

## **- MEDIA RELEASE -**

### **Catholic agencies commit to giving every child a ‘fair go’ through their implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards**

8 September 2022

In National Child Protection Week the theme ‘Every child, in every community, needs a fair go’ is being endorsed by Catholic agencies across Australia.

Catholic Social Services Australia, Catholic Health Australia, the National Catholic Education Commission, Catholic Employment Relations and Caritas Australia are among those lending their support to National Child Protection Week in a very tangible way.

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, which incorporate the National Child Safe Principles, have been endorsed for all Catholic organisations who are engaged with children and young people. They underpin the Catholic Church’s commitment to working towards a common goal of every child, in every community being safe, cared for, having their needs met and being afforded the chance to realise their potential.

Chair of Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited, Prof Michael Lavarch AO has invited Catholic organisations to sign up to show their commitment to the NCSS through the ACSL website and download the NCSS commitment badge for use on their websites and social media.

“ACSL acknowledges the lifelong harm and trauma that is experienced by children who are subjected to neglect, violence and abuse. We are committed through the social mission of the Church, to help create communities that support families and children,” Professor Lavarch said.

CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA), Monique Earsman acknowledges the range of services provided by Catholic agencies to support families, and has called for stronger action for families, particularly those living in entrenched disadvantaged communities as highlighted by the 2020 CSSA Research “Mapping the Potential”.

“We know the communities where investment in services and early intervention will make a difference to the life trajectory of these children. We must address the cycle of intergenerational poverty and disadvantage to provide a better future for the children in our care,” Ms Earsman said.

Jacinta Collins, Executive Director of the National Catholic Education Commission says that building a strong school community that invests in supporting children so that they can focus on learning, development and wellbeing, is critical to having a productive and healthy community.

“Our Catholic schools are committed to ensuring the most supportive learning opportunities are provided to children and young people to nurture their future wellbeing. We want all our students to have a fair go.”

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“The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards capture this culture of care and safety, and are wholly supported by the National Catholic Education Commission,” Ms Collins said.

Catholic Employment Relations CEO, Ian Yard-Smith has acknowledged how the stress of the past two years have impacted on work and family relationships, and through that the wellbeing of many children.

“By our work in supporting employers to support their employees navigate those pressures we hope to contribute to an environment of safety for children. The stress of finances, health, work or relationships can make it difficult for parents and carers to navigate life and provide the stability that is so important for children.”

Kirsty Robertson, CEO of Caritas Australia says that the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards support the social justice mission of the Church.

“As the international aid and development agency of the Catholic Church it is our mission to promote social justice and the dignity of every person, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Our unrelenting commitment to safeguarding and the implementation of these standards are paramount to our work and our mission,” Ms Robertson said.

ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens says that Catholic communities are involved in many community events throughout National Child Protection Week, from art competitions, performances, parades and even kite flying.

“We encourage all Catholic organisations to demonstrate their commitment to National Child Protection Week and support our collective efforts to ensure every community across Australia has strong foundations for families and children.”

To sign up to the NCSS Commitment page and download the NCSS Commitment Badge, visit [ACSL's website](#).

*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.*

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