catholic community and wider public that survivors of historical abuse will be treated justly, with no impact on compensation arrangements," Bishops Conference president Archbishop Coleridge said.

Br Peter Carroll FMS, the president of Catholic Religious Australia, said the cash injection was the correct and necessary step.

"Our Church has a commitment to protecting those who are vulnerable, and part of our history is that some of our members greatly harmed vulnerable people," Br Peter said.

"Responding compassionately to reports of abuse, through compensation, pastoral care and other support, is a way to make reparations. This cash injection solidifies one part of that response."

## **THE LIGHT FROM THE SOUTHERN CROSS**

One of the recommendations of the Royal Commission was that the Catholic Church in Australia conduct a review of diocesan and parish governance and management. The Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia accepted that recommendation.

The final version of the report, entitled *The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-Responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia*, was presented to the Bishops Conference and CRA in August 2020 and published online that month.

In December 2020, the Bishops Conference provided its initial response to the report. The response said the governance review will help shape the way the Catholic Church in Australia understands co-responsibility in its life and mission and puts it into practice.

The bishops' response points out that many of the matters raised in the document may be better handled by a local bishop or province rather than at the national level. Where there are other matters that do warrant national consideration, the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia is another forum where that might be done.

Using the release of the *Light from the Southern Cross* as an opportunity for formation, Catholic Religious Australia initiated *Catalysts for Conversation*, a series of webinars for members of the Church to ponder the themes in the report. CRA's purpose in exploring the report is to promote synodality throughout the Church, especially in its governance, allowing participants to discern what the report's themes could mean to them and their Church.

The first two in the series of three webinars were held in 2021, with the third to be held in early 2022. Session one explored the theme of "mission and Church", while session two looked at "synodality and co-responsibility". Session three will examine "accountability and transparency". CRA engaged a variety of expert speakers to lead discussion, followed by small group conversations.

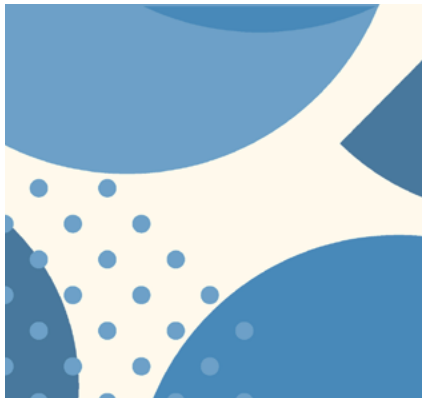
## RATIO NATIONALIS INSTITUTIONIS SACERDOTALIS

Several recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse referred to the formation and screening of people for ministry within the Catholic Church.

A critical document guiding the formation of men for the priesthood is the *Ratio Nationalis Institutionalisis Sacerdotalis*. A new *Ratio* was prepared after consultation with formators, academic personnel, seminarians, priests, experts in priestly formation and members of the Vatican's Congregation for Clergy and presented to the Bishops Conference in November 2020.

The document was approved by the bishops during that meeting and has been submitted to the Congregation for Clergy for *recognitio*.





## LOCAL INITIATIVES

### DIOCESES

#### ARCHDIOCESE OF ADELAIDE

The Archdiocesan Screening and Verification Authority works in partnership with the Department of Human Services to facilitate Working with Children Checks (WWCC) across South Australia for those belonging to and providing service on behalf of the Adelaide Archdiocese and the Diocese of Port Pirie. All checks are constantly monitored and regular service is not able to be provided unless the check undertaken is current and the individuals are deemed to be “not prohibited”. The Archdiocese requires all clergy and religious and Archdiocesan employees to obtain the WWCC. Regular volunteers and contractors are also required to obtain the WWCC. Some occasional volunteers and contractors may also be required to obtain the WWCC dependent upon the frequency and type of service provided.

The Child Protection Unit undertakes assessments of child safety risks based on a range of factors, including the level of engagement with children and young people. Precautionary measures taken to reduce risks include:

- Implementation of Best Practice Guidelines which guide behavioural expectations and raise awareness of what is and what is not protective;
- Risk assessments for all children’s activities are documented and stored;
- Clear and consistent messaging about the importance of prioritising children’s rights, particular the right to be safe, in the parish environment is also upheld.

Throughout the last year the Archdiocesan Child Protection Unit has focused on compliance and refining resources to track progress, strengths and challenges. Such resources seek to simplify the process for the targeted demographic to ensure attainment of National Catholic Safeguarding Standards is well understood, achievable, measurable and more easily transferred into practice. This considered, tailored and transparent approach allows for easier analysis of outcomes and the collection of data.

Informing children of their rights continues to be a key focus with resources being developed to ensure these are promoted but also communicated directly to children. A resource recently developed was



a notebook with a Gospel message linking the importance and value of children and young people, acknowledging children at the centre of the Church.

The Catholic Schools Scholarships Program was recognised in the inaugural South Australian Child Protection Awards by winning the “Improving education and learning outcomes for children and young people in care” category.

Delivered by the Department for Child Protection in partnership with the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, the awards celebrate the achievements of those who provide vital support to vulnerable children and young people and inspire others to support children and young people in care.

The Catholic Schools Scholarship Program supports children and young people in care to attend Catholic schools across South Australia.

Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) recently reviewed the Complaint Response Resolution Procedure and updated the CESA website to make it easier for members of the public to access policies and procedures that may help them lodge a complaint and know how it will be managed. Schools have been asked to update their websites to show relevant complaint resolution procedures or link to the CESA page for easy reference.

The Centacare Child Protection Committee is responsible for developing and co-ordinating a framework of common understanding, and a culture of child safe practices across the organisation, with the overarching aim of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children and young people accessing our services. The Committee provides a consultative forum and strategic advice on child protection and safety issues arising within Centacare.

The South Australia and Northern Territory Professional Standards Office continues to raise awareness in the Province through providing training and education for clergy and religious on: Boundaries and Ethics in Ministry; and Responding to a First Disclosure from an Adult Survivor of Child Sexual Abuse.

The training will be expanded to include lay ministers and volunteers in the coming year. In addition, the PSO has developed and delivered “Providing a Direct Personal Response for Church Authorities and their delegates” in the Province to ensure positive and healing responses to adult survivors of child sexual abuse within the Church context.

## **ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN**

Child Safe Advocates are positions within the schools of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn that have a staffing allocation – a dedicated role. The role has three main objectives:

1. Ensure the management of Child Safe regulation processes in schools are working as required and properly – this includes ensuring Working With Children Checks and Working with Vulnerable People processes are up to date in each school.
2. Provide leadership at the school in child protection matters from a teaching perspective. The Archdiocese wants child safe advocates to be people who have the right skills,

information and training to be able to manage child safety issues at schools when they occur such as on-the-ground support for when things like mandatory reports need to be made. It is important that the non-teaching elements of child protection, such as investigations into allegations made against staff under the reportable conduct schemes, are handled by the Child Protection Team at Catholic Education.

3. Advocates run the audit process for the Child Safe Standards and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. Across three years, an audit into all 10 standards will take place. The data from each audit is used to write improvement plans to ensure progress toward being compliant with all standards at all times. The advocates have the duty to ensure the plans are written and accepted by the school executive and then the strategies outlined in those reports are also enacted by the school over the three-year cycle.

The Archdiocese also has a Child Safe Advocate Portal (due to be relaunched in 2021). This is an intranet page which is broken into three sections:

1. All 10 standards are explained both in text and in video with a theme about how to make the standards relevant in the schooling system;
2. Resources related to each standard; and
3. Audit processes are outlined, with the audits conducted through a survey tool.

## ARCHDIOCESE OF HOBART

The Safe Communities: Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults Framework was developed in consultation with Archdiocese of Hobart Trust Agencies and Organisations of Catholics in Tasmania.

The Safe Communities: Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults Framework objectives are to create a shared culture of safety for children and vulnerable adults, and:

- Establish systems and processes that provide a safe environment for all in the Archdiocese's care;
- Implement safe strategies and practices to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm;
- Report, monitor and respond to disclosures or concerns of abuse throughout Tasmania.

In 2021, the Archdiocese of Hobart appointed its first dedicated Safe Communities Officer. The role is exclusively focused on supporting Safe Communities initiatives within the Archdiocese. The incumbent brought to this role over 17 years' experience working in Catholic parishes. The appointment has enabled a proactive approach to supporting parishes with embedding and enhancing their child safe practices through increased communications, enhanced understanding of the parish environments and more frequent support visits to parishes.

A new Director of Professional Standards has been appointed for Tasmania in 2021. The Director of Professional Standards for Tasmania is a qualified lawyer, with significant experience in child safety, including experience in implementing operational approaches creating child safe organisations.

CatholicCare Tasmania has recently established a Child Safety Committee, which consists of executive managers and senior leaders to oversee the leadership and operational delivery of child safe social services activities.

The Archdiocese of Hobart, including Catholic Education Tasmania, is committed to empowering children with personal safety skills. Catholic Education Tasmania utilises Bravehearts' personal safety education program with their mascot "Ditto". In 2022, Safe Communities will be adopting the use of "Ditto" for child-facing resources to help them connect between what they are learning at school and what they see in Church environments.

Looking ahead, the Archdiocese of Hobart is planning biannual parish forums and quarterly newsletters to parishes to support engagement and improve child safety competency.

## ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

A significant development in 2021 has been the changed governance arrangements for parish and diocesan schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. From January 1, 2021, a new corporate entity – Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) – assumed responsibility for the governance and operations of the MACS Catholic schools.

The changes meet with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference acceptance of Recommendation 16.6 from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. They also align with the Victorian Government acceptance in 2014 of the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust Parliamentary Inquiry.

The newly established MACS Board has released a Child Safety Framework which outlines the Board's unwavering commitment to child safety and specifies the policies and actions imposed on the Board and MACS schools to promote the wellbeing of children and to effectively address their moral and legislative child safety obligations.

The Safeguarding Office works closely with parishes, agencies and entities of the Archdiocese to help them build their safeguarding capacity and comply with the safeguarding standards and reporting obligations. Safeguarding Officers support compliance by building knowledge and capacity by providing assistance, support, training, workshops and advice in relation to the implementation of the Archdiocese's Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework.

Schools recognise that an essential aspect of providing effective protection from harm is ensuring that there is authentic engagement with students, enabling them to contribute to important conversations and decisions regarding their individual and collective safety. Schools have been implementing and trialling various strategies to achieve this, including the creation of student-based child safety teams, regular student focus group sessions and annual student and staff surveys.

Standard Six of the Victorian Standards specifically requires organisations to implement strategies to reduce and remove risks of abuse to children. The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne has developed templates, fact sheets and training materials to assist parishes to engage in a risk identification and risk reduction exercises in their context.

Achievements from the Professional Standards Unit in 2021 include:

- The translation of a range of safeguarding materials in 11 community languages prominent throughout the Archdiocese. These documents help to ensure that culturally and linguistically diverse communities are informed and have an understanding of their safeguarding rights and obligations.
- In April, the PSU presented an in-person information session with newly ordained clergy and Corpus Christi College first-year seminarians to inform them of the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Children and Young People framework.
- In August, the PSU presented a tailored online information session for migrant chaplains in the Archdiocese regarding support they can obtain from the PSU in relation to safeguarding.

### ARCHDIOCESE OF PERTH

During the past 12 months the degree of effort and focus on specific National Catholic Safeguarding Standards measures is based on parish and agency risks. While risk assessment is a key activity and an indicator of progress within the NCSS, focused risk management training has not been delivered to parishes and agencies. A phased approach has been taken by the Safeguarding Office for implementation of the NCSS within parishes and agencies to factor in the high risk of volunteer capacity and administration burden. The phases are as follows:

- Phase 1: Refresher Training and awareness of Safeguarding Officers to shift from 12 West Australian to 10 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards;
- Phase 2: Parish Training and awareness of NCSS compliance; Training of Church Workers; and Clergy Refresher Training;
- Phase 3: Risk Assessment Training and further Compliance Training.

The Safeguarding Office developed Parish and Agency Risk Management Plans that encompass the issues of harm; engagement and activities with children; statutory requirements such as workplace, health and safety. A risk management framework is in development.

The launch of *You Are God's Marvellous Creation*, a rhyming storybook for children aged 3 to 8, has been a massive success, with the first print run now exhausted. All parishes have been given copies of this resource to share in their communities, and once re-stocked will be offered to all Catholic primary schools in Western Australia.

Each year, the Safeguarding Office organises a breakfast during Child Protection Week in September. This year almost 200 people attended the event, including representatives from other faiths.

Future plans to improve child safety and wellbeing include a new Safeguarding Handbook, which needs to be approved and introduced to all parishes, early in 2022. Publication of the handbook and wide advertising of its availability will need to be undertaken. All Church workers will then need to complete the appropriate forms and parishes must keep these forms. Parishes may need additional support and/or resources to enable this to occur appropriately.

While significant work has been undertaken providing training for parishes, a targeted approach will be taken to support parishes where few opportunities have been offered. A proposal is currently being progressed with the hope that online training sessions will be available by mid-2022, particularly catering for parishes in more regional areas of the Perth Archdiocese.

## ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY

The Child Related Activity Register is an electronic tool to record details of parish workers' Working with Children Check status and Safeguarding Induction training within parish settings. The Register assists the parish priest/administrator to fulfil his legislative requirements in terms of the Children's Guardian Act 2019 and the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012. Registers are audited every six months by the Safeguarding Office to ensure currency and feedback is provided to each parish regarding compliance.

The Archdiocese has developed fact sheets, news articles, videos and training to support compliance with the state's Reportable Conduct Scheme and mandatory reporting requirements.

CatholicCare has initiated a "special project" that has developed policy and procedures relating to supporting online services for children, particularly around the issue of collecting data, storage of data and consent.

Sydney Catholic Schools has undertaken a review of all child protection policies to ensure they reflect the most recent legislative changes and these are to be launched in 2022.

CatholicCare has appointed a dedicated Child Protection Implementation Specialist role. This role provides specialist child safeguarding support to CatholicCare and Family Spirit. The role is responsible for monitoring the agencies' compliance obligations and ensuring embedding of child safeguarding practices and standards, as well as legislative requirements and regulations, contractual obligations set out by Federal Government, State Government and the Catholic Church while ensuring compliance with the Royal Commission recommendations.

CatholicCare has established a Child Protection Committee that consists of cross-agency representation of all areas of service delivery and workforce management.

The committee focuses on monitoring and reviewing:

- agency incident data for child safeguarding;
- safeguarding policy and protocols;
- safeguarding registers;
- professional development opportunities for workers;
- opportunities for agency clients and carers; and
- safeguarding recommendations for improvement to stakeholders.

The Archdiocese has Parish Safeguarding Support Officers (PSSO) in 90 per cent of parishes and 95 per cent of the chaplaincies have Chaplaincy Safeguarding Support Officers (CSSO). There are currently 195 Safeguarding Support Officers covering 138 parishes and 22 chaplaincies. Their role is to support parish priests and chaplains in meeting their safeguarding obligations. All PSSOs and CSSOs receive annual update training.

In collaboration with the Diocese of Broken Bay and the Diocese of Parramatta, the Archdiocese developed the *Guide to Supporting & Engaging, Listening and Communicating with Children and Young People*. This resource provides support to Catholic communities on how to engage children and young people.

The Archdiocese developed the *Guide for Young People to Better Understand Wellbeing*. This resource provides young people with information on how to manage their overall wellbeing and encourages young people to speak with an adult if they have any concerns.

The Archdiocese developed the *Feeling Safe Activity Booklet* for children. This resource assists children in understanding their emotions and feelings and advises them on options should they have concerns.

These resources have been developed with the support and input of children and young people within the Archdiocese.

During National Child Protection Week, Sydney Catholic Schools held an art competition as an event to create awareness about child safety issues within the community. The art competition encouraged students to discuss in class and express through art how they think and feel about their neighbourhoods. Many students participated, with the results of the competition announced through online platforms. This included an article and video message about child safety during the lockdown period focusing on making sure that every neighbourhood has what children need to thrive and be healthy. Creating opportunities for student engagement and participation is essential to hearing the voice of our students.

## **DIOCESE OF BALLARAT**

As forecast in the 2020 report, the Diocese has now established its new Diocesan Safeguarding Framework. The Framework has been distributed to parishes. The Diocese worked with and received assistance from the Archdiocese of Melbourne in creating the Framework.

The Framework and all supporting child safety documents and information sheets have been incorporated in a new Safeguarding section of the diocesan website. The Framework will help to ensure all relevant safeguarding information will be readily available to any person but particularly to parishes.

By reference to the Diocesan Safeguarding Framework, the Diocese is continuing its efforts to improve safeguarding arrangements in parishes. Actions undertaken in the past 12-month period include;

- Further work to implement a new online training module in conjunction with Catholic Church Insurance.

- Distribution to parishes of new “Rights and Responsibilities “and “Feel Safe and Be Safe at our Church” posters aimed at children.
- Further improvements in the visibility of safeguarding documents on the diocesan website.
- Development of a parish safeguarding self- assessment, to enable parishes to readily assess compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.
- Development of a risk management checklist for parishes.

As forecast in the previous report the role of Director of Catholic Education has assumed the responsibilities of Chief Executive Officer of Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Ltd (DOBCEL). In relation to child safety these duties include provision of resources and advice to schools to ensure that the Child Safe Standards are maintained and that school leaders, school staff and school governors (including DOBCEL Board) have appropriate training to build a culture of child safety.

A Child Safety Network has been introduced for the Child Safety Officers of the schools of the Diocese. The network provides opportunities for resource sharing and professional learning for the Child Safety Officers of the schools.

## *DIOCESE OF BATHURST*

The Diocese has formed a Diocesan Safeguarding Reference Group comprising personnel in education, parish and social services from across the Diocese. This group looks at training and policies across the Diocese and offers advice to the Bishop in this area.

The Diocese has implemented an Employee Code of Conduct for all entities. This is to be implemented across the Diocese for all employees (including volunteers) in 2021/22.

In this challenging second year of COVID-19, the Diocese pivoted to offer more online training, with the focus for training the National Council of Churches Safe Church Awareness workshop. The program is endorsed by more than 20 churches in Australia. It enables the Diocese to work in a way that supports parish communities and other smaller Church communities in the region. The training is ecumenical and enables other churches to take part. The Diocese of Bathurst has the only four endorsed Catholic trainers in the Safe Church Awareness Program.

This year has seen the implementation of a differing strategy of engagement with victims and survivors. This has been a process supported by Centacare Bathurst and is designed to be more victim- and survivor-centric.

- The Bishop and key leaders meet with victims and survivors and offer support tailored to the particular needs of the individual
- When victims and survivors disclose sexual abuse, they are supported by immediate response ensuring their confidentiality, and support in taking the matter forward to the appropriate authorities.

The Diocese has also entered a formal partnership with the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, which has more experience in this area.

### DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

The Diocesan Visiting Clergy Audit Report for 2021 highlighted significant improvement with adherence to the visiting clergy processes with almost 100 per cent compliance with procedures. This audit reduces the risks of clergy visiting the Diocese without the appropriate clearances.

To engage the voice of the child regarding safety in schools, a panel of students of various grades is spoken to about what safety means to them and six questions are asked. The responses are tabled, and feedback provided to the principal. Part of the process also involved parents completing a questionnaire of whether they are aware of the policies and guidelines that relate to child safety and protection.

At the annual safeguarding training delivered to staff in September 2021, the resource guide *Participation of Children and Young People in Catholic Communities* was launched. This resource was developed by the Diocese of Broken Bay, Archdiocese of Sydney and Diocese of Parramatta.

Implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards at both the Chancery and parish level commenced in 2019. Details are addressed in self-assessment and action plans and reviewed regularly. The due date for parish self-assessment and action plans was extended to 30 June 2022 to accommodate for the restrictions imposed on parishes by COVID-19. The Chancery Safeguarding Office continues to work to assist parishes with their self-assessments and action plans.

### DIOCESE OF BUNBURY

A review of the Safeguarding Handbook has been undertaken to ensure compliance with the 10 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and to include safeguarding measures for “adults at risk”. It is expected the revised Handbook will come into effect next year.

There has been an improvement in the percentage of at least one safeguarding self-audit being received from parishes from 41 per cent last year to 85 per cent this year. Parishes were required to prepare a safeguarding self-audit for each church and Mass centre to ensure each environment was assessed and the appropriate measures put in place.

Next year the Diocese will aim to arrange for all priests and safeguarding officers to receive refresher training provided by a recognised leader in child protection on the revised Safeguarding Handbook. Volunteer training will also be a focus next year.



## DIOCESE OF LISMORE

The Diocese of Lismore has recently prepared a draft protocol *Safeguarding Complaints Procedure – Child Focused*. After approval, this protocol will be distributed throughout the Diocese for mandatory compliance.

The Diocese has developed and distributed information pamphlets, response cards and concern/complaint forms throughout the Diocese to evidence compliance to the National Response Protocol.

Training and education have been provided via the Office of the Children’s Guardian SAFE series workshops to educators, which has then been delivered at local level for children aged up to 12 years, including the early education sector and the Outside School Hours Care programs.

Catholic Schools Office staff provide face-to-face child protection training annually to the following groups who are deemed at higher risk: Youth Ministry Officers; Post-School Trainees; Graduate Teachers.

Training involves mandatory reporting and reportable conduct training as well as introduction to applicable legislation.

All staff are required to complete online Self-Administered Legal Training child protection training modules annually.

School principals attended an Introduction to the Child Safe Standards in 2021. A project brief has been prepared for the executive of the Catholic Schools Office to roll out the Child Safe Standards over the next three years. The initial stage will be an education and awareness program for all staff about the Child Safe Standards.

St Mary’s Primary School and St Mary’s College Casino were also involved in the pilot program for capability assessment of the Child Safe Standards which was conducted by the Office of the Children’s Guardian.

## DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

Maitland-Newcastle’s overall levels of compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards is currently estimated to be at the 90th percentile, based on internal auditing of compliance across the educational and parish areas. The Diocese recognises that the community requires Maitland-Newcastle’s compliance to be approaching 100 per cent.

Whilst use of online platforms for audio-visual briefings, meetings and education allowed some progress during COVID-19 lockdowns, there is an intrinsic need for on-the-ground work. “Walking with the people” in their local community’s compliance journey is paramount in achieving high levels of compliance across a large and diverse diocese.

In recognition of challenges around the resourcing of parishes, the Bishop’s Office engaged with the Catholic Schools Office to fund the secondment of a Senior Education Officer who specialises in

standards compliance and also has deep connections in local faith communities. The office undertakes a mentoring and coaching role with the local parish leadership, working over a 12-month timeframe to support each parish to achieve compliance with the NCSS and implementation of the Child Safe Standards.

The act of establishing a powerful ecclesiastical office such as the Director of Safeguarding and then providing and maintaining an adequately resourced Office, with an annual operating budget of over \$1.6 million, is a clear commitment to child safety. This is reinforced by the decision to make the Director of Safeguarding one of the most senior lay leaders in Maitland-Newcastle, being a member of the Diocesan Leadership Group and having the Director aligned with the Bishop's Office, reporting to the Vicar-General.

Maitland-Newcastle has a number of concurrent strategies in place to promote the voices of children and the survivor community, though there tends to be some dichotomy in the methodologies used. Children are engaged more locally at the parish and school level, survivors are engaged more centrally at the diocesan level. However, on a diocesan level, children's voices are heard through the Diocesan Council for Ministry with Young People which serves as an advisory body to the Bishop, particularly in relation to undertaking new initiatives and directions for youth ministry.

Survivors' voices are heard through reserved membership on the Diocesan Protection and Safety Council and its constituent standing committees.

The Diocese has implemented multiple strategies to promote child safety through provision of information, participation and partnerships with key stakeholder groups, notably the families and carers of children in receipt of diocesan services. Recent additional tools to support child participation include wallet cards and a set of three brochures distributed to parishes and diocesan services designed to give children information and guidance how to report issues of concern for themselves, one specifically designed for younger (primary aged) children, one for older (secondary aged) children and also a brochure discussing what may happen during an investigation conducted into alleged abuse.

During November 2021, all parishes, schools and early education centres will be receiving multiple copies of the A3 Child Friendly Safeguarding Commitment Posters for 5-11 years and 12-17 years and, in December 2021, parishes and out-of-school hours care programs will be receiving multiple free copies of Maitland-Newcastle's Children's Safeguarding Activity Book which was developed by a local parish priest and the Safeguarding mentor-coach.

The Diocese has prepared and distributed a set of brochures for parents and carers on how to report abuse and information about what happens if their child is involved in an investigation, as well as a set of A4 flyers that have been distributed, one designed to give overall information and advice about the Diocese's safeguarding in schools and another for parishes.

After consultations across Maitland-Newcastle and seeking advice from local migrant advocacy groups, the Office of Safeguarding has been producing translations of safeguarding information brochures into the languages most commonly used in Maitland-Newcastle, other than English, including: Arabic; Greek; Italian; Macedonian; Malayalam; Mandarin; Polish; Swahili; Tagalog; Vietnamese.

In 2020, Bishop Bill Wright launched the Bishop's Healing Fund which is an annual budgetary allocation of up to \$25,000 to fund or contribute to an initiative “promoting the healing of those affected by child sexual abuse in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese”. The Fund is administered by the Standing Committee for the Support and Guidance of Healing and Support Practices. Applications for the fund will only be accepted from survivors or their immediate families.

Maitland-Newcastle undertook a major independent consultation as part of its development of a significant and permanent memorial to those affected by historical child sexual abuse that was committed within Maitland-Newcastle. Mara Consulting produced a final report on the public’s support for a diocesan memorial for survivors of child abuse and Bishop Wright's response. Maitland-Newcastle will now consider the possibilities of participating in a community-wide project to establish a memorial for all survivors and victims of child sexual abuse.

Implementing both the Royal Commission’s Child Safe Standards and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards produces a set of complex, multi-faceted and inter-related expectations and obligations that stretch across the Diocese. To facilitate this process, the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle approved the *Safeguarding Framework Policy* in December 2020. The purpose of the policy is “to provide the leaders of the Diocese’s parishes and agencies that undertake the good works of the Diocese, with an understanding of what is expected of them and what needs to be incorporated into their individual policies, procedures and operational norms”.

There are four advisory councils established in the Diocese, which are the senior-most consultative bodies that have direct access to the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle. One of these is the Diocesan Protection and Safety Council, the peak advisory body in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

The Diocesan Protection and Safety Council has a number of subcommittees which report back to the Council and address areas of particular importance: the Standing Committee for Assisting in Resolving Claims; the Standing Committee for the Support and Guidance of Healing and Support Practices; the Standing Committee for the Oversight of the Office of Safeguarding.

The voice of survivors is heard in the most senior councils of Maitland-Newcastle’s safeguarding infrastructure through participation in both the Diocesan Protection and Safety Council and two of its standing committees.

## **DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA**

**Training with seminarians:** In 2021, the Diocese developed training for those who are at the Holy Spirit Seminary in Harris Park. The purpose of the training is to “Know thyself” with the view of exploring issues that relate to the complex relationship development that priests undertake when in parishes. The purpose has been that if a new priest is aware of themselves and what motivates them then they will be safer in parishes and in their relationships with all parishioners, including children.

**Training with clergy ordained five years or less:** Meetings are run every two months to explore issues that come up for newly ordained priests. The priests attend a two-hour meeting with lay professionals

relating to any issues that may occur in the parish. Topics already covered include the Child Safe Standards, domestic violence, intimacy for the priest and boundaries.

During 2021, the Diocese launched a new online learning platform called PointsBuild. Several courses have been developed and are available online and face-to-face. There are three compulsory courses, including Understanding Safeguarding and the Child Safe Standards and Working with Adults at Risk. There has been a huge uptake of the training courses and other courses are in the development stage.

A significant piece of work was a rewrite of the Safeguarding Policy. Along with embedding relevant legislation, this policy reflects the Child Safe Standards and the standards of Australia Catholic Safeguarding Limited. This policy has been endorsed and reviewed by the Parramatta Safeguarding Council including the Parramatta Diocese Safeguarding Champion, Ms Kerry Boland. The policy has been written in a way that it is easily understood by children and others who may need to access it. It is available on the Diocese public website and has been provided to staff and volunteers as required.

The Diocese worked with the Archdiocese of Sydney and the Diocese of Broken Bay on children and young people's participation in Catholic communities and collaborated with the Dioceses of Broken Bay and Wollongong and the Archdiocese of Sydney on pastoral supervision for priests.

The Diocese of Parramatta has engaged an external independent auditor to conduct an audit of the Child Safe Standards with the view of achieving externally recognised accreditation to the Child Safe Standards. This process has so far involved mapping the standards and identifying any gaps or issues that may not yet have been developed or instigated within the Diocese. This is ongoing and will be rolled out in the last quarter of 2021 with the audit being conducted in early 2022.

The Diocese has a Prevention, Healing and Support team who provide case management, referral pathways and support for survivors and their families. The work undertaken by the Prevention, Healing and Support team can take many forms including counselling, housing and domestic violence referrals and alternative therapies support.

### **DIOCESE OF PORT PIRIE**

The Diocese has enhanced its human resources with the commitment of funding to employ a Child Protection Project Officer. Six leaders, clerical and lay, male and female, have been trained in the delivery of direct personal responses as part of the National Redress Scheme, if requested by those abused within Church settings.

The Diocese has provided posters to be displayed in all parish facilities, including church foyers.

The Diocese has developed a network of Parish Child Safe Contact Persons, allowing them to be supported and support each other in their roles.

Using a checklist, each parish assessed their fulfilment of required policies and procedures. Parishes are then assisted in the areas in which they are deficient.

## DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON

Each parish in the Diocese of Rockhampton has a designated Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR). Their role is to ensure that the parish community is aware of the importance of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and to promote safe practice in parish activities, including what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The parish priest and the PSR assist with the implementation of the Diocesan Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

Safeguarding training is mandatory for all who minister in the Rockhampton Diocese, including paid and unpaid staff. During 2021, face-to-face safeguarding training was delivered to staff and volunteers in parishes across the Rockhampton Diocese. Almost 700 participants – clergy, employees and volunteers – attended the training.

Training resources are regularly updated. This year, new Criminal Code legislation was introduced in Queensland. This vital information has been added to the training as it impacts on all. If volunteers are unable to attend face-to-face training, the Diocese has developed an online platform which they complete.

Every new employee in the Diocese completes Safeguarding Induction training within the first week of commencing employment.

In 2022 the Safeguarding Office will create a calendar which will feature drawings from children with the theme “What Keeps you Safe”.

## DIOCESE OF SANDHURST

The Diocese was audited by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd in April 2021. The assessment noted that the Diocese has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 99 of the 103 indicators which are relevant to its operations. The Diocese is working towards complying with the 12 recommendations, and significant progress has been made on that task.

The Diocese recently updated the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy to comply with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. All parishes have been provided with a replacement “Summary of the Safeguarding Policy” to be updated with parish details, including the Parish Child Safety Officer’s name and contact details, for display in all Church buildings.

The Diocese has updated the flowchart for responding to concerns and complaints raised by children and any other persons to include the Parish Child Safety Officer's contact details. This has been promulgated to all parishes to replace the previous reporting flowchart for display in all Church buildings. The Diocese is currently updating a new safeguarding complaints process.

The Diocese has implemented a risk assessment plan based on the ACSL guidelines to be rolled out to parishes when the COVID-19 restrictions are eased. The plan will include a roadshow to deaneries and Parish Child Safety Officers.

## DIOCESE OF TOWNSVILLE

Safeguarding training, including understanding the types of abuse, risk assessment and responding to abuse disclosures and implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, has been delivered to clergy, religious, paid staff and volunteers. In addition, a safeguarding quiz as part of the induction for all new personnel has been introduced.

All clergy participate in an annual safeguarding in-service and this has included specific components of *Integrity in Ministry* such as maintaining healthy boundaries. The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator provides a report for quarterly Council of Priests meetings and engages with clergy on emerging issues and reforms. This includes changes to legislation such as the Queensland No Card, No Start Blue Card policy and mandatory reporting laws.

Child-friendly posters and reading materials have been developed in the Diocese by Centacare North Queensland. The resources have been disseminated across agencies and ministries to support children and families to build strong, healthy and safe environments and for Church personnel to encourage children to have a voice if they are worried or feel unsafe at any time. The “It’s OK to tell someone” poster has been modelled from the Archdiocese of Brisbane and provided to all parishes to support children to have a voice.

Effective complaints management has also been a priority focus in the Diocese to ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding is developed so any person can feel confident in raising a concern or complaint, knowing they will be listened to and taken seriously. This includes the establishment of the Whistleblower Policy and STOPline service for reporting.

Two significant criminal investigations have occurred in the past 12 months which have resulted in charges being laid against the alleged offenders. These investigations commenced as a result of individuals coming forward to the safeguarding/student protection team to raise concerns about children being harmed or being at unacceptable risk of harm. These concerns were immediately reported to the Queensland Police Service.

The Diocese has established a partnership with the Historical Sexual Abuse Investigations Unit of the Queensland Police Service to ensure immediate resources are accessible for those who make a complaint or as criminal proceedings occur. The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator has facilitated support responses in partnership with QPS and the Professional Standards Office Queensland to support people as required with regards to their respective matter. Networks have also been established with advocacy groups to assist with support referral pathways. The Diocesan approach to managing historical sexual abuse complaints across agencies has been streamlined to ensure more consistent approaches are taken.

## DIOCESE OF WAGGA WAGGA

Examples of system improvements in the Diocese include:

- Conducted live training on risks and signs of abuse to all priests at all diocese deanery meetings.

- An audit of all historical files for lapses in complaint response and to identify improvements for incident and complaint response.
- Review and amendment of safeguarding policies and procedures.

The Diocese continues to offer immediate clinical professional counselling upon complaints receipt. Complainants are provided with information and made their own choice to select a range of supports and pathways to exercise their rights including contacting police, civil lawyers, redress scheme, community advocates, and other independent advisory services.

Professional standards and child safe training have become more frequent at Vianney College, the Diocesan seminary, and system improvements have been identified for Vianney's induction and child-safe policies.

The Diocese contracted external assessors to review child-safe practices where incident response lapses were identified. Changes were made to systems and training and child-safe knowledge.

Victims and survivors have been openly encouraged and do meet and speak with leadership of the Diocese, including the Bishop, as a priority over all other work commitments. This gives leadership full understanding of risks and the impact on children across Diocesan environments.

## **DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG**

This year also saw the commencement of the parish consultation and review process whereby the Diocesan Office of Professional Standards and Safeguarding works with parishes to understand their current compliance levels with the Child Safe Standards and National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. Work is being undertaken with each parish to support, enhance and supplement their current safeguarding practices and efforts to ensure an ongoing child safe environment at the parishes.

In 2021, Catholic Care Wollongong has further improved the agency-wide reporting on children and young people at risk of harm (ROSH) and (NON-ROSH) for whom Catholic Care provides support and services to. This reporting assists in monitoring risks (especially children at risk of cumulative harm), identifying trends/areas of need in the Diocese and the prevalence of the types of abuse. This initiative has been very effective in helping Catholic Care to respond to needs in a planned and agile manner. It also informs the training and professional development for frontline staff.

Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDoW) has undertaken a large project in 2021 called *Life to the Full*, which seeks to promote respectful relationships and consent education by providing a *Framework for Respectful Relationships, Child Safety and Human Sexuality in a Catholic Context*.

CEDoW has also implemented prevention and proactive education strategies including supporting schools in the development of teaching and learning programs to deliver while at school or in a remote education setting; building capacity and engagement of educators to assist in the effective delivery of age-appropriate prevention education that aims to increase student knowledge of child sexual abuse and build practical skills in strengthening self-protective skills and strategies; as well as utilisation of the updated NSW Department of Education *Child Protection and Respectful Relationships* resource.

## ORDINARIATE OF OUR LADY OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS

The Ordinariate does not have schools or church buildings, but they do access churches in dioceses where we have communities in order to celebrate Mass and other liturgies. Priests and volunteers have limited interaction with children, typically immediately before or after those Masses.

The Ordinariate has established a new safeguarding committee whose role is to examine the safeguarding policies and procedures, and to propose revised or new policies as needed in accordance with the current National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

Priests and volunteers are reminded of the need to participate in programs and safeguarding training through their local Catholic diocese. Those programs are considered critical to support the Ordinariate, which covers all of Australia and his limited staff capacity.

## RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES

### AUGUSTINIANS

The Order in 2019 initiated a project to implement the 10 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. It undertook this initiative upon the recommendations of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in conjunction with Catholic Professional Standards Limited. The Order committed to a full audit by CPSL which was undertaken in November 2020.

The Order was assessed as a 'Category One' Church entity under the NCSS and has governance responsibilities for its activities and ministries in education, parish work and Indigenous outreach. These ministries work with children as a normal part of the conduct of that activity or ministry.

The Order was required to satisfy the 10 NCSS standards, 49 NCSS criteria and 111 NCSS indicators. It achieved a 97 per cent pass mark.

As part of its rollout of safeguarding compliance and child safety measures, the Order:

- Appointed a dedicated Professional Standards Project Officer responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of safeguarding standards.
- Undertook significant work in the area of risk management and has developed detailed risk assessments for its members, activities, premises, events and overseas ministries.
- Made changes to its recruitment policy to incorporate safeguarding requirements in all aspects of its advertising, vetting and screening of new personnel.



Discussion with the leaders of the small Augustinian community in Vietnam, which is overseen by the Australian Province, has proceeded and a Vietnamese safeguarding committee appointed. The committee is engaged in writing in Vietnamese the Commitment to Safeguarding. Issues of candidate aptitude, behaviour, responsibility, autonomy, law (both secular and canon), insurance, process and training are being discussed to help in identifying the way forward, and addressing the clear cultural and legal differences between Australia and Vietnam.

### **BENEDICTINE COMMUNITY OF NEW NORCIA**

The Community was audited by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, which found the Community was compliant on 99 per cent of the relevant indicators for the current ministry undertaken. The audit report was published in 2020.

In 2021, the Community has continued to monitor its policies and procedures regarding safeguarding and child safety, using a Safeguarding Activities Assessment Tool developed by the Archdiocese of Perth. The Tool uses the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards to support assessment of current strengths and weaknesses.

The Community's alignment with the Tool's requirements was very high, with notes made about the importance of accessing ongoing training and the need to further strengthen processes around Working With Children cards as well as police checks.

### **CAPUCHIN FRANCISCAN FRIARS**

The active Capuchin Friars are engaged primarily in parish ministry in the Archdioceses of Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide and in the Diocese of Parramatta. The Friars operate within the regulations, customs and various child safety programs, including reporting procedures, within the particular archdiocese or diocese.

This means that the Friars participate in all forms of child safety development particular to their local jurisdiction. Once every three years the Friars come together for a day of in-service in such matters.

Student Friars also undertake formation and workshops conducted by the student director or other professionals drawn from the local area (Melbourne) on a regular basis.

There is an extensive section in the Provincial Handbook on Maintaining Ethical Ministry with Minors and Others detailing ministry with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

### **CARMELITES (ORDER OF BROTHERS OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN OF MT CARMEL)**

A significant development to safeguard child safety that the Carmelites of Australia and Timor-Leste have undertaken in the last 12 months has been its work with two East Timorese child protection

experts to review progress in implementing the Safeguarding Policy. This has also included a risk assessment of the ministries in Timor-Leste.

Their report highlighted that Carmelite brothers in Timor-Leste have a good understanding of the policy and positive attitudes towards implementing it. In addition to making helpful recommendations, the East Timorese experts produced a training manual and ran three training sessions with seminarians, staff, volunteers, teachers and key community leaders, specifically focusing on the code of conduct.

### CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

The Christian Brothers' initiatives to promote safeguarding and child safety include:

- Mandatory Working with Children Checks for all involved in ministry programs, for all active Brothers, and employees working in places where children may be encountered.
- When induction processes take place, children are informed of their rights and are included in discussions about setting rules and expectations on programs.
- Children are informed and involved in decisions which affect them (as far as possible).
- The two leader rule, which sees no individual alone with a child, is practised in direct service delivery and online platforms.
- All recruitment processes include a clear message of child safety and interviews include relevant child safety and behaviour-based questions.
- Online safety practices and processes are in place including: 'How to guide' for video conferencing – outlining what features must be enabled/disabled for online programs; online engagement protocol; online engagement consent/permission forms; and volunteer training, participant inductions etc.

### COLUMBANS

The Missionary Society of St Columban (the Society) in Australia continued to build its culture of safeguarding by pursuing a number of initiatives in preparation for an expected audit by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited in late 2021 or early 2022.

Having previously developed an implementation plan based on the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (2019), the Society this year further developed its Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, Risk Management Strategy and Complaints Handling Policy. Each of these policies has been available to the members of the Society for comment and review throughout 2021. At the Columban regional gathering in November 2021, these policies will be formally presented to the Society for affirmation and acknowledgement by members.

2021 has also seen the Society conduct its first safeguarding induction events for members returning from overseas missions expecting to either live temporarily or retiring full-time in Australia.

The Society has developed a personnel register to map and record relevant safeguarding information about members and co-workers such as ministry status, Australian Catholic Ministry Register number, working with children check details and participation in pastoral supervision.

In 2022, the Society intends to further develop its relationship with professional standards bodies throughout the country so as to better document training and other obligations members are required to meet within each distinct diocesan jurisdiction.

### **DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL**

The Sisters, many of whose 35 members are retired and/or in care, have no direct contact with children and only incidental contact with children. Even though this poses low risk, child safety measures continue to be addressed.

Child safety is a standing item on the agenda of the Trustees, and leaders have undertaken training provided by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd and Catholic Religious Australia.

During 2022, all active Sisters are expected to undertake training, as well as staff. A Code of Conduct will be finalised and be signed by all active Sisters and staff.

### **DAUGHTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART**

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart have limited engagement with children within Australia. They have engaged a Safeguarding and Professional Standards Coordinator to assist with building and maintaining safe environments for children as well as policy development, Working with Children Check process, implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, safeguarding training and responding to the National Redress Scheme.

A suite of safeguarding policies has been developed that includes a policy on effectively responding to allegations of abuse and engaging with survivors of abuse. A project is underway to work with Sisters in overseas ministries on engaging children in safeguarding discussions and ensuring their views are heard.

The Safeguarding Coordinator was engaged in partnership with the Sisters of the Good Samaritan as their Safeguarding Coordinator was able to assist with safeguarding and professional standards requirements.

The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart recently provided personal apologies to a large number of survivors of abuse in the Northern Territory in conjunction with other agencies.

## **FRANCISCAN FRIARS**

Governance changes within the Province commenced in 2019, including the revision of the 1939 memorandum and articles of association – the foundational document of the civil entity.

With the fundamental governance platform changed and modernised, the Franciscans have begun engaging more lay female expertise on every committee supporting the work of the Friars. Governance changes are seen as very significant to improving a capacity for safeguarding because good, transparent and fit-for-purpose governance is the basis upon which is built a strong and lasting tradition and culture of safeguarding.

The Franciscans have developed a Franciscan Migrant Chaplains Protocol. The development of the Protocol involved engagement with key dioceses (Adelaide, Canberra-Goulburn, Parramatta and Sydney), the current group of Franciscan Migrant Chaplains (Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Poland), the General Curia in Rome, and the Provincials from all of the represented off-shore provinces. In July 2021, at the General Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor, after an exhaustive 18-month process, the relevant Provincials agreed to the new Protocol, which is now in effect.

A key component of safeguarding is ongoing professional development and pastoral supervision for all Franciscans engaged actively in ministry. This cultural shift has been difficult for some Franciscans, but the vast majority of Friars have accepted the need for ongoing professional development and pastoral supervision, and have engaged fully in these processes.

## **HOLY SPIRIT MISSIONARY SISTERS**

The Congregation has fewer than 10 active members working in three states. In maintaining a child-safe environment, the Congregation's Safeguarding Policy was created adapting the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards to its present reality. Catholic Professional Standards Ltd completed the Congregation audit at the end of November 2020.

In relation to education and training on safeguarding and child protection, all members of the Congregation attended a workshop conducted by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd and materials sent by key national organisations are sent to members. Sisters in active ministries have done the training through the institutions that they are employed with, as an obligatory process in any workplace settings.

## **INSTITUTE OF SISTERS OF MERCY OF AUSTRALIA AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

The Institute has completed an audit of its unregulated ministries on the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. The audit was conducted by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) and resulted in a 92 per cent compliance result.

The Institute has established relationships with survivor groups and related support services, including Tuart Place in Western Australia.

The Institute's Safeguarding Improvement Plan developed by Child Wise has been updated to reflect progress on implementation of each of the NCSS following the ACSL audit report being finalised and published.

A proposal for a children's, parents and carers reference group is in development to ensure the views and voices of those the Institute seeks to safeguard are taken into account in all decision-making.

The Institute has committed to providing at least one hour of safeguarding training annually for all Sisters, staff, long-term contractors and volunteers as well as initiatives such as webinars and publishing a safeguarding infographic to raise awareness and illustrate the commitment to continuous improvement in this area.

The Institute has published the various pathways for claims on the website and over the past 12 months has successfully settled and paid 44 direct and civil claims, 99 National Redress Scheme claims and undertaken 34 personal response engagements.

### LITTLE COMPANY OF MARY

Little Company of Mary (LCM) has limited engagement with children within Australia. LCM has engaged a Safeguarding and Professional Standards Coordinator to assist with building and maintaining safe environments for children, as well as: policy development; Working with Children Check process; implementation of National Catholic Safeguarding Standards; and safeguarding training.

A suite of safeguarding policies is under development which includes a policy on effectively responding to allegations of abuse and engaging with survivors of abuse.

LCM's Safeguarding Coordinator was engaged in partnership with the Sisters of the Good Samaritan as their Safeguarding Coordinator was able to assist with safeguarding and professional standards requirements.

### LORETO PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH EAST ASIA

During 2021, the Province commenced implementation of the Loreto Child Safeguarding Program which will ensure the Province's compliance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations published by the Australian Human Rights Commission, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards developed by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd and Victoria's Ministerial Order 870 which ensures compliance with Victoria's child protection laws and regulations. The Province's improved Child Safeguarding Program relates to all aspects of child safety and protecting children from abuse, neglect or other harm, and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture within Province ministries.

The Province is building capacity and pursuing continuous improvement by providing annual compulsory training of clearly articulated standards of behaviour which provide practical guidance for all Sisters, employees and volunteers and encourage individuals to identify and report practices and

incidents that may be inconsistent with the child safeguarding culture. The Province also maintains professional relationships with external legal advisers to leverage their knowledge and expertise in reporting and responding to child protection incidents and engaging their services as needed.

In 2022, the Province will implement the following additional registers, reports and tools as part of its improved Child Safeguarding Program: Information Sharing Register; Self-Assessment Standards Tools; Information Sharing Report; and Standards 1-10 Compliance Action Plan Report.

In addition to the documentation and publication of the Child Safeguarding Program to all Sisters, employees, volunteers and contractors, additional initiatives which support the Province's zero tolerance to child abuse include the purchase of an online learning platform to improve accessibility to child protection compliance training, which is mandatory for all Sisters, employees and volunteers, and the development of a training register to report on child protection compliance training which is mandatory for all Sisters, employees and volunteers.

The Province plans to soon publish its Complaints Handling Guide online, which includes a detailed process of how to make a complaint.

## MARIST BROTHERS AUSTRALIA

The Marist Brothers Province includes Timor-Leste and, in the past year, an extensive protocol for Timorese information has been drafted. After the Province accepted governance of ministries in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands last year, the safeguarding protocols of the Church in PNG and the Solomon Islands have been reviewed and communicated to the Brothers working in those countries.

A research study into why Brothers have abused continues. It is being conducted by Dr Brendan Geary, through the University of Glasgow. COVID-19 has slowed progress, however Dr Geary will visit Australia in 2022 to conclude his interviews and continue his study.

Marist Schools Australia has undergone a significant structural change in 2021 which strengthens the governance of its colleges. An incorporated entity with an independent board has been created to govern, manage and operate the education ministry. The governing responsibilities for the schools moved from the Trustees of the Marist Brothers to the new company as from 1 January 2021 and, as part of this transfer, a full review of safeguarding requirements has been undertaken. The board will be supported by a child safeguarding advisory committee.

A set of agreed child safeguarding risks has been developed by Marist Schools Australia and sent to schools for assessment and logging on their risk register. This enhances each school's individual risk management program and also allows analysis of safeguarding risk across all schools.

Within Marist180 and Australian Marist Solidarity, ministry leaders, including the chairs and CEOs of incorporated ministries, provide an annual safeguarding report to the governing body's Professional Standards Advisory Committee and attend in person for an extended conversation about their safeguarding program, initiatives and challenges. This provides an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of the program and to discuss further improvements that could be made.

The annual Liturgies of Sorrow and Promise (Catholic Religious Australia) and Lament (Province) are used as one way of ensuring that the experiences of victims and survivors are not forgotten. The CRA Promise Statement remains both a focus and commitment.

At several schools which are the subject of historical abuse claims, survivors or relatives of victims are invited to meet with the principal and are encouraged to discuss anything that they feel is relevant or useful to them in the circumstances. The schools look to ways that might also assist victims and survivors.

A policy on removing of names and images of discredited school staff was reviewed this year. It now includes a requirement for schools to audit and provide assurance that removal has occurred as required.

At the end of 2022, the governance structure of the Province will expand to include the following countries: Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Timor Leste and Cambodia. A Working Group is already scoping the extent of civil and Church laws and policies in these places and that Marist safeguarding protocols are in place, as mandated by government and Church and reflect best practice, with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards as the benchmark.

## MARIST SISTERS

Child safety measures undertaken by the Marist Sisters include:

- *Marist Sisters' Congregational Guidelines for the Safeguarding of Children and for dealing with allegations of Sexual/Physical abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults (2021)* has been reviewed and endorsed by the Congregational Leadership and promoted to the members.
- *Marist Sisters' Unit of Australia Policy and Guidelines for the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults 2021 (Policy)* has been disseminated to each sister in the Unit.
- *Marist Sisters' Unit of Australia Commitment Statement (2021)* outlines the commitment to create safe environments for children, young people and vulnerable adults in order to secure their protection from any form of harm or abuse and to enable their full participation in life.
- *Marist Sisters' Unit of Australia Code of Professional Conduct (2021)* outlines the commitment to child safety, expected ethical and professional behaviour and legislative, contractual and industrial requirements related to child safeguarding.
- *Marist Sisters' Unit of Australia Recruitment Policy (2021)* outlines the process of recruiting new staff members to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults in the selection and employment process.

The Marist Sisters' Australian Unit was audited during 2020-2021, and Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd published its report in August 2021. It was noted that 99 per cent of the safeguarding requirements relevant to the Unit's activities under the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards had been implemented or substantially progressed.

## MISSIONARY SISTERS OF CHRIST THE KING

The Sisters, whose headquarters are in Poland, have six members in Australia. They received the new Safeguarding Document from their General House in Poland which was created and established for all members of their Congregation in the response of the requirements of the Catholic Church regarding the implementing of the safe practices and safeguarding regulations in its mission.

All six Sisters of the Australian Delegation of the Missionary Sisters of Christ the King read the Document and signed it. They are bound to its directives in safeguarding practices and reporting procedures.

The Delegate of the Australian Delegation has been updating the Safeguarding Policy for the Sisters in the Australian Delegation and their personnel with the support of Catholic Religious Australia to make it relevant to this Document and to all standards of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards in Australia.

The decision has been made to appoint a new Safeguarding Coordinator in the Congregation, who is now responsible for all safeguarding matters related to the members and mission of the Congregation. This person is also an advocate to the Sisters in Australia in seeking directives and promoting a safe culture.

## MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST PAUL

The Australian province of the Society is responsible for limited ministry within the Church of Australia. It has pastoral care of two parishes within the Archdiocese of Melbourne (St James the Apostle Parish, Hoppers Crossing North, and St Bernadette's Parish, North Sunshine). In these capacities, the Society conforms to the requirements of the Archdiocese of Melbourne in relation to the safety and protection of children and young people. It also operates migrant chaplaincy services in Parkville in Melbourne and in eastern Sydney, administering the sacraments to migrant communities in English, Maltese and Italian.

Within the two parishes administered by the Society, their Safeguarding teams are actively working towards the requisite National Child Safety Standards through the Archdiocese of Melbourne. This includes having a dedicated Safeguarding Coordinator and Safeguarding Committee responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the standards.

The Society has also employed a part-time Safeguarding Coordinator who, together with the Provincial Council, makes up the Safeguarding Committee which is responsible for the overall implementation and monitoring of the standards.

All religious undertake annual training on Safeguarding Children and Young People provided within the congregation, and some also undertake further training within the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

All overseas religious visiting Australia (including seminarians on placement) are required to attend an induction program when they arrive in Australia. The induction program specifically focuses on safeguarding issues, including the Society's safeguarding policies and protocols and the Code of Conduct.



This year, the Australian province of the Society has provided consultancy to the Society's Generalate for the development of a global Safeguarding policy for the Society and its missions within Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Cuba, Canada and Malta. While accounting for the differences between provinces and local Church authorities, the experience from members of the Australian province following the Royal Commission's Final Report has enabled a growing awareness of and response to child safeguarding measures.

### **PRESENTATION SISTERS QUEENSLAND**

Over the past 12 months, and since the completion of the Presentation Congregation audit by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd in October 2020, numerous processes are now in place which have been monumental in ensuring the safety of children under the banner of professional standards.

Some of those processes include:

- Congregation members and staff have numerous sets of policies and procedures, which are predominantly similar, however vary in brief and content regarding the positions that they hold within the Congregation.
- Policies and procedures are updated annually by the business officer, who is the safeguarding officer for the Congregation working under the direction of the Congregation leader and the Congregation leadership team. All amendments are approved and endorsed by the Congregation leader and distributed for updating.
- The new Safeguarding Recruitment Clause was rolled out to current employees as of October 2020 as an additional inclusion to their current contracts of employment.

The unwavering cooperation of the Catholic Professional Safeguarding Ltd team throughout the duration of numerous educational seminars, outstanding resource references made available on their website and the process of audit has led to a broader understanding of how to administer and monitor the necessary statutory regulations required to ensure the safeguarding of children. It must be said that the participation and interaction of the Sisters in general towards the importance of professional standards has vastly improved since the introduction of CPSL in 2018.

Where there was a sense of resistance, there is now acceptance, together with a willingness to comply with professional standards. The change has transpired through numerous factors, including a deluge of negative media coverage in and around professional standards within the Church following the Royal Commission, but the work of CPSL (now ACSL) must be commended as a very large contributing factor in ensuring that safeguarding officers are armed with the necessary tools to ensure that through the "zero tolerance" approach, the "do no further harm" concept is driven home.

## PRESENTATION SISTERS WAGGA WAGGA

The Congregation's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures have been reviewed and revised. The revisions made are to include adults at risk standards and update legal changes. The Code of Conduct was also reviewed and revised, and annual updates of risk registers for Sisters were completed.

Several training programs were attended by the Safeguarding Officer, staff and Sisters during the year, including training led by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd, Catholic Religious Australia and the National Redress Scheme.

## REDEMPTORISTS

Throughout 2021, the Redemptorists of the Province of Oceania (the Redemptorists) have been committed to working through implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Edition 1 (the Standards) and have applied these in a way that anticipates the inclusion of adults at risk in edition 2 of the Standards. They have also acted in accordance with relevant state safeguarding legislation in Australia, for Redemptorist communities in NSW, VIC and WA, and national safeguarding legislation for communities in New Zealand. Safeguarding legislation largely does not exist in Samoa, but Redemptorist communities in Samoa have been encouraged to follow and implement Redemptorist Safeguarding Policies and Procedures to the best of their ability.

The Safeguarding Coordinator is engaged in regular and varied professional development, accessing training and education from across the Australian and global Catholic Church, government bodies and NGOs, to ensure that the Redemptorists' approach is consistent with best practice.

The Redemptorists have a Statement of Commitment to Safeguarding that was drafted and approved by the General Chapter in April 2021. The Commitment Statement has been published on the Redemptorist website in multiple languages, including English, Vietnamese and Bahasa.

At present, a child-friendly version of the Commitment Statement is in development by the Redemptorists, in collaboration with primary school teachers. This will be made available in multiple formats, including video.

Fostering a holistic culture of safeguarding is important to the Redemptorists. Such a culture sees the value of policies, procedures and audits, but also seeks to look at language used, the everyday stories told, the theologies professed, etc.

To assist this, the Safeguarding Coordinator and Provincial have begun a Safeguarding Bulletin for the Province, sharing safeguarding learnings, what things are making a difference and how these apply to the Redemptorists. One edition included, for example, the Theology of Safeguarding videos prepared by the Irish Church's national safeguarding body.

The Safeguarding Coordinator, in collaboration with the Redemptorist Media Commission, has drafted a Code of Conduct for Digital Technology and Social Media. This draft is currently being reviewed by the Extraordinary Provincial Council to ensure suitability for the Redemptorists, before being disseminated to the entire Province for feedback and comments ahead of final approval in April 2022.

## SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO

Salesian initiatives to promote child safety in the past 12 months include:

- The engagement of two staff working on professional standards matters at the Province Centre.
- Providing online child safe training to staff.
- Marking the National Day of Sorrow in October and Safeguarding Sunday in September.
- Sending out a safeguarding checklist for each Salesian community.
- Publishing parts of the Child Safe Standards in the monthly circular papers.
- Upgrade of the Child Safe Policy and review of the Australian Salesian Mission Overseas Aid Fund Child Safeguarding Policy.

## SCALABRINIAN MISSIONARIES

Having previously developed an implementation plan based on the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (2019), the Congregation this year developed its Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, Risk Management Strategy and Complaints Handling Policy. Each of these policies has been available to members for comment and review throughout 2021 and they are expected to be formally presented for affirmation and acknowledgement prior to the end of the year.

Professional development has taken place throughout the year beginning with the Province Assembly in April 2021 with a presentation focusing on the safeguarding vision of Pope Francis. This was followed in September with the first of two safeguarding webinars, one for Australian residents of the Province and the second for confreres residing and ministering in Asia.

In October the Congregation also held a safeguarding webinar specifically for members ordained less than five years, which forms part of its mentoring of younger clergy as required in its Risk Management Strategy.

The Congregation conducted a Safeguarding Survey in July-August to gather information on current practices across Australia such as the extent and frequency of participation by confreres in diocesan training and participation in pastoral supervision.

The Congregation has developed a personnel register to map and record safeguarding relevant information about clergy and co-workers such as ministry status, Australian Catholic Ministry Register number, Working with Children Check details and participation in pastoral supervision. This tool allows the Congregation to issue renewal reminders to personnel in advance of expiry dates and to monitor compliance with elements of the national standards.

In 2022 the Congregation intends to establish its Safeguarding Committee and to further develop its relationship with professional standards bodies throughout the country so as to better document training and other obligations members are required to meet within each distinct diocesan jurisdiction.

A major challenge for the Congregation in the new year is to extend its safeguarding policy development across its Asian communities in a culturally appropriate process.

### SISTERS OF MERCY NORTH SYDNEY

The Congregation has engaged a Safeguarding and Professional Standards Coordinator to assist with building and maintaining safe environments for children as well as policy development, Working with Children Check process, implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, safeguarding training and responding to the National Redress Scheme. It supports working closely with other religious institutes and dioceses to embed best practice safeguarding policies and procedures.

The Congregation has a current safeguarding policy which all Members have received and agreed to as best practice. This policy is currently under review and is being modified to align with best practice and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. A safeguarding committee has been formed comprising the Congregational Leader, Congregation Members, Monte Sant Angelo Principal and Safeguarding Coordinator.

The Safeguarding Coordinator was engaged in partnership with the Sisters of the Good Samaritan as their Safeguarding Coordinator was able to assist with safeguarding and professional standards requirements.

### SISTERS OF MERCY PARRAMATTA

Since August 2019, the following safeguarding policies have been approved and implemented by Sisters of Mercy Parramatta: Acceptable Use of Electronic Communications Systems and Devices Policy; Conflict of Interest/Loyalty Policy; Code of Conduct; Gifts and Benefits Policy; One-to-One Interaction with Children Policy; Privacy Policy; Protected Disclosure Policy; Safeguarding Commitment Statement; Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy; Safeguarding Information and Record Keeping Policy; Safeguarding Policy.

The following safeguarding procedures have been approved and implemented by Sisters of Mercy Parramatta: Management of Child Related Safeguarding Risks Procedure; Responding to Safeguarding Disclosures Procedure; Safeguarding Complaints Handling Procedure; Safeguarding Recruitment Procedures; Working with Children Checks and Police Checks Procedure.

Specialised health and wellbeing safeguarding training was conducted in May 2021. Staff safeguarding training has been scheduled for November 2021 for all staff. Training for Sisters has been rescheduled to 2022 due to vulnerability to COVID-19.

All third parties using Sisters of Mercy Parramatta property have signed a commitment to abide by the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta Code and Conduct and Safeguarding Policy.

## *SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD (SOTGS)*

Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand has a comprehensive suite of measures on child safeguarding, and ongoing training and support is compulsory for all staff.

Most Sisters do not have direct contact with children, but training and information sessions are held for Sisters and volunteers on child safeguarding.

A suite of child safety policies and documents are in place:

- SOTGS Complaints Handling Policy (September 2021);
- Reporting Child Abuse Notification Form (July 2021);
- SOTGS Risk Management Policy;
- SOTGS Code of Conduct (reviewed July 2021);
- SOTGS Statement of Commitment (a new document, signed by every active Sister);
- SOTGS Safeguarding Policy (reviewed in July 2021).

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd are preparing for a safeguarding audit with Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd, which was due to commence in October 2021.

## *SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH*

The Holy Spirit Province in Australia is in the process of writing the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures in consultation with Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL).

The Leadership Team has participated in ACSL training session, and any relevant information is forwarded to the Sisters. The Leadership Team provides opportunity for Community Leaders and Sisters who are involved in formation or vocation ministry to attend training and professional development related to child protection.

During the Province Gathering Meeting, safeguarding training and a workshop are part of the program item for all Sisters to participate. The Provincial and her Council participated in the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards training and session for leaders.

The Sisters are informed of the ongoing education, training and workshops provided by the Diocese of Parramatta Safeguarding Office and are encouraged to participate.

## SOCIETY OF JESUS (JESUITS)

The Australian Province of the Society of Jesus has undertaken to publish its own annual report on its response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The most recent report includes information about progress made in the previous period, including:

- The development of Guiding Principles for Child Sexual Abuse Civil Claims.
- The development of several policies and guidance material for all Province ministries.
- Involvement in the development of the “Your Safety First” poster, which is prominent in all Province ministries that engage with children and young people.

In the interests of ongoing transparency and accountability, the Australian Province has committed to publishing, on an annual basis, any complaints of child sexual abuse committed by an adult that are received by the Province in the reporting period. This includes reports that relate to previous decades or to someone who is now deceased.

## **OTHER ENTITIES**

### MACKILLOP FAMILY SERVICES

MacKillop has implemented a Child Protection Policy that embeds all elements of the Standards developed by the Royal Commission. The MacKillop Code of Conduct articulates a zero tolerance of all forms of child abuse, neglect and exploitation, and expectations in relation to observing child safety principles.

MacKillop is implementing the Power to Kids program across out-of-home care settings, and the Healing Matters program across residential homes, to ensure all staff, young people and their carers are aware of safety concerns, and able to respond to disclosures.

Complaints relating to child sexual abuse are referred to and responded to through the MacKillop State-Based procedures for responding to incidents.

### MCAULEY COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR WOMEN

McAuley is committed to a child-safe culture and has Child Safe and Complaint policies and procedures, a Code of Conduct and a systematic process for documenting identified risks and mitigating actions.

McAuley has developed and utilises specific child-friendly/appropriate materials to support the understanding of children regarding rights and responsibilities and processes. McAuley has specific children’s worker roles to ensure focus on assessment of children’s needs and appropriate responses.

## MERCY CONNECT

Mercy Connect has implemented the Child Safe Standards and conducts training on these for any staff who are required to work with children. It has a Child Safety and Protection Policy and child safety is a standing agenda item for the Quality Risk and Safety Committee. It has risk management plans, a Code of Conduct and privacy, confidentiality and record-keeping policies.

All staff must have current Working with Children Check and National Disability Insurance Scheme Worker Screening which is outlined in the Recruitment, Selection and Induction Guideline.

The Participant Handbook, Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure and Mandatory Reporting Procedure outline steps to make complaints and relevant roles and responsibilities. An internal audit process identifies any gaps in compliance and triggers a review.

## MERCY HEALTH

As a provider of Health Services, services provided to children are funded and regulated as public health services in NSW and VIC and are therefore subject to regulation by the relevant Departments of Health.

Additional initiatives that further address the Royal Commission recommendations include the implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which includes components on safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and the existence of a Safeguarding Coordinator and Committee, who have overseen the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, with plans to undertake an audit against them in late 2021.

## MERCY SERVICES

Mercy Services primarily provides aged and disability care services to over 18-year-olds, and counselling services through its alcohol and other drug programs. It does not provide services to children, however staff or volunteers may come in 'contact with children' during provision of its services.

Mercy Services has implemented the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and completed an audit by Catholic Professional Standards Limited. It has a Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Social Media policies that make clear the organisation's zero tolerance for abuse.

Safeguarding training has been undertaken by staff/volunteers across the organisation, with annual refresher training being rolled out.

Mercy Services is currently updating its safeguarding guidelines to assist staff/volunteers/clients when raising a concern, complaint or allegation of abuse, including processes for referring people to relevant support agencies. Additional policy revisions around privacy and document management are planned to strengthen record-keeping and documentation.

### **MERCY WORKS LIMITED**

Mercy Works Ltd (MWL), as a ministry of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG), had its safeguarding policies and practices examined by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd as part of ISMAPNG's audit, demonstrating implementation of many of the Royal Commission's recommendations.

Mercy Works Ltd does not run any community development projects with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, but partners with seven Indigenous communities to support their projects in the form of funding and project monitoring support. These communities have provided MWL with a copy of their own Child Safeguarding Policies or, where absent, have agreed to and signed MWL's policy.

### **MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY – INDIGENOUS SUPPORT AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

The Missionaries of Charity are complying with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, which includes having a safeguarding policy, risk management strategies, a Code of Conduct, complaint handling policy and procedures, a record-keeping policy, induction and other ongoing training, and are working to implement this across all of their ministries by mid-2022. Sisters and volunteers have Working With Children Checks or their equivalent in their particular jurisdiction.

### **SERVITE SISTERS – KORA CHILD CARE CENTRE**

The Servite Sisters have a charitable organisation called Kora Child Care Centre, run by a Board, which cares for Aboriginal children, migrants' children, children of single parents and children from women's refugee homes. They comply with regulation by state governing bodies, such as the Education Department and the Children and community Services (Child Care) Regulations 2007.

A dedicated staff member updates and provides assistance to the Board regarding policies and procedure requirements. They are working on the Royal Commission recommendations with many policies and procedures currently in place that go a long way to accommodate the recommendations.





In June 2021, the Holy See announced changes would be made to Book VI of the Code of Canon Law, titled “Penal Sanctions in the Church”. The changes, which take effect on December 8, 2021, revised 63 of the books 89 canons. The descriptions of crimes of sexual abuse, including child pornography, are more explicit, and the required actions of a bishop or superior of a religious order in handling allegations are more stringent.

In *Pascite Gregem Dei*, the apostolic constitution announcing the changes, Pope Francis wrote that a process commenced in 2007 sought to “determine new needs, to identify the limitations and flaws of the current legislation, and to indicate possible clear and simple solutions”.

The Pope wrote: “The new text introduces various modifications to the law presently in force and introduces several new types of crime, corresponding to the growing need in various communities to ensure the restoration of justice and order that the delict infringed.

“The text has also been improved from a technical aspect, especially with regard to fundamental issues of criminal law, such as the right to self-defense, the prescription of penal action, and the need for greater precision in the determination of penalties, consonant with the requirements of penal law, thus providing ordinaries and judges with objective criteria for identifying the most appropriate sanction in individual cases.”