



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**3 September 2021**

### **Child safety in the spotlight**

In a first for the Catholic Diocese of Sale, parishes and schools across the region will soon unite to celebrate *Child Safety Week*.

In a [video message published online](#), the Catholic Bishop of Sale, Bishop Greg Bennet, said that child safety is the highest pastoral and moral priority in the Diocese of Sale.

"We want all our people and our structures to hold the care, safety and dignity of children in the highest regard.

"Child safety should always be front of mind, not only during *Child Safety Week*, but it should be paramount to all we do as a Diocese, in our parishes, in our schools, and wherever young people encounter the Church," he said.

The theme for the celebration is, '*Every child in every community needs a fair go*'.

"We want every child to have the chance to achieve their very best. I encourage parents, grandparents and carers to have open conversations with the young people in their lives about their safety, whether online, at school, or in the community. There are a range of resources available to families to support these crucial conversations," Bishop Bennet said.

Director of Catholic Education for the Diocese of Sale, Ms Maria Kirkwood, said that a major focus of *Child Safety Week* is listening to and empowering children and young people to have their say.

"Throughout *Child Safety Week*, and at various times through the school year, we encourage students to learn about behaviours that will help to keep them safe. One important action that children can take is to speak to a trusted adult if they have any concerns," she said.

In the lead up to *Child Safety Week*, children from every school and parish in the Diocese were invited to enter a poster competition to express their ideas about child safety. The winning designs are available to view on the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Ltd (DOSCEL) website, and will be turned into posters for display at churches and schools across the region.

"The safety, wellbeing and participation of students is our top priority. My hope is that during *Child Safety Week*, we will see schools, parishes and families come together to ensure that whether children are in class, at church, or at home, our environments are safe and welcoming, and uphold the dignity of every child," Ms Kirkwood said.

Child Safety Week in the Diocese of Sale will commence on 5 September, and conclude on [Safeguarding Sunday](#), September 12.

- ENDS

**For all media enquiries, contact Chloe Smethurst on 0417 534 232**