

- MEDIA RELEASE -

Former Federal Court Justice Duncan Kerr to chair Catholic Church National Appeals and Review Panel

23 November 2022

Former justice of the Federal Court The Honourable Duncan Kerr has today been announced as the new Chair of the Catholic Church's National Appeals and Review Panel.

The National Appeals and Review Panel, managed by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL), is an independent panel which facilitates reviews for complaints concerning abuse against children and vulnerable adults that have been managed by Australian Catholic Church Authorities.

Speaking shortly after the announcement, ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens said that the appointment is very significant in the life of the Review Panel, given Mr Kerr's substantial experience.

'The National Appeals and Review Panel looks into the management of complaints to ensure there has been procedural fairness and a robust process. Reviews are taken incredibly seriously. For complainants, respondents or Church Authorities who feel their complaint has not been handled appropriately, the Panel is here to thoroughly and compassionately review the processes to determine whether the outcome of the complaint management has been procedurally fair,' Dr Stephens said.

'Mr Kerr taking leadership of the Panel means that there is deep experience and expertise at the highest review level to oversee the processes of the panel.'

In addition to his tenure as a former justice of the Federal Court from 2012 – February 2022, Mr Kerr is a barrister who has served as President of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal from 2012 to 2017, as a member of federal parliament from 1987-2010, and as Minister for Justice from 1993-1996.

The National Review and Appeals Panel can facilitate a review into a previous complaint that was made to and managed by a Church Authority under recognised Professional and Safeguarding Standards of the Catholic Church: the National Response Protocol, Towards Healing or the complaints management policy of an individual Catholic Church Authority, including dioceses and religious institutes.

A review can be requested by:

- a. the complainant, in relation to the process and/or findings of an investigation, or based on an objection to how a matter has been managed or the outcome of the complaint;
- b. the respondent, if they cooperated with the investigation process, in relation to the process and/or findings of an investigation, or based on an objection to how a matter has been managed or the outcome of the complaint; and
- c. the Responding Church Authority, in relation to the process and/or findings of an investigation.

The National Appeals and Review Panel has been managed by ACSL since 2021.

More information about the National Appeals and Review Panel is available on ACSL's [website](#).

If you need support, you can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14. If you need to report a concern, call the police on 000.

ACSL works with Catholic entities to promote and oversee a nationally consistent, comprehensive and sustainable framework for the protection of children and adults at risk within the Church in Australia.