

## **Video Message Chair Catholic Professional Standards Ltd**

**The Hon Geoff Giudice AO**

**Chair Catholic Professional Standards Ltd**

### **Consultation meetings: Draft National Catholic Safeguarding Standards**

*Introduction to the Survivors, Families and Advocates Consultation sessions held June-July 2018*

**June 2018**

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Welcome to this meeting to discuss the draft National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

Firstly, let me thank you for spending time with us today and sharing your experiences and insights. Your contribution as survivors of sexual abuse within the Church and advocates for survivors, is vital to the standard-setting process and we appreciate it.

Catholic Professional Standards Limited, or CPSL, was established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia in response to the revelations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

CPSL has some very important functions relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The main functions are firstly, to establish nationally consistent standards for the protection of children and other vulnerable people who come into contact with the Church.

The Standards are to deal with the promotion of safety, the prevention of abuse and misconduct, and responses to allegations of abuse and misconduct.

Secondly, to provide education and training in relation to the Standards and, in doing so, foster a culture of safety and care.

And thirdly, CPSL is to enter into contractual arrangements with Church authorities to ensure ongoing compliance with the Standards by all Catholic entities, to carry out audits and to report on the results.

There are many other aspects to the Church's response to the Royal Commission relating to redress, canon law and so on. These other matters are the concern of the recently established Implementation Group.

While CPSL is owned by the Church it has an independent board, which does not include any priests, nuns or brothers. You can read the qualifications and experience of the Directors on the CPSL website.

One of the challenges for CPSL is to maintain the momentum for change created by the Royal Commission.

Because of the Royal Commission, we all have a heightened awareness of the possibility of abuse of, and misconduct towards, vulnerable people who come into contact with the Church.

But no matter how much better informed we are, the danger has not passed. Evil will always exist. A sustained effort is needed to create and maintain a culture of safety and care. That realisation is central to CPSL's operations and two things in particular flow from it.

The first is that the safeguarding of vulnerable people should be at the forefront of conversations within the Church at all levels.

The development of the Standards should not take place in the background at some bureaucratic level. It should be embraced at all levels. The widest possible contribution should be encouraged.

And it goes almost without saying, that broad-based discussion will increase awareness and contribute to the creation of a child safe culture throughout the Church.

Secondly, because of the ever-present possibility of abuse and misconduct of other kinds, CPSL will be persistent and uncompromising in implementing the national Standards.

Our default position is that audit reports will be publicly available. This does not mean that the audit will be used to embarrass or humiliate. The main purpose of the audit process is to recognise and reinforce good practice and to assist authorities to change behaviour where that is necessary.

Audit reports – positive and negative – will be of great practical and symbolic significance. They will tell the story of how well a bishop or religious leader is managing safeguarding requirements in the different services under their control.

When the child safeguarding Standards have been approved later this year, CPSL will carry out its responsibility to implement them with perseverance, compassion and transparency – three words taken from the CPSL Values Statement.

Quite a deal has been said by the Royal Commission among others, about the need to change the culture of certain Church organisations.

The Objectives of CPSL use the words ‘fostering a culture of safety and care’. The culture of an organisation is the product of a number of things and among the most important are the systems, the policies and procedures which exist in the organisation, and of course the way in which those systems are administered.

Your views on the kind of systems which should be in place will be particularly valuable. As I said in opening, your contribution to the drafting of the standards is very important. With your help, and the help of others with whom we are consulting, I am confident that we can produce robust and effective safeguarding standards that will fulfil your aspirations for the safest Church environment we can have.

On behalf of the Board, I wish you well in your discussions.

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