



Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL
Bishop of Parramatta

Level 2, 12 Victoria Rd, Parramatta NSW 2150
PO Box 3066, North Parramatta, NSW 1750

☎ 02 8838 3400 📠 02 9630 4813

✉ bishop@parracatholic.org

🌐 parracatholic.org

14 October 2019

Dear friends and colleagues in ministry,

As the Bishop of Parramatta, with responsibility for the Catholic Church in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, I am absolutely committed to protecting children and vulnerable people in our care from harm.

I am determined to ensure our Diocese remains open to the continual learning, collaboration and embedding of safeguarding practices within and across all our parishes, agencies and ministries.

As such, I am pleased to announce an important milestone in our safeguarding and professional standards practices work.

In the coming months, our Office for Safeguarding will be further integrated into our agencies and ministries in order to further strengthen our care for children and the vulnerable in the Church of Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

This localisation of safeguarding and professional standards services is based on three important learnings:

- i) our 15 years of experience in this field;
- ii) the findings from the seven-year period of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse; and
- iii) consulting, listening and reviewing our work in this area with many independent stakeholders and experts over the past 12 months.

This localised approach of safeguarding services will continue to offer advice and support to our parishes, Catholic Care, Catholic Education, our ministries and agencies. Catholic communities in the Diocese of Parramatta will continue to have all the necessary support mechanisms in place to help those in need.

Localising safeguarding services will also help ensure greater engagement and accountability of safeguarding within respective parishes, agencies and ministries.

My aim is to build on the strengths of the work over the years undertaken by the Office for Safeguarding and Professional Standards (OSPS). This work has brought us to a position where many practices can now be undertaken locally with greater understanding and capacity to keep our children and vulnerable people safe.

It is at the local level that the voices of our vulnerable people and children are more readily engaged, and where we have learnt that localised safeguarding systems and accountability improve harm prevention.

As part of this milestone I am delighted to announce:

- The appointment of an inaugural Diocesan Safeguarding Patron, Ms Kerry Borland, (former NSW Children's Guardian);
- A support program, facilitated by the Diocesan Office for Safeguarding, for each ministry and agency to work together to implement the National Safeguarding Standards locally;
- The establishment of a new Safeguarding Unit within Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta;
- Changes in the current structure of the OSPS; and
- The future provisioning of safeguarding roles in the coming years within our other agencies.

This will require changes to the current structure of the OSPS, with a permanent Diocesan Head of Safeguarding to be appointed. This person will continue to have oversight of all Diocesan safeguarding practices including our parishes, agencies, ministries and schools.

Recruitment to these appointments will commence shortly with the Office for Safeguarding continuing to report directly to myself.

I am grateful to the OSPS team in their preparation and work in moving towards this transition whilst maintaining high standards of service delivery within the Diocese of Parramatta.

May we continue to accompany one another on our journey of protection and safeguarding of children and the vulnerable.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read "Vincent Long Van Nguyen".

**Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv
Bishop of Parramatta**