

2022

# Annual Progress Report

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 2022

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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, their families and their supporters, and have led to a loss of trust in the Church. 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, and 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 to ensure that children and vulnerable people are cared for and protected.

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.

# Foreword

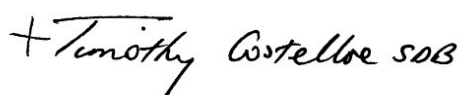
As the Australian community marks five years since the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was handed down, the need for steadfast commitment to child-safe practices and policies remains evident.

As leaders of two key national Catholic entities, we state again that we are deeply sorry for the abuse that has occurred in our past and we renew our pledge for the present and the future of a Church that listens, that seeks the truth, that responds compassionately, that desires healing and that acts with justice.

Our shameful past informs and energises our ongoing efforts. We are mindful that for the Church to carry forward God's mission for us, we must take seriously our responsibilities to keep all people safe, and especially children. Some of those efforts are outlined in this report, which follows on from four previous reports submitted in accordance with Recommendation 17.3 of the Royal Commission.

As requested by the National Office for Child Safety, this report identifies local, regional, national and international initiatives that are keeping children and other vulnerable people as safe as possible within a Church environment. But many of the changes that are taking place – cultural and behavioural changes – are not easily captured in the pages of a report. Alongside the wider community, the Church has evolved in its understanding of the scourge of child sexual abuse and our resolve has been strengthened.

On behalf of those who lead thousands of Catholic ministries across the country, we offer this report to the Australian community.



**Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB**  
President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference



**Fr Peter Jones OSA**  
President, Catholic Religious Australia

# Introduction

The Catholic Church was heavily engaged with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse from the time of its announcement.

During the Royal Commission itself, the Truth, Justice and Healing Council was the lead organisation interacting with the Commission on behalf of dioceses and religious institutes. A number of other entities, including Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards and Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd, have played major roles during and beyond the Royal Commission.

In August 2018, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) published a comprehensive response to the Royal Commission, considering each relevant recommendation individually.

In that response, the ACBC 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 can be measured over time.

From 2018 to 2021, the ACBC and CRA submitted annual reports to the National Office for Child Safety on behalf of the Catholic Church in Australia. This is the fifth 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.

The ACBC 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.

They were asked to reflect, in particular, on progress and achievements in the following areas: Governance and structures; Education and training; Cultural change; Pastoral responses; Participation of children; Community engagement; Engagement with victims and survivors.

Dozens of dioceses and religious institutes submitted information for the preparation of this report. That response demonstrates the central importance of safeguarding for Catholic organisations in Australia today.

Significant progress has also been made at the national level, as well as in the Church globally. Those initiatives will be highlighted in this report, followed by the local initiatives outlined by dioceses and religious institutes.

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 2021 to October 2022. A report to be published in 2023 will provide a more comprehensive update on the progress made during and since the Royal Commission.

# Key National Initiatives

## National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

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In December 2022, Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) formally launched the second edition of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS), which covers adults at risk as well as children.

ACSL has worked with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia and the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons to develop the NCSS Edition 2.

ACSL chair the Hon. Michael Lavarch AO said the adoption of the new Standards clearly demonstrates that the Church is vigilant of emerging safeguarding risks for everyone in Catholic communities, especially children and adults at risk.

‘The Standards address the safeguarding requirements of adults (with a focus on adults at risk) by both reflecting the duty of care owed to everyone, as well as recognising that there are particular risk-factors that cause some people to be more susceptible to abuse,’ Mr Lavarch said.

‘Including adults at risk within the safeguarding standards is a major milestone for the Church, as there are many groups running ministries with adults as well as children. The new Standards aim to address the power imbalances that can occur in a range of Church contexts, which can be a risk factor for abuse.’

Edition 2 of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards can be accessed on the ACSL website: <https://www.acsltd.org.au/>

## National Response Framework

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With agreement by all its members (the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia and the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons), Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd adopted the new National Response Framework as the required approach that Church entities are to take to ensure a consistent and appropriate response to allegations or concerns about children and adults who have or may have been abused by a person working for or engaged by a Church entity. Church entities are to establish policies and/or procedures consistent with this Framework.

## National Response Protocol

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The National Response Protocol is a framework for Catholic entities across Australia to respond consistently to people raising concerns or allegations of child abuse. The National Response Protocol outlines principles and procedures to offer a consistent response to children and adults who have been subjected to abuse by Church personnel.

The National Response Protocol was adopted by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and came into effect for all dioceses from February 2021.

In May 2022 the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference adopted Version 2 of the National Response Protocol. Version 2 makes minor changes to the National Response Protocol to expand the scope to include abuse against vulnerable adults and implements referencing for ease of application.

The updates have not changed the procedures to be followed.

Version 2 of the National Response Protocol can be accessed on the ACSL website:

<https://www.acsltd.org.au/>

## Formation for new bishops

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For the first time, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference hosted a week of formation for recently ordained bishops in February 2022. The four-day gathering covered a wide range of topics, but safeguarding was a key aspect of the bishops' training, across multiple sessions, to assist them in their new ministry role.



## Community of Practice

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Catholic Religious Australia continues to develop and chair its Safeguarding Community of Practice for religious institute leaders and safeguarding practitioners to support a network of experts in safeguarding to facilitate a hub for sharing of expertise, resources, information and practices. The topics of focus cover a wide range of issues including working with those who have been abused, perpetrators and improving training.

## Safeguarding portal

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Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd launched a new portal in April 2022 to help Catholic organisations measure their progress in applying the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

ACSL Chief Executive Officer, Dr Ursula Stephens, described it as a crucial resource for entities wanting to understand where their current safeguarding standards are in relation to best practice.

‘Entities can work through the requirements of the Standards online and attach supporting documentation as evidence,’ she said.

‘The portal will generate a progress plan for organisations working towards accreditation and reporting.’

## NCSS Commitment Badge

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The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards underpin the Catholic Church’s commitment to working towards a common goal of every child in every community being safe, cared for, having their needs met and being afforded the chance to realise their potential.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd has invited Catholic organisations to show their commitment to the Standards by downloading the Commitment Badge for use on their websites and social media.



Entities are able to have their logo featured on the NCSS Commitment page.

# Global Initiatives

## International progress report

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The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors has laid the groundwork for an annual report on child protection efforts by the Church globally.

Pope Francis in April 2022 asked the commission to develop such a report; the outline of the design of the report was created in subsequent months.

While additional work will be undertaken in 2023, it is expected that the first comprehensive annual report will be published in 2024.

## Updated guidelines for handling abuse cases

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Two years after publishing a step-by-step guide for how bishops, religious superiors and canon lawyers should handle accusations of alleged abuse by clerics and labeling it 'Version 1.0', the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith published an update in mid-2022.

'Version 2.0' of the dicastery's *Vademecum on certain points of procedure in treating cases of sexual abuse of minors committed by clerics* was necessary mainly because of the promulgation of a new section of the *Code of Canon Law* dealing with crimes and punishments in the Church.

## Code of Canon Law

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Changes to Book VI of the *Code of Canon Law*, titled 'Penal Sanctions in the Church', took effect on 8 December 2021. 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 revisions to 63 of the book's 89 canons, 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.'

# Progress in Key Areas

Dioceses and religious institutes were invited to provide updates on their progress in the areas of safeguarding and child protection across seven areas: Governance and structures; Education and training; Cultural change; Pastoral responses; Participation of children; Community engagement; Engagement with victims and survivors.

A synopsis of that progress is contained in this section.

## Governance and structures

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### **ARCHDIOCESE OF HOBART**

Screening strategies for all Church personnel within the Archdiocese include:

- Working with Vulnerable People checks
- national police criminal history checks
- work history and reference checks
- Right to Work in Australia checks
- Statutory Declarations (as required).

All safe communities policies and procedures undergo regular internal and external audits to ensure that the Archdiocese continues to create a culture that places the safety of at-risk children and adults at the centre of its thinking and actions.

The Safe Communities Framework is an initiative of the Archdiocese of Hobart to protect children and adults at risk from abuse and neglect. The framework creates a shared culture of safety for children and adults at risk, by:

- establishing systems and processes that provide a safe environment for all in the Archdiocese's care
- implementing safe strategies and practices to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm
- providing annual safeguarding training for all Church personnel, including volunteers
- reporting, monitoring and responding to disclosures or concerns of abuse throughout Tasmania.

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## **ARCHDIOCESE OF PERTH**

Initiatives in governance by the Archdiocese of Perth have included:

- formalisation of an archdiocesan safeguarding policy
- review of all safeguarding guidelines
- production of a WA Provincial Code of Ethical Conduct
- development and implementation of an archdiocesan screening and monitoring policy.

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## **DIOCESE OF BALLARAT**

To assist schools in meeting Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority compliance, a child-safe standards action list has been rolled out across schools to ensure clarity and adherence to the new legislative requirements. The Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Ltd (DOBCEL) board includes the following items on the agenda of all its board meetings:

- child-safe standards and complaints dashboard, which includes matters of various complaints from the DOBCEL community, mandatory reports made by schools, suspension and expulsion data, and reportable conduct investigations and findings
- risk management.

The Diocesan Personnel Board has a membership that now includes lay members. The new arrangement will help to ensure that clergy appointments are made by the bishop with the benefit of a broader cross-section of advice.

Meetings of the Council of Priests regularly have lay experts as guest presenters.

### **School level – St Alipius**

- Staff participated in professional learning teams to unpack the new child-safe standards.
- St Alipius has appointed a First Nations student on representative groups (e.g. Laudato Si Student Action Group) to ensure First Nations voices are represented in decision-making.
- Principal Emily Clarke is on the DOBCEL Children and Young People Safeguarding and Wellbeing Consultative Committee.

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## **DIOCESE OF BATHURST**

Initiatives in governance by the Diocese of Bathurst have included:

- initiation of development of a diocesan safeguarding approach, led by Catholic Education and extended to all diocesan agencies and parishes
- further development of partnership with the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn to prepare for an audit to be conducted in late 2023
- development of diocesan policies for reportable conduct and procedures for responding to and investigating reportable allegations
- implementation and acknowledgement of Employee Code of Conduct for all employees of diocesan entities
- continual rollout of professional supervision and mentoring across the Diocese
- pilot review of parish compliance by the Office of the Children’s Guardian
- attendance at NSW Professional Standards Community of Practice Forum
- revision of child protection and safeguarding policies to align with child-safe standards
- completion of risk assessments for events, and distribution to the relevant people.

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## **DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY**

A comprehensive review of the Diocesan Safeguarding Charter, with the new Charter released in February 2022, has strengthened the governance of the diocesan safeguarding office. New provisions included an increase in reporting requirements to the director of the diocesan safeguarding office by the diocesan agencies – chancery and parishes, Catholic schools and CatholicCare – and a renewed commitment to the Diocesan Safeguarding Strategic Advisory Panel, which provides expert advice on safeguarding matters to the Diocese.

The Diocese increased the resources devoted to managing safeguarding, with an increase in the number of safeguarding staff to 10 across the agencies of the Diocese, in addition to the director.

The diocesan office is now focusing attention on achieving key priorities through the development of the Diocesan Safeguarding Strategic Plan 2023–25 to ensure continuous improvement. Each agency develops initiatives and practices specific to the areas of the focus.

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## **DIOCESE OF BUNBURY**

Initiatives of the Diocese of Bunbury in the area of governance and structures have included:

- revision of diocesan safeguarding policy
- review of safeguarding resources
- production of a Code of Ethical Conduct.

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### **DIOCESE OF GERALDTON**

The director of safeguarding for the Diocese of Geraldton is part of a provincial safeguarding team that also includes the directors of safeguarding from the Archdiocese of Perth and Diocese of Bunbury, and a volunteer from the Diocese of Broome. This team meets regularly via Zoom/Teams, together working on the safeguarding handbook, policy amendments and any upcoming events such as Child Protection Week, where they endeavour to run similar activities to improve the cohesiveness of all parishes within the state.

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### **DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA**

In 2020, Bishop Vincent Long commissioned a governance review of the decision-making and advisory bodies that currently provide the structures and processes for the governance and administration of the Diocese of Parramatta. This review was led by Adjunct Professor Susan Pascoe AM with the support of Adjunct Professor Murray Baird. In response to the final report which came out of the review, in October 2021, the Diocese of Parramatta created the role of governance coordinator within the Governance, Risk and Compliance department. The governance coordinator has integrated oversight of the whole Diocese and is dedicated to ensuring that the recommendations from the report are implemented across the whole Diocese. Another recommendation, which was implemented in October 2022, was the introduction of Chancery Values: Collaborate, Respect, Celebrate and Strive. These values and governance principles were introduced to underpin work across all agencies in the Diocese.

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### **DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON**

The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton has a well-established safeguarding committee. This committee meets four times a year and provides guidance on all safeguarding matters in the Diocese. The Diocese is supported by the independent Professional Standards Office of Queensland.

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### **DIOCESE OF SALE**

The Diocese of Sale engaged staff from the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Office in presentations to parish clergy and staff, ensuring consistency of message in the area of child safety and protection.

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## **DIOCESE OF SANDHURST**

The Diocese of Sandhurst was audited by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) in April 2021 and is working towards complying with the ACSL recommendations (currently at 75% completion).

The Diocese has also implemented a risk management plan based on the ACSL guidelines. The plan will include a roadshow to deaneries and child safety officers in parishes and considers all of the above risks. This is still to be rolled out to parishes. However, all parishes in the Diocese have been provided with a risk management plan and following on from the April 2021 ACSL audit they have been reminded that the risk management plan has to be discussed at each parish pastoral council or safeguarding meeting and noted in the minutes of the meetings, even if no new risks have presented.

The Diocese is in the process of updating the diocesan safeguarding policy to comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards (due by 1 July 2023). Once the policy has been ratified by the safeguarding committee, all parishes will be notified of the updated policy and provided with a replacement summary of the safeguarding policy. This is to be updated with parish details including the parish child safety officer's name and contact details, for display in all Church buildings. Once the policy and summary of the policy have been ratified by the safeguarding committee and promulgated by the bishop, the updated policy will be uploaded onto the diocesan website and is the primary base policy for safeguarding in the Diocese.

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## **DIOCESE OF TOOWOOMBA**

Initiatives in governance by the Diocese of Toowoomba have included:

- regular and open discussion between the diocesan safeguarding officer and the bishop
- regular updating of diocesan leadership bodies within their cycle of meetings: diocesan pastoral council, diocesan consultors, diocesan council of priests
- meetings of the Diocesan Safeguarding and Standards Committee (normally quarterly).

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## **DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG**

The Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDoW) Child Safe Strategy Project has commenced with two primary schools piloting a Child Safe Project. This includes a child safety gap analysis, the creation of a child-safe team to identify and deliver upon opportunities to strengthen child safety in the school, and Student Voice and Parent Voice Projects. Insights from the individual school Child Safe Projects will be used to enrich and contextualise the overall CEDoW Child Safe Strategy, with learnings flowing between the two bodies of work, strengthening each.



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### **MARONITE EPARCHY**

As part of their governance and structures, the Maronite Eparchy continues to work with the Australian Catholic Ministry Register to annually ensure all clergy have a Working with Children Check (WWCC) in the parishes of their respective states. In addition, the Eparchy continues to annually check for currency of WWCC of all the employees, contractors, safeguarding officers and volunteers in parishes. It has commenced an online self-audit process through Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) and has also engaged an external party to review, update and implement policies and procedures relating to its safeguarding standards. The Eparchy hopes to engage ACSL in the coming year to attend a safeguarding audit on all its parishes.

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

All staff and volunteers have a current police check, as well as a Working with Children Card. The community has applied to have all police checks renewed automatically through the National Crime Check non-for-profit program. Safeguarding is included in agendas of all executive, parish and committee meetings.

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### **CHRISTIAN BROTHERS**

The Christian Brothers are now a significantly different organisation than in the past. They have a commitment to child protection and safety and an expectation that all employees and brothers who engage with children and minors have a Working with Children Check. The Christian Brothers no longer own or operate any schools. They have instituted a skilled child protection professional to oversee and supervise the safety and care plans of brothers who may be at risk of offending or causing harm to children or vulnerable adults.

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

There is a recognition that safeguarding best practice calls for a change in culture – to be more transparent, responsible, accountable and risk-conscious in all encounters with children and vulnerable adults.

Work continues on draft policies and procedures – code of conduct, safeguarding policy, work health and safety, and complaint handling.

The Advisory Group Leadership Team is briefed and will take responsibility for surveying sisters' ministries regarding the responsible Church authority, training, code of conduct and supervision.

Safeguarding is a standing item on the trustees' agenda, including current claims, pastoral support of claimants, and development of a database of past claims. This will assist in reporting and analysing patterns in past claims.

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### **INSTITUTE OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY**

The Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea was audited by ACSL in 2020–2021. Over the past 12 months, the Institute has been engaged in the ongoing implementation of the ACSL audit recommendations. It has developed and implemented new supervision guidelines for all sisters and registered sisters in active ministry in the Australian Catholic Ministry Register.

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### **MARIST BROTHERS PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA**

Initiatives in governance by the Marist Brothers Province of Australia have included the following:

- Appointed a Province safeguarding and support officer (PSSO) to enable more direct identification and implementation of compliance with the Standards.
- Established quarterly reporting from both the PSSO and the healing and support coordinator to the Province Professional Standards Advisory Committee and the Provincial and Council, to ensure that issues of child safety and victim/survivor support are reported directly to those in governance.
- Incorporated an NFP public company limited by guarantee to govern the schools nationally and embedded a commitment to child safety in the company constitution. A board committee was established with a charter aimed specifically at advising and supporting the board on child safety matters.
- Established a quarterly board reporting process that included matters of child safety, wellbeing and improvement.

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### **MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART**

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart has appointed a designated officer (religious) in Vietnam to oversee safeguarding under the direction of the Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office, Australian Province. This person is currently undertaking six months of intensive (residential) safeguarding studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Italy.

Personal safety and wellbeing plans for 'restricted' religious have been developed and implemented.

A database has been developed and implemented to track and report on historical and contemporary safeguarding-related matters across the Province.

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## **MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST COLUMBAN**

Examples of improvements in governance by the Missionary Society of St Columban are as follows:

- All Columban priests in active ministry continued to have regular professional supervision. This practice began in January 2019.
- School Chaplaincy Ministry Agreements were signed between the Missionary Society of St Columban and two Catholic schools where one of the Columban priests works as the school chaplain.
- All Columban priests fill out their Columban Sacramental Ministry Record Form each time they go to a church to celebrate the sacraments, e.g. Mass, funeral, wedding, Reconciliation. A scanned copy of the form is uploaded onto our safeguarding personnel register.

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## **PRESENTATION SISTERS WAGGA WAGGA**

The initiatives in governance of the Presentation Sisters Wagga Wagga have included the following:

- Reviewed and updated the Congregation's policy for safeguarding children and adults at risk, and its procedures.
- Completed the online self-assessment for National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (onsite visit in this process is planned for early December).
- Began implementing online safety program and software on Congregational IT.

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## **SERVANTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

As a congregation, Servants of the Holy Spirit are very mindful of the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults. To ensure that those voices are heard, they have clearly stated in their safeguarding policy that they commit to the safety and protection of those vulnerable human beings. In maintaining the child-safe environment, their policy has been approved since 2020 by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (now ACSL) and has been implemented in all communities in three states.

Working with other Church entities, active members are committed to policies and protocols of the institutions that they are working with and to ensuring a safe environment is provided for both the vulnerable and for the members themselves.

Recently, at their annual gathering in October where all the members were present, the safeguarding officer presented and stressed again the safeguarding policy directives on training, online risks, record-keeping, supervision, code of conduct and reporting.

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## **SISTERS OF CHARITY OF AUSTRALIA**

Initiatives in governance by the Sisters of Charity of Australia have included the following:

- The new leader and members of the Congregational Council completed ACSL Training for Leaders.
- Safeguarding officer engaged in training provided by ACSL on the proposed Complaints Management System.
- 'Getting started with your self-assessment on the NCSS Accreditation Portal' and document 'Our Common Mission' surveys were completed and portal set up.
- Working with Children Checks or equivalent for sisters were monitored and updated.

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## **SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

Within Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand (the service arm of Good Shepherd), a Heritage Engagement Office has been set up to assist with enquiries and issues related to former residents. The Heritage Engagement Team is involved in receiving requests from former residents and family members who seek records and in supporting and accompanying them in the process of accessing the information.

The Congregation has reissued internationally its safeguarding policy and procedures to ensure that policies and procedures are in place that include children and adults at risk. Their local policies are also inclusive of children and adults at risk.

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## **SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF SION**

In the period between October 2021 and October 2022, the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion completed the review, begun in March 2021, of all their safeguarding documents. The last documents to be reviewed and updated were the Safeguarding Risk Management Framework and the Safeguarding Coordinator Role Description. They have also engaged the services of Sheree Limbrick from SLK Advisory to ensure all the requirements have been met.

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## **SISTERS OF ST JOHN OF GOD**

The Sisters of St John of God's initiatives in the area of governance and structures have included:

- establishing a safeguarding committee, which drafted terms of reference for approval
- establishing a clear reporting process
- incorporating safeguarding responsibilities into all relevant managers' position descriptions.

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## **SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH OF THE SACRED HEART**

The Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart made efforts in governance with the following:

- Draft Edition Two of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards was considered and incorporated in the review of the Congregational Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement. This resulted in the incorporation of adults at risk and the development of the Congregational Adult and Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement.
- Developed Congregational Compliance Check Policy, ensuring safeguarding considerations and state-based legislative requirements were incorporated.
- Developed safeguarding organisational flowchart for the consideration and review of the Congregational Safeguarding Committee and then approval by the Congregational Leadership Team. Once approved, the safeguarding organisational flowchart shall be publicly available.
- Formal volunteers are now required to sign their acknowledgement and commitment to the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct.
- Developed a draft Commitment to Safeguarding declaration form for the use of contractors and tradespeople, when Working with Children Check (or state-based equivalent) is not required for their work.

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## **VINCENTIAN FATHERS OCEANIA PROVINCE**

The Vincentian Fathers appointed a director of safeguarding for the Oceania Province.

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## **CATHOLIC EDUCATION DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG**

During 2022, Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong reviewed and updated its foundational documentation underpinning Life to the Full: A Framework for Respectful Relationships, Child Safety and Human Sexuality in a Catholic Context to ensure alignment with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church and existing school frameworks like Positive Behaviours 4 Learning (PB4L). These are multi-tiered approaches to enhance prevention and intervention strategies.

## Education and training

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### ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

A major, well-attended interactive education and training campaign was rolled out to clergy and staff of the Archdiocese of Melbourne with a focus on building knowledge and capacity, in order to prevent abuse and to act swiftly if abuse is suspected or detected.

The Archdiocese, in conjunction with other dioceses, also rolled out an online Safeguarding Essentials package to reach its approximately 25,000 volunteers. The training is embedded within a customer relationship management system, which enables parishes to track compliance to ensure all volunteers have undertaken child safeguarding training. In the three months since the rollout, more than 1,000 volunteers have completed the training.

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### ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY

**Building a safer community:** The Archdiocese recognises that its work in early intervention and prevention of abuse is critical in protecting its children and communities. To this end, in 2022 the Archdiocese presented training for clergy and lay workers to inform and raise awareness relating to risk identification and mitigation strategies. The training explains what risk is, where the greatest areas of risk appear in a parish environment and how to mitigate risk. A risk management framework was developed along with supporting documentation to sit alongside the training. A dedicated feedback tab was also developed on the archdiocesan website to support communities in bringing forward concerns and feedback.

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### ARCHDIOCESE OF PERTH

The Archdiocese of Perth's initiatives to promote education and training have included the following:

- 74% of clergy have completed safeguarding and mandatory reporting training, with 100% completion anticipated by 31 December 2022.
- 937 Church workers (paid and unpaid) have completed a safeguarding induction.
- Safeguarding training for seminarians has been completed.
- Other professional development courses provided to Church workers and community:
  - Mental Health First Aid
  - Cultural Competency
  - Protective Behaviours – Protecting God's Children
  - Safeguarding for Youth Leaders.

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## **DIOCESE OF BALLARAT**

The Diocese is rolling out a new online child safety training module and is asking all clergy, those in positions of leadership in parish and diocesan settings and all volunteers who work with children to complete the training module.

A diocesan schools child safety network continues to provide opportunities for resource sharing and professional learning for the child safety officers of the Ballarat Diocese schools.

Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited has been proactive in attending the following training:

- the third Annual Law of Religious Institutions Conference
- mandatory reporting and other reporting obligations training
- ASIC finance for the not-for-profit director.

On the school level, staff of St Alipius participated in professional learning teams to unpack the new child-safe standards.

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## **DIOCESE OF BATHURST**

Education and training initiatives in the Diocese have included:

- continuing Safe Church Awareness workshops to all parishes across the Diocese, and commencement of renewal training to maintain currency
- initiating a process of endorsing trainers for the National Council of Churches Safe Church Awareness Workshops (increasing the knowledge base even more across the Diocese)
- continuing Office of the Children's Guardian training programs.

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## **DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY**

Education and training initiatives continue to play a key role in promoting a positive safeguarding culture in Broken Bay. In the lead-up to Safeguarding Awareness Month, the Safeguarding Office (chancery and parishes) launched Participation of Children and Young People in Catholic Communities by delivering training to chancery staff and clergy within the Diocese. Regular reportable conduct and incident training was delivered to new staff in high-risk services in CatholicCare throughout the year. The Safeguarding Office (Catholic Schools Broken Bay) offered safeguarding training to all central office staff and provided specialised content to specific areas of Catholic Schools Broken Bay.

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## **DIOCESE OF BUNBURY**

Examples of improvement in education and training by the Diocese include:

- safeguarding officer training
- training in safeguarding and mandatory reporting for priests at their professional development days and annual conference
- safeguarding training for Bunbury seminarian studying at St Charles Seminary
- new safeguarding officers enrolled in training course.

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## **DIOCESE OF DARWIN**

Catholic Education NT has rolled out the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum Training in the schools. During this period, training for teaching staff was provided in each school.

Professional learning in ethics and boundaries in ministry was provided for clergy. This training included definitions, legislation and scenarios, building on previous professional learning.

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## **DIOCESE OF GERALDTON**

Throughout the past year, developing the Church Worker Training Program has been a big focus for the Diocese of Geraldton. This is a one-hour training session for all Church workers, paid or unpaid, which ensures that all Church workers are familiar with the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures in place within the Diocese. Its goal is for all Church workers in the Diocese to attend this training session during the first half of 2023.

In October 2022, the Diocese began training for clergy pertaining to mandatory reporting. This is a new and ongoing initiative.

In the past year, the Diocese has worked on increasing its number of safeguarding officers, offering them comprehensive training and support.

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## **DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA**

In mid-2021, in response to the COVID-19 lockdowns, the Diocese initiated an online learning platform where personnel, volunteers and the wider diocesan community could undertake core safeguarding training. The Diocese has recently upgraded its online training platform and is now offering several courses online via Zoom and face-to-face.

There are three compulsory courses, which all staff and volunteers must complete, including Understanding Safeguarding and the Child Safe Standards, Legal Compliance (Risk of Significant Harm, and Reportable Conduct), and Working with Vulnerable Adults and Understanding



Boundaries. In addition, the Diocese has recently created elective courses, which include the following modules, among others: Elder Abuse Awareness, Protection Through Participation for Children with a Disability, and Domestic and Family Violence – a Multicultural Perspective. All these courses can be translated into several languages to accommodate those in the community with linguistically diverse backgrounds. There has been a huge uptake of the training courses, with 1,099 participants (consisting of volunteers, personnel, parishioners and even members of other religious orders) having completed the training courses to date. To supplement this training, in June 2022 during Safe Parishes Week, the Diocese released a parish safeguarding kit with extensive safeguarding resources. The kit is available as a physical kit and in soft copy for all parishes. During Safe Parishes Week, safeguarding champions were commissioned, sourced from the parish communities across the Diocese of Parramatta.

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### **DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON**

The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton has continued to deliver safeguarding training both face-to-face and online to all in the parish community who are in active ministry roles. Safeguarding training is delivered yearly and updated regularly. All new employees in the Diocese complete a safeguarding induction within the first week of employment.

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### **DIOCESE OF SALE**

Several training sessions have been held with diocesan clergy, parish office staff and safeguarding officers throughout the past year, focussing on the Child Safe Standards and developing a culture of safety.

One session with clergy involved a joint presentation by the bishop and the director of Catholic Education on professional standards in ministry, utilising a case studies and discussion mode.

A presentation by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education officer for the diocesan education office was provided to clergy at a training day. The training session focused on appropriate involvement and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parishioners.

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### **DIOCESE OF SANDHURST**

The Diocese of Sandhurst has been in negotiation with Salt, a provider of online training modules, on essentials of safeguarding and privacy for employees and volunteers. The new modules have been updated by Salt to ensure compliance with the new Victorian Child Safe Standards. The modules should be available for employees and volunteers by the end of November 2022.

PowerPoint presentations are available to all parish leadership groups to ensure training is provided to volunteers who have no computer skills. This is currently being updated to ensure compliance with the new Victorian Standards.

Training at the biennial in-service for clergy continues to include education on safeguarding and child protection. The next in-service is scheduled for early 2023.

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### **DIOCESE OF TOOWOOMBA**

Examples of improvements in education and training in the Diocese have included:

- regular parish visits by the diocesan safeguarding officer: intensive meetings with parish leadership personnel on safeguarding ministry, NCSS and local safeguarding practices and issues
- diocesan audit in February 2022 with diocesan in-service on audit report in March 2022, followed by progressive implementation of audit recommendations
- provision of safeguarding information to parish leadership personnel: in print, online, website.

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### **DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG**

Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong (CEDoW) has designed and delivered targeted child safety training for priority staff cohorts, such as pre-career teachers and the school pastoral support workers. Targeted training understands the specific vulnerabilities of different staff cohorts and students, and seeks to mitigate potential risks through education, case studies and mentoring.

CatholicCare Wollongong has developed an early intervention resilience program called 'Kindy Kids Connect' to promote community connectedness and wellbeing for students' transition to kindergarten. It has been piloted in 15 CEDoW schools to date. The program supports teachers and upskills parents to enable children to coregulate, identify and understand their emotions and have open conversations about safety and help-seeking. Child feedback from the trial has been used to fine-tune the program.

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### **MARONITE EPARCHY**

In an attempt to implement cultural change, the Maronite Eparchy has continued to focus on education and training during their regular clergy meetings with face-to-face safeguarding workshops and training. Additional safeguarding workshops and training of clergy, staff, employees, contractors, volunteers and the community generally were also conducted, with a focus on three main areas:

- increasing awareness, understanding and commitment to safeguarding children
- adults at risk and understanding relationships, power/authority and boundaries to provide guidance in identifying and interacting with at-risk/vulnerable adults and how to respond using clarity, consistency and continuity
- developing the understanding of child-safe behaviours and the legal compliance aspects of safeguarding – Risk of Significant Harm, and Reportable Conduct – by understanding how to recognise and respond appropriately if there is concern for a child or young person who is at risk.

As the Eparchy moves forward, it will be looking at developing online courses and expanding the above topics to include inclusive practices for children with disability and child-safe organisations, domestic and family violence, elder abuse awareness and how to involve children in child-safe organisations.

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

**Cultural safety training:** The Community's two safeguarding officers have completed a multi-module online Cultural Competency for Mission course (completed August 2022). It has also booked an onsite cultural awareness / safety training day (1 December 2022), provided by WACMRO and Catholic Mission, for all personnel.

**Safeguarding training program and register:** The Community has implemented an annual safeguarding training program and established a safeguarding training register. Clergy and safeguarding officers undertake specific training as required by the Perth archdiocesan safeguarding program, e.g. clergy have completed online and in-person training regarding mandatory reporting. Non-ordained monks, staff and volunteers participate in onsite training days.

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

Examples of initiatives in education and training have included the following:

- Worked with the safeguarding service provider in developing and providing annual training for members and staff. This training provides foundational knowledge in regard to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.
- Sisters received initial training in regard to the safeguarding of children in early 2020. This training is currently being reviewed and enhanced to remain current and to extend the knowledge that the sisters have in this area.
- A supervision framework was implemented for those in active ministry, which builds upon this foundation of safeguarding training.
- Ongoing commitment to education and training supports the embedding of a culture of safeguarding in all ministries and works.

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## **DE LA SALLE BROTHERS ANZPPNG**

The institute has continued with the education of ministry personnel in Pakistan and Papua New Guinea through:

- establishment of sector safeguarding committees with completely national membership
- three meetings of each conducted throughout 2022
- agenda items each meeting including locally identified priorities, Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) audit report priorities and action plans
- demonstration of and practice in risk assessment methodology
- progressive groundwork in preparation of separate ministry components in the ACSL negotiated with ACSL and the implementation of the process across Australia, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea (New Zealand on hold pending the outcomes of the NZ Royal Commission).

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## **INSTITUTE OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY**

For staff, the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy have implemented ongoing education and safeguarding training, including attendance at forums provided by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL).

For Institute sisters, family care sisters and Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood sisters, the Institute has implemented annual safeguarding training for those in active ministry, rolling the program over three years for others.

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## **MARIST BROTHERS PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA**

Education was provided around the Province by two safeguarding experts from the United Kingdom, who facilitated face-to-face workshops in the capital cities.

The Province continued its commitment to and participation in a unique research project, identifying why religious brothers offend.

Training and awareness programs were held to educate the Province's school boards, committees, executive and staff about new Child Safety Standards and Ministerial Order in Victoria and Standards in NSW.

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## **MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART**

The institute has implemented the following initiatives in the area of education and training:

- the professional development of religious and lay via their attendance at the inaugural MSC International Safeguarding Conference in Rome
- training of students in formation and priests arriving from overseas to join the Australian Province in safeguarding and related issues.

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#### **MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST COLUMBAN**

Improvements in education and training by the Society have included:

- safeguarding training for all Columban priests on its Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy (18 November 2021)
- Safeguarding Induction Session and Complaints Handling Session for all Columban lay staff (20 October 2021)
- attendance by safeguarding coordinator of three safeguarding training sessions organised by ACSL (2022)
- continued attendance by all Columban priests in active ministry of the annual safeguarding training provided by the local diocese where they reside.

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#### **PRESENTATION CONGREGATION QUEENSLAND**

Presentation Sisters Queensland (PSQ) members and staff attend annual training sessions held by the safeguarding officer. The PSQ policy and procedures folder is annually updated at these meetings and each attendee signs a form that states they have read, understood and updated their folders. These forms are held by the safeguarding officer to ensure compliance with safeguarding standards.

PSQ policies and procedures for contractors are issued on appointment and/or updated annually, and each contractor signs a form that states they have read, understood and updated their folders. These forms are held by the safeguarding officer to ensure compliance with safeguarding standards.

The updating of the policies and procedures folders is carried out as per recommendations received from the National Office for Child Safety.

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#### **PRESENTATION SISTERS WAGGA WAGGA**

The institute revised their training program for staff and sisters, which will be delivered in 2023.

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### **SERVANTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Most of the institute's members participated in the workshop conducted by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL). Active members in ministries have completed additional safeguarding training at their various workplaces. The safeguarding team, which includes the safeguarding officer, continues to participate in online workshops conducted by ACSL so that members are updated on child safety protection and continue to keep members informed.

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### **SISTERS OF CHARITY OF AUSTRALIA**

New staff members were provided with a safeguarding resource pack of materials and a training session was planned.

A contract was signed with Governance Risk and Compliance Solutions for provision of the online Safeguarding Essentials course for new staff and volunteers associated with the congregation.

Safeguarding resources were developed for a ministry and provided to members of its new advisory board. They also engaged in the Safeguarding Essentials course.

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### **SISTERS OF ST JOHN OF GOD**

Managers have attended relevant ACSL sessions.

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### **SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH OF THE SACRED HEART**

The institute developed a training presentation in relation to the Congregational Child Safeguarding Policy and the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct. The safeguarding coordinator is attending various sites and centres around Australia and presenting this training to identified SOSJ formal volunteers. There is also a plan to deliver training specific to individual safeguarding policies in the future.

The purchase of online safeguarding induction training licences has been extended to formal volunteers.

The safeguarding coordinator and professional standards officer are attending each region around Australia and delivering a presentation to religious at regional community gatherings.

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**VINCENTIAN FATHERS OCEANIA PROVINCE**

Training was provided for the Province in Fiji, with a strong focus on safeguarding – in particular, grooming behaviour.

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**CATHOLIC EDUCATION DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG**

As a part of their safety and support plan, students who may exhibit problematic or harmful sexualised behaviours receive Tier 3 support in the form of targeted and explicit education plans, addressing concerns, building skills and helping reduce the likelihood of future harm. The individual plans are developed with the student and family, recognising their needs and learning styles. Through explicit education plans, Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong is harnessing its unique position as an institution of learning to reduce the risks for students and strengthen the child-safe culture in schools.

## Cultural change

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### **ARCHDIOCESE OF PERTH**

In the interests of cultural change, the Archdiocese is involved in communications that promote safeguarding, such as video production, FAQs and a re-design of the archdiocesan safeguarding website.

Forty-three percent of parishes have completed a safeguarding activities assessment tool against the NCSS. A percentage increase is expected by the end of 2022.

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### **DIOCESE OF BALLARAT**

Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited, as a school governing authority, must ensure that its schools contextualise, develop and implement policies, procedures and practices to create a child-safe culture and environment.

A marked cultural change is occurring in parishes of the Diocese of Ballarat. Parishioners understand the importance of child safety and have an awareness of unsafe situations and a preparedness and knowledge about how to report concerns.

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### **DIOCESE OF BUNBURY**

Improvements in cultural change by the Diocese of Bunbury have included:

- communications about safeguarding in parish bulletins
- engagement with the Safeguarding Office about policies, procedures and guidelines
- promotion of Safeguarding Sunday throughout the Diocese.

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### **DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA**

In June 2022, Bishop Vincent Long launched a Statement of Commitment in relation to safeguarding. Within his statement, he articulated the Diocese's commitment to a culture of safeguarding where leaders at all levels put safeguarding first and where the best interests of children are always paramount. As a step further in response to this commitment, a review of the administration office of the Diocese, 'a Chancery Review', was commenced by external agency BDO Australia in August 2022. One of the recommendations from this review was merging the Safeguarding team with the People and Culture team, to close any gaps between



its systems and processes (particularly recruitment processes), as a means of further protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people. In combining Safeguarding with People and Culture, this will allow for a culture of safeguarding to be further embedded throughout the Diocese.

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### **DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON**

The Safeguarding Office has well-established links with parishes across the Diocese. Regular contact with parish secretaries, parish safeguarding representatives and clergy on all things safeguarding has developed a culture of change which has safeguarding at the forefront of decision-making.

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### **DIOCESE OF TOOWOOMBA**

The Diocese normalised open discussion around sexual abuse and safeguarding in formal spaces (at meetings) and in local spaces (parishes and schools). It openly promoted a zero-tolerance approach by the Diocese and parishes to abuse of any form, coupled with commitment to the best interests of children, young people and adults at risk.

Safeguarding matters are now a standing meeting item for parish councils and diocesan bodies.

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### **CHRISTIAN BROTHERS**

Efforts by the Christian Brothers have included initiating Rituals of Lament to acknowledge the damage and suffering of victims. They will continue to be open to providing such rituals.

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

The institute has been focused on ensuring the policies in place are current and represent best practice in the area of safeguarding for children and young people. This has included review of the policies and procedures for a number of ministries.

The focus on policy update and implementation has very much been about the embedding of safeguarding practice within the culture of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and cultural change to support this approach to safeguarding. An ongoing commitment to education and training supports this process.

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## **DE LA SALLE BROTHERS ANZPPNG**

Initiatives at the level of the entity have included:

- detailed action plan to implement recommendations from the prolonged CPSL/ACSL Audit (2019-2021)
- interim reports provided to ACSL on completion of action plan indicators
- early registration and first opportunity training of entity personnel for ACSL portal implementation.

Initiatives at the level of the sectors have included:

- identification of record categories consistent with ACSL priorities and progress in compilation
- initial negotiation of issues of compliance declarations where the sector is subject to local jurisdictional regulation
- preliminary identification and discussion of current criteria (pending Version 2) of NCSS for matters applicable at the entity level but not at the sector level.

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## **MARIST BROTHERS PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA**

The Province developed and ratified a child protection policy for formation communities in Timor Leste, based on the ACSL Standards and respectfully adapted to the local cultural context.

Child protection officers were appointed on the ground in Timor Leste, with direct responsibility for the implementation of the policy.

A review occurred of schools' Reconciliation Action Plans to further consider how best to ensure the safety and wellbeing of indigenous students.

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## **PRESENTATION CONGREGATION QUEENSLAND**

There has been a growing awareness and acceptance around the issues relating to child safety. All members of Presentation Sisters Queensland and staff and contractors are now very aware of the issues relating to child safety and are in full agreement with what is required. Where there was resistance, there is now acceptance. The message is getting across loud and clear.

The purpose of policy and procedures within the Congregation has shifted enormously within the last four years as a result of the work in the area of safeguarding within the Catholic Church. In-depth training and hands-on collaboration with the leadership team and safeguarding officer have resulted in total compliance and acceptance of the need for all Presentation members, staff and contractors to be consistently mindful of safeguarding as a matter of priority.

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**SISTERS OF CHARITY OF AUSTRALIA**

Sisters were provided with resources for Safeguarding Sunday on 11 September 2022 and invited and reminded to pray the specially prepared prayer.

Requests for training are being made by those responsible for ministries associated with the congregation.

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**SISTERS OF ST JOHN OF GOD**

The institute documented its approach to cultural safety.

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**SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH OF THE SACRED HEART**

Religious, laity and formal volunteers were invited to participate in the review of the Congregational Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement.

Formal volunteers in identified locations are now required to provide a Working with Children Check (or state-based equivalent) and have this 'linked' to the organisation.

The safeguarding coordinator and professional standards officer are attending each region around Australia and delivering a presentation to religious in relation to supervision and reflective practice.

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**VINCENTIAN FATHERS OCEANIA PROVINCE**

The Province held continuing conversations to develop a culture of care among all confreres as a shared responsibility.

## Pastoral responses

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### **ARCHDIOCESE OF PERTH**

Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence workshops have been provided.

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### **DIOCESE OF BALLARAT**

The Diocese continues to meet requests for pastoral responses, focusing on meeting the immediate financial and counselling needs of survivors.

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### **DIOCESE OF BUNBURY**

Pastoral responses have been provided to victims as requested.

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### **DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON**

The Safeguarding Office continues to pastorally support victims and survivors of child sexual assault. The Diocese has a 1800 number that can be contacted for support and referral.

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### **DIOCESE OF SANDHURST**

The Diocese has provided a flowchart for responding to concerns and complaints raised by children and any other persons. This flowchart includes the parish child safety officer's contact details, the parish priest and the diocesan safeguarding coordinator's contact details. This has been provided to all parishes to replace the previous reporting flowchart for display in all church buildings. The Diocese has updated a new process for keeping records of complaints.

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### **DIOCESE OF TOOWOOMBA**

The Diocese exercises professional care, respect and competence in dealing with personal injury claims, National Redress Scheme applications, disclosures (current and historical) and allegations of abuse. Where appropriate, the Diocese shows a willingness to meet personally and to listen to people who have experienced abuse, ensuring they are aware and informed of their options for personal action.

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**CHRISTIAN BROTHERS**

The institute continues to be a participant in the National Redress Scheme and to fulfil its obligations to fund compensation and counselling and to be open to direct personal responses to those who apply to the Scheme.

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**INSTITUTE OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY**

The Sisters of ISMAPNG have provided many pastoral responses throughout Australia in response to requests from applicants under the National Redress Scheme and from claimants in civil claims.

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**MARIST BROTHERS PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA**

At least one of the Province's schools is participating in a program for reciprocal inter-school sharing of counsellors, to enable more counsellors to be deployed amongst schools when incidents occur.

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**VINCENTIAN FATHERS OCEANIA PROVINCE**

The Province has developed clear management plans for people returning to the care of the Province after custodial time, through a shared development and consent to a Covenant for a Personal Safety and Wellbeing Agreement.

## Participation of children

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### ARCHDIOCESE OF ADELAIDE

In preparation for Safeguarding Sunday, the Archdiocese of Adelaide Child Protection Unit welcomed an opportunity to partner with Centacare Catholic Family Services to design and implement feedback tools for children and young people. The initiative called 'Your Voice, Your Say' was launched in parishes in August 2022. The project consisted of a suite of resources and avenues for feedback which included a pictorial booklet for children aged between 7 and 12 years, and a QR code for young people aged between 13 and 17 years to access an online survey and a link with questions for leaders of safeguarding and children's activities to complete. Just prior to National Child Protection Week, over 2,000 booklets were distributed across the Archdiocese and QR links were displayed on posters in parishes. This project not only sought to support the implementation of Standard 2 of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and relevant requirements but to ensure children and young people are listened to about what makes them feel safe, encouraged to have a voice in decisions which affect them and participate in the life of the Church. This initiative also integrated children being further informed of their rights, particularly to be safe in the parish environment.

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### ARCHDIOCESE OF PERTH

The Archdiocese promoted the following in the interests of child participation:

- children's activities on Safeguarding Sunday
- kite-flying event during National Child Protection Week
- mentoring provided for youth group leaders.

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### ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY

**Child Protection Week 2022:** The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney uses Child Protection Week each year as an opportunity to engage with children and communities in developing resources that raise awareness, inform, and keep communities safe. In 2022, the Archdiocese worked with children to develop a resource called 'Celebrating Differences: We are All Special'. This resource is an activity book for children, designed to assist them in recognising and celebrating difference and diversity within their community. Its point of difference is that the information is provided within a Catholic context.

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## **DIOCESE OF BUNBURY**

The Diocese of Bunbury held children's liturgy activities on Safeguarding Sunday and provided mentoring for youth group leaders.

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## **DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA**

**Parramatta Marist High School ('PMHS'), Westmead:** Participation of students (children) at PMHS has included reinforcing the idea that 'Nothing is that bad that you cannot tell someone about it'. Boys often remain silent about issues and do not speak up, as they feel it is not what 'a man' would do. To counter this, PMHS has introduced a new program that they call 'Game Changers' – a comprehensive Catholic youth ministry program for students in Marist Schools from years 7 to 12. It is highlighted by a strong sense of community, regular meetings, creative faith formation, and service opportunities. The aim is to provide boys with a platform to 'open up and not harden up', to speak about any situations that they do not feel comfortable in. It also aims to provide an avenue to not only be supported by other students but to also support students who need someone to speak to. This all leads to PMHS's values of compassion (looking out for one another), courage (standing up for what is right) and commitment to the pillars at the school that uphold the dignity of every student. This then leads to students realising that 'everyone has a right to feel safe all the time'.

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## **DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG**

In September 2022, CatholicCare Wollongong ran a competition to engage children and young people in thinking about 'what makes them feel safe' during Child Protection Week. There was a total of 39 entries with an age range of 5 to 14 years. The competition was circulated in schools, parishes and CatholicCare services across the Diocese.

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## **MARIST BROTHERS PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA**

Some of the Province's schools have interviewed or surveyed students to understand what kind of participation by students might be desired or needed, and how to provide opportunities for this.

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## **CATHOLIC EDUCATION DIOCESE OF BATHURST**

**Standards 2 - St Matthew's Mudgee:** Mobile phones are an important modern-day communication tool, essential in providing a safe and effective school environment. As a school community, when it came time to review its mobile phone policy in 2020, the school

wanted it to reflect an understanding that mobile phones are considered by the community to be an essential communication tool – noting, however, that they can also be improperly used, lost or damaged and must therefore be effectively managed. In order to ensure the updated policy reflected the needs of the students, the school included various opportunities for student voice in the review process. Two key changes were implemented as a result of listening to the voices of students. Firstly, students identified the need for a ‘phone zone’, which is available at break times, so they could organise after-school pickups, commitments or variations of routine. They also raised the need to be able to use phones at the end of the school day (while waiting in bus lines, for example) for the same purpose. These two changes were simple to implement and demonstrated that providing the opportunity for student voices to be heard as part of policy development can positively enhance student safety and wellbeing in the school environment.

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#### **CATHOLIC EDUCATION DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG**

Student voice and participation has been prioritised as a way to identify a shared understanding of what enables students to feel safe at school, utilising student voice to explicitly identify the peer-to-peer relationship behaviours that are of concern. Schools are developing student voice advisory groups to identify and work to solve problems within a peer-to-peer context. This data is used for school-based decision-making, prioritising the needs and voice of students.



## Community engagement

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### **ARCHDIOCESE OF PERTH**

The Archdiocese made the following efforts in the interests of community engagement:

- diocesan-wide events for National Child Protection Week
- events for Catholic Social Justice Statement 2022–23
- workshops on parent/carer protective behaviours
- collaboration projects by Mercy Care Connect, Loving for Life, Justice Ecology and Development Office, and St Thomas More Residential College
- 302 community participants in safeguarding initiatives.

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### **DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY**

The Diocese of Broken Bay participated in Safeguarding Awareness Month in September, where each agency of the Diocese engages in awareness-raising activities and promotions with a particular focus on an element of safeguarding – this year being safeguarding in families. Metrics to measure online engagement during the month reflected a significant increase in participation across the Diocese.

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### **DIOCESE OF BUNBURY**

The Diocese promoted National Child Protection Week in parishes and schools, circulated new church porch posters to parishes, and displayed the safeguarding program banner at key events.

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### **DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA**

The Diocese of Parramatta wanted to develop a statement from the community about its beliefs and values around safeguarding. In response to this, the ‘Parramatta Way’ safeguarding statement was developed by the community for the community including youth, religious, and culturally and linguistically diverse members from the Diocese of Parramatta community. The Parramatta Way statement was drafted in late 2021. The statement prioritises the importance of care, inclusion and respect for Aboriginal communities. The statement is reflected pictorially with a painting, by Aboriginal artist Brett Groves, of the Diocese’s story. The Parramatta Way was blessed and hung in May 2022 and sits in the foyer of the Bethany Centre, the chancery office of the Diocese of Parramatta.

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### **DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON**

The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton participated in Child Protection Week, concluding with Safeguarding Sunday.

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### **DIOCESE OF TOOWOOMBA**

The Diocese participated in public meetings and events during Child Protection Week and special occasions, provided safeguarding information on parish notice boards for locals and visitors, and promoted Child Safeguarding Sunday through parish liturgies, Masses and homilies.

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

The Community has participated in annual activities such as the Catholic Religious Australia Day of Sorrow and Promise, and National Child Protection Week. The latter included the participation of children, with the production and flying of safeguarding flags on Safeguarding Sunday.

The Community also installed an interactive memorial 'Rock of Remembrance', which has proved a successful forum for both creating general awareness and engaging with victims and survivors.

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### **SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

The Heritage Engagement Team has been involved in 'telling the Good Shepherd story' through a History Centre that is being co-designed and updated to include more stories and experiences of former residents.

## Engagement with victims and survivors

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### **ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE**

The Archdiocese of Melbourne, the Diocese of Sandhurst, the Diocese of Ballarat and the Diocese of Sale renewed their commitment to providing a fair and compassionate response to victim-survivors through the establishment of a company called Pathways Victoria, which commenced operations in 2022. Pathways Victoria offers a trauma-informed and person-centred model to respond to disclosures of abuse within the Catholic Church in Victoria via a three-step approach of engagement, response and resolution.

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### **ARCHDIOCESE OF PERTH**

The Archdiocese of Perth developed a Counselling Pathways Referral brochure and initiated a complaints management register within the offices of the Vicar General, Safeguarding and Professional Standards.

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### **DIOCESE OF SALE**

Examples of engagement with victims and survivors have included the following:

- The Diocese has taken a proactive approach with legal advisors for both indemnified and non-indemnified compensation claims by ensuring the presence at all mediation sessions of a senior member of the diocesan staff.
- Prior to the commencement of any mediation process, the Diocese makes an offer of a written and/or personal apology to the victim/survivor as part of the process. This has been valued by legal advisors of both parties and has often set an appropriate tone for the mediation to proceed.
- All personal approaches to the Diocese are dealt with compassionately and expeditiously.

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### **DIOCESE OF TOOWOOMBA**

The Diocese has made the following efforts in relation to engagement with victims and survivors:

- Provided public information via posters and parish newsletter notices, inviting contact with designated persons.

- Held personal meetings / listening sessions when requested by persons living with the experience of abuse.
- Provided information on options for personal action to support and empower survivors of abuse.
- Provided counselling support where appropriate and requested.

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### **DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG**

The Diocese of Wollongong has engaged with survivors to establish the 'Magnolia Project', which involves the planting of a Magnolia Soulangeana tree on a parish site. This tree was chosen as it represents youth, innocence, endurance and resilience. The plaque installed with each tree recognises the harm experienced by members of the community and the Diocese's ongoing commitment to ensuring the protection of all children, young people and those who are vulnerable. Survivors can visit the trees without having to enter a church building, which allows for quiet reflection in a safe space. The first tree was planted and blessed in August 2022.

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### **CHRISTIAN BROTHERS**

The Christian Brothers have a commitment to, engagement with and acknowledgment of victims and survivors. They have established, expanded and funded a professional standards office to facilitate the ministry of healing, reconciliation and right relationships. They are committed to providing opportunities for pastoral care and engagement with victims and survivors, and their leadership team is available and willing to meet with victims and survivors to truly understand the variety of their ongoing needs.

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

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart's efforts in engagement with victims and survivors have included the following:

- Survivors and victims are encouraged to come forward through institute policies and the development of the public website.
- The institute has rarely engaged directly with victims or survivors of abuse in its works or ministries; however, it remains deeply committed to supporting their healing.
- The institute acknowledges the pain and suffering of survivors and encourages any survivor of abuse to voice their concerns.
- The institute has developed a safeguarding tab on the province website. This tab includes the institute's public safeguarding statement, which encourages all survivors and victims of abuse to speak out and have their stories heard.
- The safeguarding statement is also included in the institute's safeguarding policy.

- The institute continues to actively engage with the National Redress Scheme.

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#### **INSTITUTE OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY**

The Institute has engaged directly with many victims and survivors through its internal claims scheme.

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#### **MARIST BROTHERS PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA**

There has been a restructuring of the role of healing and support coordinator for victims and survivors to ensure its continuation and also to make its provision more independent of the congregation. Funding for the next three years has been set in place.

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#### **PRESENTATION CONGREGATION QUEENSLAND**

The Congregation are members of the National Redress Scheme and follow procedures and processes laid down by this organisation to fully support survivors of abuse. This process includes a direct personal response from the Congregation leader.

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#### **SISTERS OF CHARITY OF AUSTRALIA**

Two meetings with victims have been undertaken.

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#### **SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

Good Shepherd updated its apology to all victims and survivors of sexual and institutional abuse. This is available on the Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand website. A reunion for former residents of Good Shepherd, including survivors, was held, at which the Province leader reiterated the apology on behalf of the sisters.