

## **Safeguarding capacity building and audits making an impact**

Wednesday 19 August 2020

Safeguarding capacity building activities and audits delivered by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL) are highly valued by Catholic Church leaders and safeguarding personnel, according to stakeholder feedback compiled in a report published by CPSL today.

CPSL was established in 2016 in response to the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Since then, CPSL has developed and rolled out the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, provided safeguarding capacity building to Church entities through training, support, advice and guidance, and developed an audit framework to measure compliance with the Standards.

Key figures from the CPSL Impact Report show that more than 1,800 people have accessed training activities, 1,200 people have attended briefings, conference presentations and informal development activities, 13 entities have participated in a CPSL audit of their practices against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, and 10 audit reports have been published on the CPSL website.

CPSL CEO Sheree Limbrick said that the report shows CPSL has been delivering on its purpose: to help the Church in Australia create safer environments for children and adults at risk by providing capacity building and audit services, and the report shows these services are highly valued by Church entities across Australia.

“The report shows not just the breadth of safeguarding training and support CPSL has provided but also that people have responded, on the whole, very positively to the services we have provided, and data from our formal evaluations reflects that fact. Feedback from training participants affirms that it has helped build their capacity to protect children. Participants have also told us that they have really valued the opportunity to meet each other through our training and find that other entities are just as committed to safeguarding as they are. From leaders of small religious institutes to safeguarding personnel in large dioceses, we’re hearing that more capacity building is needed to create safe environments for children and adults at risk, so CPSL will continue to evolve our training plans to meet emerging needs,” Ms Limbrick said.

“The other major insights come from the safeguarding audits we have completed of Church entities. This is the first time that the Church in Australia has been subject to nationally consistent guidelines and been audited against them. CPSL has now audited an archdiocese, three dioceses and six religious institutes and we are getting a sense of where some of the safeguarding gaps are across the Church as a whole. For instance, the audits indicate a number of areas for practice improvement including risk management, engaging with children, families and communities, cultural safety awareness and capacity, and a range of people management processes including professional/pastoral supervision, performance reviews and oversight, and access to ongoing professional development.”

“While there are certainly areas for improvement, audits conducted to date have revealed consistent commitment of leaders and an emerging and strengthening child-safe culture. We have also found areas where Church entities are consistently demonstrating strong levels of compliance, such as in the area of complaints management. Given the well-justified past scrutiny towards the Church in this area, that Church entities are increasingly able to demonstrate that robust systems and procedures are now in place is a vital finding.”

“Having conducted a number of audits over the last several months, we are now getting feedback about our audit approach and method. This feedback is incredibly important because it allows us to improve our service delivery.



## MEDIA RELEASE

CPSL's continuous improvement model welcomes feedback in all areas. We are committed to providing the best possible services and in so doing encourage and support those we work with to do their absolute best to protect, value and respect children and adults at risk," Ms Limbrick said.

CEO Sheree Limbrick is available for interview. The full report can be read on the CPSL website [here](#).

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*Catholic Professional Standards Ltd is a not-for-profit public company, limited by guarantee. It was established by the leadership of the Catholic Church during the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to develop national safeguarding standards, to audit the compliance of Church Authorities with those standards and to publicly report the results. CPSL has a lay Board of Directors with sole responsibility for the content and publication of audit reports.*

*Visit the CPSL website [here](#).*