

The PSU is excited to welcome Ryan Gardiner, Safeguarding Officer (Western Region) to our team!

Ryan joins the PSU after working as a Child Protection Practitioner for the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. In his role as a Child Protection Practitioner, Ryan has worked as part of the Investigation and Response Unit where he has assessed reports of alleged abuse and neglect of children and young people. Coupled with his background in psychology and health sciences, Ryan is eager to transfer these skills and experience to the PSU to assist all parishes in the Western Region.

Ryan commenced with the PSU on 11 October and is currently undertaking an induction program. Shortly, Ryan will reach out and make contact with each of the Western Region parishes individually. However, in the meantime Western Region Parishes are encouraged to continue to contact the PSU team for any support or assistance.



Safeguarding in Focus

Parish Safeguarding Reference Group

The PSU is very excited to announce the formation of a Parish Safeguarding Reference Group.

Comprising of selected safeguarding representatives and members of clergy from across the Archdiocese, the group will convene to act as an advisory body to the PSU rather than to the Archdiocese. Meetings held throughout the year, will provide a forum for discussion and discernment that creates a climate of good governance through accountability to parish staff, volunteers and parishioners, including children and young people.

It is our hope that this Parish Safeguarding Reference Group will be a link between the Parish Priest, parishioners and the Archdiocese in relation to safeguarding.

Once the group is finalised and meetings held, the PSU will continue to provide parishes with ongoing updates.

Safeguarding Children and Young People Survey for Parents and Carers

Thank you to all those parishes who distributed to the parents and carers of children and young people within their communities the *Safeguarding Children and Young People Survey* from the Professional Standards Unit (PSU).

This survey was prepared by the PSU for parents and carers to provide feedback on their safeguarding experiences within the parish.

We are very pleased to advise that a total of 111 responses were received from parents and carers across the Archdiocese.

The PSU will now begin to compile and analyse the data collected to improve safeguarding policies, practices, and procedures as well as shaping any reviews and future support.

Thank you again for your assistance with distributing this survey to your communities.



Children's Week: 23 - 31 October 2021

Children's Week, Saturday 23 October to Sunday 31 October 2021, is a national celebration that recognises the talents, skills, achievements and rights of children and presents an opportunity to consider the conditions in society which affect the lives and future of our own children. The theme this year is: **Children have the right to choose their friends and safely connect with others**, drawn from Article 15 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

To celebrate Children's Week, the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne is taking this opportunity to reach out to parents, carers and children in our parishes to raise awareness to the issue of online safety. In doing so, we hope to support the efforts of parents and carers to better understand online safety, as children connect to activities in their parish, with peers and family.

You can access the resource [here](#).



Parish and Entity Self-Assessment Tool – Submission Process for 2021

After what has been another challenging year for us all, the Professional Standards Unit would like to firstly recognise the considerable effort and commitment shown by parishes to continue to implement child safety policies and processes.

In response to feedback received last year, we are changing the way we conduct our meetings with parishes for the Parish and Entity Child Safety Assessment Tool (herein referred to as the Self-Assessment Tool).

This year instead of requesting that each parish submit their self-assessment by a particular date, Safeguarding Officers will hold meetings with each parish to discuss their progress with the implementation of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework as guided by the Self-Assessment Tool. We hope this will make the task less daunting and more dynamic and supportive.

During these progress review meetings, the parish will be invited to share with their Safeguarding Officer the parish's Assessment Tool in its current condition. The Safeguarding Officer will provide support and guidance to the parish in relation to progressing their implementation of the safeguarding framework.

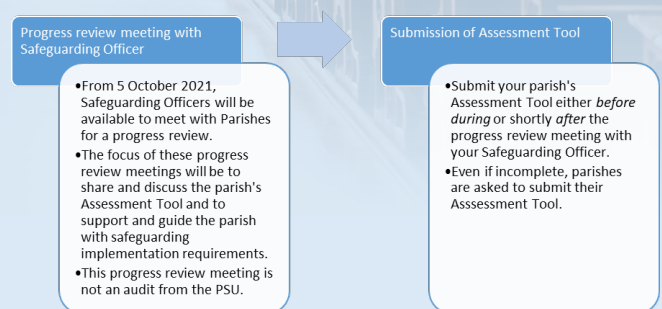
Participation in these meetings and sharing the Self-Assessment Tool with your Safeguarding Officer will be considered as submission of the parish's Self-Assessment Tool.

Please remember, when answering the questions within the Self-Assessment Tool we encourage you to consider examples that demonstrate how a specific indicator has been met. This may include a statement about what has been implemented within your parish, policies, procedures, documents and activities (including those planned and in progress).

Some examples of evidence that a parish may consider include, but are not limited to:

- Documents e.g. Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, Code of Conduct, newsletters
- Procedures e.g. recruitment processes for volunteers, screening processes e.g. Working with Children Check
- Examples of how feedback is sought and obtained from volunteers, families and children.
- Sample of templates e.g. permission forms, role descriptions, volunteer registration forms
- Meeting minutes e.g. Safeguarding Committee meeting minutes
- Risk assessments e.g. an example of a risk assessment that has been undertaken
- Photographs e.g. photos of noticeboard with safeguarding posters

Please find outlined below the process for Parish and Entity Child Safety Assessment Tool submission for 2021 as well as a list of commonly asked questions:



Common Questions:

1. What is the Parish and Entity Child Safety Assessment Tool?

The Parish and Entity Child Safety Assessment Tool was released in November 2019 to provide parishes with an opportunity to assess and monitor their safeguarding efforts in relation to the requirements of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework consistent with the requirements of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and the Victorian Child Safe Standards. This comprehensive Assessment Tool:

- Ensures that child safety is embedded within the culture and practices of the parish and that safeguarding is reflected in the way in which the parishes conduct their ministries.
- Lists the requirements of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (10 Standards, 49 criteria and 111 indicators) and the Victorian Child Safe Standards (7 Standards).
- Has indicators that represent a comprehensive range of elements that are necessary to promote the safety of children and young people in an organisational context such as a parish.
- Is intended to accompany parishes on their safeguarding journey helping to ensure that a range of safeguarding elements are present and operational, ultimately creating the foundation for a safeguarding culture within a parish.

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2. Our parish submitted a Parish and Entity Child Safety Assessment Tool last year. Do we need to do another one?

If your parish submitted an Assessment Tool last year, you do not need to fill in a new one. This previously submitted tool will be updated to reflect the things that you have been working on throughout 2021 to build upon your safeguarding efforts in a process of continuous improvement. The completion of the Assessment Tool is also necessary preparation for child safety audits likely to be conducted by the Commission for Children and Young People in 2021.

3. Our parish has not managed to address all 10 standards within the Parish and Entity Child Safety Assessment Tool. Does that matter?

We understand that parishes are all at different stages of progress. We ask that parishes share their documentation, even if it is incomplete, as this will help provide a snapshot of safeguarding within your parish and help us to more effectively provide you with relevant advice, support and resources to build upon your progress. Rest assured that we are here to support your parish no matter where you are on your safeguarding journey.

4. Previously there was a submission date of 30 November for the Assessment Tools? Is that no longer the case?

In light of the various factors impacting parishes this year, rather than having a fixed submission date for the Parish and Entity Child Safety Assessment Tool, we are encouraging you to make a time with your Safeguarding Officer anytime from 1 October 2021 to come together for a progress meeting.

5. Will the Parish and Entity Child Safety Assessment Tool be simplified and condensed?

The PSU acknowledges the feedback received in relation to the Assessment Tool and revisions and improvements to this tool are in progress. With the approved changes to the Victorian Child Safe Standards coming into effect from 1 July 2022, it is imperative that this revised Assessment Tool reflect these changes. This will be a priority for the PSU throughout 2022. We will consult and work closely with the newly formed Parish Reference Group, comprising of 12 clergy and parish representatives, to make the necessary changes to this Assessment Tool.

6. Will the Self-Assessment Tool be updated to reflect the new Victorian Child Safe Standards (effective 1 July 2022) by the start of next year?

As the PSU consult with the Parish Reference Group to review and improve the Self-Assessment Tool, we will also be guided by the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP). Parishes are encouraged to keep using the existing Self-Assessment Tool into 2022. As materials and updates are supplied by the CCYP, PSU will inform parishes and also incorporate these recommendations into the Self-Assessment Tool. Parishes and entities within the Archdiocese are well placed to meet any modified requirements, for the CAM Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework developed by the PSU in 2018 incorporates the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (10 Standards), as well as the current Victorian Child Safe Standards (7 Standards) and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (10 Standards). Hence, the adjustments required to meet the new set of Victorian CSS will be minor.

Q & A

Q. What do we do if a volunteer does not have any photo ID to apply for a WWCC?

- A. If a volunteer does not have any photo ID they must firstly [apply for a Proof of Age Card](#) (as they do not require any photo ID for this application).

Then the next step would be to use that Proof of Age Card which qualifies as a photo ID, for a [Keypass ID](#) application. This can be done through Australia Post as this is recognised as a primary form of identification for a WWCC application.

Q. Is there a way to get a reduced rate for a Police Check?

- A. Parishes can apply for a Community Volunteer Fee rate which would then see the cost reduced to \$18.40. To apply as an authorised organisation for this please contact your Safeguarding Officer and we will send you the correct form required to be completed and returned to VIC Police.

Q. At our parish we have volunteers who are engaged in 'driving' responsibilities. What traffic offenses are shown on a Police Check? And are there any further checks on a person's driving history a parish can undertake?

- A. In relation to traffic offenses appearing on your Police Check the [Australian National Character Check Pty Ltd](#) (who is just one provider of national police checks in Australia) have provided a clear explanation around this topic. They explain that there are two types of records for traffic offences that are recorded by most Australian police jurisdictions (exceptions may apply). They are:

1. Records of all the demerit points you have incurred in the past while driving
2. Records of all offences leading to licensing loss

However, the records of all the [demerit points](#) you incur in your driving (traffic) history are not displayed in your criminal record but in your traffic history. This traffic history, is protected and regulated by the Road Safety Act and Infringements Act and prevents them from being disclosed in a Police Check. Please note that the traffic history report, obtainable through VIC Roads for a fee, only contains details of any traffic offences incurred within the last 5 years.

Though this traffic history report is not a compulsory requirement under the CAM Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework, a parish may choose to request this from a volunteer who is performing driving responsibilities in addition to the standard [Criminal History Record Check \(Police Check\)](#), to assess whether they are unsuitable to perform the requirements of their role. To apply for a traffic history report visit the VIC Roads [website](#).



Sharing the Safeguarding Journey

The PSU is delighted to highlight Fr Kevin McGovern's report on the placement of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) acknowledgement plaque in St Cecilia's Church:

NATSICC Acknowledgment Plaque at St Cecilia's, Camberwell South

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) has asked Catholic schools, parishes and organisations to display a plaque as a statement of support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The plaque is endorsed by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, and includes the Conference logo.

On Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday on 4 July, Fr Kevin McGovern, Parish Priest of St Cecilia's, asked parishioners for their views about displaying this plaque in St Cecilia's Church. This invitation was included in two emails to everyone in the parish, and Fr Kevin and members of St Cecilia's Pastoral Council also spoke to parishioners where this was possible. Parishioners responded face to face, and through phone calls and emails.

Consultation with parishioners provided an opportunity to dialogue, listen, and work through concerns from a portion of the congregation. It is through these conversations that we realised that there is some way to go on our journey of reconciliation, but it is a process to which we are committed to ensure reconciliation between the First Peoples of our Nation and non-Indigenous Australians. Education is a key element of that journey and will help to unite us as one people.

The vast majority of respondents – more than 80% – were supportive or highly supportive. The plaque was therefore installed in the narthex or foyer of St Cecilia's Church. St Cecilia's School has also purchased two of the plaques, and plans to display them in prominent positions around the school. One parishioner of St Cecilia's commented, "I think that this is an essential step towards healing country. It is also the act of a loving and welcoming Church, seeking to follow Jesus' example of caring for those who are marginalised, dispossessed and oppressed." NATSICC Acknowledgment Plaques can be purchased online at www.natsicc.org.au/online-store.html.

Written by Fr Kevin McGovern • Photo supplied by St Cecilia's Parish, Camberwell South

The PSU commends St Cecilia's initiative as by installing the plaque in a prominent position, Australia's First People will know they are in a culturally safe and accepting space as suggested in Standard 4 of the NCSS- Equality is promoted and diversity is respect.

Safeguarding Lens

Over the last few months as the lockdown has continued, Safeguarding Officers have successfully conducted Safeguarding Deanery Workshops online.

Attended thus far by 121 members of clergy and Safeguarding Committee members across the Archdiocese, the success of these workshops has been evident.

Led by parishes and facilitated by Safeguarding Officers, these workshops have proved an invaluable opportunity to bring parishes together on a more local level to collaborate, network and support each other with the implementation of the safeguarding standards guided by the Self-Assessment Tool.

Safeguarding Officers experienced sincere thankfulness from participants in these sessions, for the opportunity to connect with others from their own parish, as well as neighbouring parishes, during these times of isolation.

We have also been encouraged by the generosity of spirit amongst participants to share their documents and resources with others, and to openly discuss safeguarding topics such as risk assessment, volunteer management, initiatives to engage families, children and volunteers, as well as considering how to further embed safeguarding culture in parishes. Parishes have also expressed gratitude for the ongoing support from the PSU.

To find out when your next Safeguarding Deanery Workshop is being held, please contact your regional Safeguarding Officer.



Helpful Links & Tools

Risk Management Webinar Resources

- Following the Risk Management Webinar on 24 August, 2021 the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) are pleased to present a recording of this webinar and supporting resources and templates which can be located [here](#).
- In the [Risk Assessment Parish Testimonials](#) resource, we hear from three parish representatives about their experiences of conducting risk assessments for local events and programs and what they've learned from the process.

Safeguarding Documents Translations

- [Safeguarding documents translated into 11 community languages](#) – available now for parishes.

Sports Clubs Information

- Looking for some information about the Victorian Child Safe Standards for your parish sports clubs? The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) [website](#) has some posters and tip sheets for general use that may be helpful.
- There is also some information on the Victorian Government [website](#). The links suggested here will direct you to the 'Play by the Rules' website and Vicsport.

Service Victoria App

- Did you know that the Service Vic App has the functionality for individuals to apply for and manage their WWCC?



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In his continued protection for the Church, Joseph continues to protect *the child and his mother*, and we too, by our love for the Church, continue to love *the child and his mother*.

POPE FRANCIS, *PATRIS CORDE*, § 5



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OF MELBOURNE