

- MEDIA RELEASE -

New draft code of safety for the Catholic Church: ‘*Our Common Mission*’ launched for consultation

4 August 2022

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) and Australia’s Catholic Bishops Conference have this week released the first draft of the Church’s new code of safety, entitled *Our Common Mission*.

Our Common Mission sets out the commitment of the Catholic Church in Australia to put safety at the centre of mission. It is a document intended to be adopted by all Church entities to inform ongoing formation in ministry and service for both people in religious ministry and lay people.

ACSL CEO and Advisory Group Member Dr Ursula Stephens said that in drafting *Our Common Mission*, the intention has been to create something that can speak directly and inclusively to diverse groups.

‘*Our Common Mission* is a short document and that’s something which is very intentional. It outlines foundational principles based on culture, relationships and formation that can guide each entity to develop their own organisational code of conducts that respond to their unique contexts, while still reflecting a cohesive national commitment to putting safety squarely at the centre of mission,’ Dr Stephens said.

‘We are now inviting all Church entities to consider how they would embed *Our Common Mission* in their organisation and provide us with feedback on the draft. This will inform a final version for approval in November 2022 and dissemination across all entities. To help prompt reflection on the document we’ve developed a Conversation Guide which accompanies *Our Common Mission*,’ Dr Stephens said.

Our Common Mission has been developed in response to Recommendation 16.49 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse which states that ‘codes of conduct in religious institutions should explicitly and equally apply to people in religious ministry and to lay people’, a recommendation which was accepted by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia.

In October 2021, ACSL established an advisory group to guide the writing of a national code for all Catholic ministries and services. Advisory group members (Sr Veronica Hoey SGS – Chair, Dr Jane Comensoli, Dr David Leary OFM, Sr Ailsa MacKinnon RSM, Rev Dr Jake Mudge, and Dr Ursula Stephens – CEO ACSL) provided input on the draft, which reflects current ecclesiology and safeguarding within an Australian and global context and recognises the imperative of each entity to develop their own codes of conduct.

Our Common Mission complements existing Church protocols and standards including the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, the National Response Protocol, and the National Response Framework.

Other Church protocols such as Integrity in Ministry and Integrity in the Service of the Church which detail a range of specific behavioural standards can still be used, but some of these standards have been condensed and updated in *Our Common Mission*.

Read [Our Common Mission](#)

Read the [Our Common Mission Conversation Guide](#)

Provide your responses through the [Consultation Survey](#) by 31 August 2022.

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.