



MEDIA RELEASE

April 30, 2021

National groups welcome new CEO of Catholic safeguarding body

The three member organisations of Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited have welcomed the appointment of Ursula Stephens as the chief executive officer of the recently-formed company.

The board of ACSL, which was established in December 2020 to oversee all safeguarding, child protection and professional standards matters in Australia, announced Dr Stephens' appointment earlier today.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) and the Association of Ministerial PjPs (AMPJP) are the three members of Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited. Each organisation endorsed Dr Stephens as the first full-time CEO.

"Ursula has a long list of positions and achievements in many fields, including politics, public service, community engagement and education," Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge said.

"While her departure as CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia is a loss for them, the Church and the nation will continue to benefit from Ursula's gifts and skills, now focused on the crucial task of professional standards and safeguarding."

Eva Skira, the chair of AMPJP, said Dr Stephens is well known and highly trusted within and beyond the Catholic Church.

"The Church's ministries understand the pre-eminent place of child protection and safeguarding across all our works," she said.

"To continue the hard work that has already been undertaken, and with a new company structure in place, we know we are in safe hands with Ursula leading Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited."

Dr Stephens will take over from Sheree Limbrick, who served as CEO of Catholic Professional Standards Ltd for three-and-a-half years and has been acting CEO of ACSL since December.

Ms Limbrick will complete her time with ACSL this week.

CRA president Br Peter Carroll FMS said the Church in Australia is indebted to Ms Limbrick for her leadership and service.

"I'm sure I speak on behalf of the Bishops Conference and AMPJP and so many others when I thank Sheree for exceptional service to the Church with Catholic Professional Standards Limited," he said.

"In particular, we note the momentous task of overseeing the development of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, as well as helping guide the transition from CPSL to ACSL.

"Sheree now leaves, after many years working for the Church, with our deep gratitude and sincerest best wishes."