

### Catholic Schools must continue to focus on safeguarding children

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Ms Sheree Limbrick, head of the Catholic Church's new safeguarding body, Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL), has told teachers, principals and others in Cairns on the weekend that while Catholic schools are further advanced in establishing safeguarding practices for children, there is always more that can be done.

Ms Limbrick, CEO of CPSL, was presenting at the 2018 Safeguarding Children Conference hosted by Catholic Education Services in the Diocese of Cairns on Saturday 28 April 2017.

More than 120 principals, teachers, school and Catholic Education Services staff as well as priests, volunteers, Catholic Early Care and Learning, parents and local child protection experts attended the conference.

Ms Limbrick said the recent publication of CPSL's new draft National Catholic Safeguarding Standards is a significant step in ensuring children are safe in schools and other Catholic institutions across Australia.

"Broad consultation around the new draft standards has now started and it is important teachers, educators, parents and others have their say about the content of the standards and how they will work.

"This is the first time, anywhere in Australia and among just a handful of countries around the world, where the Catholic Church leadership will be accountable for its adherence to consistent and measurable national standards for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

"The new Standards will be particularly relevant in schools which are now the places where children come into contact most with Church institutions.

"And while Catholic schools are well down the track in implementing safeguarding practices, schools have not always been safe places for children. It is vital that Catholic schools and the broader education system continue to focus on safeguarding.

"The new Standards will be used to hold the leaders and members of Catholic dioceses, congregations, organisations and other Catholic entities accountable for the safety and wellbeing of all people who come into contact with the Church.

"As we start our work we will be auditing and reporting publicly on different Catholic organisations so as to assure the Catholic and broader community that our parishes, schools and other places are safe for children," Ms Limbrick said.

CPSL was established by the Catholic Church in Australia in November 2016 to develop, audit and report on compliance with professional standards across Catholic entities. It is a 'functionally' independent company with no clergy or religious on its board and is a significant development in the Church's approach to protecting children and vulnerable adults.

To comment on the CPSL draft National Catholic Safeguarding Standards go to [CPSL website](#)

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