

Catholic Professional Standards Ltd child safeguarding consultations up and running

Monday 28 May 2018

The Catholic Church's new child safeguarding organisation, Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL) has met with three significant groups over the past week as it continues its Australia-wide consultation on new child safeguarding standards for the Catholic Church.

Ms Sheree Limbrick, CEO of CPSL, said that over the past week Catholic School Parents Australia, Catholic Religious Australia Council members and Vicars General from Dioceses across Australia have been briefed on the draft standards and asked for their feedback.

"This is all part of a concerted effort to hear from everyone who will be impacted by these new standards before they are finalised later in the year," Ms Limbrick said.

"In addition to the groups we have already met with, we will shortly be starting consultations with survivors and other groups in every state.

"This three-month consultation process started at the end of April with the release of draft National Catholic Safeguarding Standards which can be seen on our website where anyone can provide written feedback," she said.

Vicars General from Dioceses across Australia

On Wednesday last week (23 May) Ms Limbrick met with eight Vicars General from Dioceses across Australia, all of whom expressed strong support for CPSL and the introduction of new safeguarding standards across all Church entities.

"It was heartening to hear all the Vicars General voice their commitment to improving safeguarding practices and audit mechanisms.

"Together we discussed several areas where CPSL could tighten requirements in the next iteration of the NCSS and discussed a range of strategies dioceses are already implementing to improve safeguarding particularly in the areas of screening overseas clergy, supporting parishes to increase awareness of child safety and improving risk assessment skills and practices."

Catholic School Parents Australia

Earlier in the week, Sunday May 20, Ms Kate Eversteyn, CPSL Director of Safeguarding, met with Catholic School Parents Australia (CPSL) in Sydney where she shared information and sought feedback regarding the draft safeguarding standards.

"We are encouraging all parents to take an active role in keeping children safe," Ms Eversteyn said.

“One way of helping parents do this is by keeping CSPA and other school and parent organisations informed of our work and asking for feedback from parents on what makes a child safe church and school,”

John O’Brien, Executive Officer, Catholic School Parents Australia, said CSPA is keen to ensure that the national voice of parents with children in Catholic schools is heard around these vital safeguarding issues.

“As a follow-up to the report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, CSPA is developing a position statement entitled “Catholic Schools as Child Safe Communities.

“Our meeting with CPSL has been most informative, clarifying and helpful and will greatly inform our formal response to the draft National Catholic Safeguarding Standards,” he said.

Catholic Religious Australia Council members

On Monday last week (21 May) Ms Limbrick met with some 15 Catholic Religious Australia Council members in Sydney to discuss the draft standards.

Ms Limbrick said the meeting focused on the work done so far to ensure the standards recommendations from the Royal Commission continue to inform child protection activities throughout Religious Institutes.

“From this meeting it is clear that CRA is strongly committed to the CPSL safeguarding and audit approach.

“In a wide-ranging discussion we talked about the appropriate responses in very small groups of religious and how safeguarding standards for both children and vulnerable adults needs to become central to their mission and operations.”

Coming up

In June, CPSL will be consulting with Church sexual abuse survivors, their families and advocates in forums scheduled around the country. Also in June, CPSL will be hosting workshops with Church authorities to discuss the audit approach CPSL will introduce later in the year.

In coming months CPSL will continue consultations with Catholic Religious Australia General Forum, seminary rectors, heads of schools of Theology, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, education, social services and health and aged care providers, youth ministry leaders and others.

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

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