



MEDIA RELEASE

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New national Catholic safeguarding agency established

The Catholic Church has established a new company to oversee all safeguarding, child protection and professional standards in Australia, creating a more focused and streamlined model.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) and the Association of Ministerial PJs (AMPJP) have today launched Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited.

“We have discerned what was working well and what needed to change, and we are convinced this new national agency will make the Church’s work more coordinated, accountable and best prepared to ensure the safety of people in Catholic settings,” CRA president Br Peter Carroll FMS said.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited will reduce duplication and consolidate work previously undertaken by Catholic Professional Standards Limited, the Implementation Advisory Group and the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards.

Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge said multiple reviews and extensive consultation within and beyond the Church, including with survivors and their supporters, have led to the establishment of Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited.

“The work of safeguarding and professional standards is constantly evolving, including through important and necessary state regulation and oversight. We in the Church knew we had to evolve as well, which has brought us to this point and to this new agency,” he said.

“Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited will build on the strong work of the previous bodies, including in demanding accountability of Catholic entities and in requiring independent audits and reviews of adherence to the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.”

Archbishop Coleridge said insights and recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse have also shaped the new approach. Some of the bodies ceasing operation were established before or during the Royal Commission.

Eva Skira, the chair of AMPJP, said the members of the Association – canonical stewards of Church ministries, including in education, health, aged care, disability and social and community services – were supportive of the consolidated national approach.

“While Ministerial Public Juridic Persons as an ecclesial structure are relatively new and emerging, we are deeply committed to child protection and safeguarding in our various contexts,” she said.

“We are very pleased to be collaborators with the Bishops Conference and CRA, which have made significant progress in recent years.”

Said Br Peter: “AMPJP’s membership of Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited extends the impact of the company across an even broader range of Catholic ministries.

“Our focus must always be on the safety of all those who come into contact with the Church.”

More information on Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited can be found here: bit.ly/ACSLFAQs