



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Children need to be better understood if Church is to develop best practice safeguarding standards**

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One of Australia's leading experts on the theology of childhood has told a meeting in Adelaide that to develop and advance appropriate cultures for the care of children the Church must better understand children as competent and accomplished beings.

The Rev James McEvoy, senior lecturer in the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy at the Australian Catholic University and a priest of the Adelaide Archdiocese, was part of the Adelaide Catholic Professional Standards Ltd consultation meeting on the new CPSL draft Safeguarding Standards last week.

Rev Mc Evoy, said our children's lives are immensely precious to families, school communities, our Church and most importantly to God.

"Together we need to reflect the great gift of children and childhood," he said.

"We need to ask ourselves how can church communities and Catholic schools best honour children's innate sense of trust, wonder and play? We must be aware of how the grace of God is uniquely present to us through our children's lives."

The consultation meeting, held in the Adelaide Town Hall, was attended by safeguarding officers from Archdiocese Adelaide, Edmund Rice, Dominicans Education, Dominicans, Centacare, ACU and other Catholic organisations.

Ms Kate Eversteyn, CPSL Director of Safeguarding, said the discussion around the Theology of Childhood is very important in the development of the new CPSL Safeguarding Standards.

"We look forward to talking more with Rev. Mc Evoy on the Theology of Childhood and children and the types of conversations we should be having with clergy/religious, church personnel, parents, carers and communities," Ms Eversteyn said.

"If we are really going to tackle cultural change we need to reflect on and discuss the meaning of childhood in the light of Christian faith."

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