

MEDIA RELEASE

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Robert Fitzgerald AM appointed Chair of Diocese of Parramatta Safeguarding Council

The Diocese of Parramatta has appointed one of Australia's leaders in child protection and institutional governance, Robert Fitzgerald AM, as Chair of its Safeguarding Council.

Led by Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta, the Diocese has been at the forefront of safeguarding practices in the Catholic Church for years now, developing stringent policies and procedures and embedding a culture of safeguarding across all parishes, agencies and ministries.

The appointment of Mr Fitzgerald to Chair of the long-standing Safeguarding Council is the next iteration in the Diocese's commitment to safeguarding by working with a diverse group of independent experts.

Mr Fitzgerald brings decades of experience in social justice, governance and the protection of vulnerable people. As a Commissioner of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, he helped lead one of Australia's most significant inquiries into institutional safeguarding, accountability and cultural reform. His career has also included serving as Australia's Age Discrimination Commissioner, Productivity Commissioner and Community and Disability Services Commissioner in New South Wales.

"Our safeguarding journey has been centred around protecting and promoting the dignity and rights of children and all persons, especially those who are vulnerable," said Bishop Vincent.

"I am pleased to appoint Robert Fitzgerald to our Safeguarding Council and am sure that his exceptional experience, integrity and lifelong commitment to justice will be an enormous gift to our Diocese as we continue to strengthen our safeguarding culture."

"I would like to thank prior Chair Kathryn Greiner AO, whose outstanding leadership has helped create a safeguarding culture of zero tolerance for any abuse, transparency, accountability and continuous improvement."

Mr Fitzgerald said he was honoured to accept the appointment.

"Strong safeguarding depends on leadership, accountability and a willingness to continually improve. It is essential to honouring our promise to keep safe children and vulnerable adults. I am pleased to join the Diocese of Parramatta's Safeguarding Council and contribute to its already significant work in promoting safe environments and strengthening public trust."

Joining Mr Fitzgerald on the Safeguarding Council are Sebastian Duhau, who will serve as the Council's youth representative, Bianca Grella, and Dr Greg Elliott. Together, they bring a wealth of professional expertise and lived experience to the Council.

The Diocese of Parramatta is proud of its commitment to safeguarding with a focus on transparency, survivor-centred practice and ongoing formation that continues to influence safeguarding practices nationally.

It has recently undertaken an external audit of its safeguarding practices with independent auditors QIP; safeguarding was placed in the spotlight during the Diocese's fifth Safe Parishes Week; and has expanded its Prevention and Healing program. Find out more at parracatholic.org/safeguarding

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About the Diocese of Parramatta

The Diocese of Parramatta is the Catholic Church in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains and is home to over 320,000 Catholics with 45 parishes and churches. The Diocese educates more than 43,000 students across its 80 schools, employs more than 5,500 people and cares for thousands of people in need through its social services arm, Catholic Care.

Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv was appointed the fourth Bishop of Parramatta in 2016. He is Australia's first Asian-born Bishop, and the first Vietnamese-born Bishop to lead a Catholic Diocese outside of Vietnam. You can read more about [him here](#).