

# Privacy Policy

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## Professional Standards Office – Catholic Church (Queensland)

### General

The role of the Professional Standards Office Queensland (referred to in this document as **PSOQ, we, us or our**) is to advise and assist the Catholic Church in Queensland to implement and continuously improve safe and ethical practices and respond appropriately to incidents of abuse and misconduct by Church personnel.

The PSOQ is overviewed by and reports to a Professional Standards Liaison Committee established by the representatives of the Dioceses and Religious Orders of Queensland on behalf of the Conference of Queensland Bishops and the Catholic Religious Australia (Queensland). The PSOQ also works in collaboration with the National Committee for Professional Standards.

### Application of this Policy

We recognise that your privacy is important and we are committed to protecting the personal information we collect from you. The PSOQ is bound by the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) (**Privacy Act**), which includes the Australian Privacy Principles (**APPs**), as well as applicable state and territory based health records legislation.

This policy sets out ways in which the PSOQ collects, stores, uses, disseminates and disposes of personal information. It applies when personal information is collected and/or used by the PSOQ.

‘Personal information’ means any information or an opinion (whether true or not), in any form, by which you are identified or from which you are reasonably identifiable. It includes sensitive information, which is personal information about your racial or ethnic origin, religion, criminal record, sexuality and union activities and your health.

### Purpose of collection of your personal information

#### *Purposes*

The personal information that we collect and hold about you depends on your interaction with us. Generally, we collect your personal information for one or more purposes, including:

- managing disclosures of information, enquiries, grievances and complaints falling under the jurisdiction of the PSOQ office;
- arranging pastoral care for victims of sexual, physical and emotional abuse by Church personnel;
- developing and implementing policies, principles and procedures for preventing and responding to Church-related abuse and misconduct;
- assessing the employment applications of prospective employees, contractors and volunteers;
- providing you with information about other services that we offer that may be of interest to you;
- facilitating our internal business operations, including the fulfilment of any legal requirements; and
- other purposes that are authorised or required by law, including the APPs.

When we first collect your information or at other appropriate time, we will tell you why your personal information is being collected.

#### *Types of personal information*

The personal (including sensitive) information that we collect and hold about you, depends on who you are and the nature of your interactions with us.

### ***Church Personnel***

The personal information we may collect about you includes:

- your name, date of birth, contact details, photograph, position within the Church and Church Authority;
- details of Working with Children checks, National Police checks, or other State or Territory equivalent checks;
- disclosures of information, enquiries, grievances or complaints that have been made about or against you under *Towards Healing, Integrity in Ministry, Integrity in the Service of the Church* or civil, criminal law or Church law;
- any other information regarding your fitness to carry out a ministry or apostolate, including your criminal record and any canonical suspension or disciplinary action taken against you;
- details of any declarations you make as to the fitness of another priest or religious or lay person to carry out a ministry or apostolate;
- any other information relevant to providing you with the services you are, or someone else you know, is seeking.

### ***Other individuals (including complainants, witnesses and professionals)***

The personal information we collect may include:

- your name, date of birth and contact details including telephone numbers, email address, postal address and street address;
- in relation to an enquiry, disclosure, grievance or complaint made generally or under *Towards Healing, Integrity in Ministry, Integrity in the Service of the Church* – information you supply as an enquiry, disclosure, grievance or complainant on your own behalf or on behalf of another person, as a witness or as a professional (such as an assessor or facilitator) involved in a grievance, complaint, or information we otherwise collect about you in this context;
- your health information, such as if we are assisting you with welfare or pastoral care needs;
- any other information relevant to providing you with the services you are, or someone else you know, is seeking.

## **Methods of collection**

### ***Personal information***

The PSOQ may collect your personal information from you directly or sometimes from others, including:

- when you or a person authorised to act on your behalf provides personal information about yourself and/or a member of your family to the PSOQ either via email, telephone, website, in person or via any documents from your Church Authority;
- from someone who has made an enquiry, disclosure, grievance or complaint about or against you or about whom you have made an enquiry, disclosure, grievance or complaint, or from someone who has provided information as a witness;
- from the NCPS or another State Professional Standards Office in Australia;
- from law enforcement, advocacy groups or your legal representative.

The PSOQ will endeavour to collect your personal information directly from you. There may, however, be some instances where personal information about you will be collected indirectly because it is unreasonable or impractical to collect personal information directly from you. We will usually notify you about these instances in advance, or where that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable after the information has been collected.

### ***Sensitive information***

Except as otherwise permitted by law, we only collect sensitive information about you if you consent to the collection of the information and if the information is reasonably necessary for the performance of our functions, as set out above.

## *Children*

In the case of children, personal information will ordinarily be collected from their parents or guardians, unless specific and/or unusual circumstances require that the collection be made directly from the relevant child from time to time.

## *Prospective employees*

For prospective employees, we may also collect identity details such as your photo, your occupation, employers, education and qualifications, as well as information from referees. We may contact your previous employers who have not been nominated as referees but will advise you before we make contact.

## *Anonymity/Pseudonyms*

You have the option of remaining anonymous (i.e. by not identifying yourself) or using a pseudonym when dealing with us or providing information we have requested, except where this would be impracticable or where we are required or authorised by or under an Australian law or court/tribunal order to deal with identified individuals. In such circumstances, we may not be able to provide you with the services you require, respond to you or take full action on that information.

## *Failure to provide information*

If you do not provide us with complete or accurate personal information or permit us to collect your personal (including sensitive) information, then depending on the circumstances, we may be limited in our ability to:

- fully act upon your enquiry, disclosure, grievance or complaint or your response to an enquiry, disclosure, grievance or complaint;
- attend to your welfare needs and offer you pastoral care;
- offer you employment; or
- deal with any enquiries, difficulties or concerns that you may have.

## *Internet users*

If you access our website, we may collect additional personal information about you in the form of your IP address and domain name.

Our website may contain links to other websites. We are not responsible for the privacy practices of linked websites and linked websites are not subject to our privacy policies and procedures.

## **Use and disclosure of your personal information**

### *Purposes*

Your personal information will usually be used or disclosed for the purpose for which it was collected as explained above. It may also be used and disclosed for another related purpose (or if sensitive information, if the other purpose is directly related) and which you would reasonably expect. We may also use and disclose your personal information for another purpose that:

- you have agreed to;
- the PSOQ is required under Church law to use or disclose the information for a particular purpose; or
- the PSOQ is required or authorised by or under an Australian law (including in the Privacy Act) or court or tribunal order to use or disclose the information for a particular purpose.

### *Disclosure*

The PSOQ may share your personal information, for the purposes explained above, with:

- Church Authorities;
- law enforcement bodies;

- State and Territory agencies;
- people you have provided information about, made an enquiry about or lodged a grievance or complaint about and your legal representatives, advocates or other professionals involved in processing the information, enquiry, grievance or complaint;
- our related entities and other organisations with whom we have affiliations, including NCPS and other State Professional Standards Offices to facilitate our and their internal business processes;
- our related entities, including NCPS and other Professional Standards Offices, where the PSOQ holds information or complaints which these Offices are handling or which are subject to review by the NCPS;
- third party service providers or contractors, including for the provision of software and technology services, who in some limited circumstances may have access to or may help store your personal information. These service providers may not be required to comply with our privacy policy. However, their agreements with the PSOQ in most cases include confidentiality provisions to protect the personal information.

We may disclose your personal information overseas if the information, disclosure, enquiry, grievance or complaint relates to or involves Church personnel based overseas.

### ***Sensitive information***

Except as otherwise permitted by law, we only disclose your sensitive information with your consent, for the purposes for which it was collected, and to the parties described above.

### **Security and storage of your personal information**

The PSOQ takes all reasonable steps to protect and secure personal information it holds in hard copy or electronic databases or other forms, from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. These steps include restricting and limiting access to our systems, use of encryption and VPN lines and other technology to keep our systems secure, and storing hard copy documents containing personal information in secure and lockable locations within the PSOQ offices.

The PSOQ also takes reasonable steps to destroy or de-identify personal information it holds where it no longer needs that information for a legitimate purpose under the APPs and it is not required by law to retain the information. The PSOQ may need to retain personal information relating to complaints indefinitely for legal reasons.

### **Access to your personal information**

You are entitled to access personal information that the PSOQ holds about you by making a written and signed request, except in circumstances in the Act, such as where:

- giving access would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of other individuals;
- the PSOQ reasonably believes that giving access would pose a serious threat to the life, health or safety of an individual, or to public health or public safety; or
- giving access would be likely to prejudice one or more enforcement related activities conducted by, or on behalf of, an enforcement body.

The PSOQ will try to respond to all requests for access within a reasonable period of time. We may decline a request for access to personal information or sensitive information in circumstances prescribed by the Privacy Act. If we refuse your request, we will give you written notice of the decision and reasons (unless it would be unreasonable to provide those reasons) and explain how to complain if you are not satisfied with the decision.

The PSOQ may charge you for its reasonable costs of providing you with access.

To access your personal information please contact the PSOQ using the details below.

## **Accuracy and correction of your personal information**

The PSOQ takes reasonable steps to ensure the personal information it collects about you is accurate, up-to-date and complete, and also when using and disclosing it, that it is relevant for the purposes of the use or disclosure. If the PSOQ is satisfied that any of the information should be corrected it will also take reasonable steps to correct that information.

If your personal details change or you believe that the personal information the PSOQ holds about you should be corrected because it is inaccurate, incomplete, out-of-date, irrelevant or misleading, please contact us on the details below.

If we do not agree that your information needs correcting, we will give you written notice of our decision, including our reasons and how to complain if you are not satisfied with our decision. You can also ask us to associate a statement with the personal information which explains that you believe it is incorrect.

You will not be charged for making a correction request or requesting us to associate a statement with your information.

## **Questions and Complaints**

If you have any questions about this policy and our privacy practices, or you wish to complain about how the PSOQ has handled your personal information, in the first instance please contact the PSOQ:

Professional Standards Office Queensland  
PO Box 3264  
BRISBANE QLD 4001  
Telephone: (07) 3336 9474 or 1800 337 928  
Email: [psqld@catholic.net.au](mailto:psqld@catholic.net.au)

If your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may complain to the Privacy Commissioner's office, who is responsible for the enforcement of the Act. Information of how to make a complaint is available at [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

The Privacy Commissioner's contact details are:

PO Box 10143  
Adelaide Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000  
Telephone: (07) 3324 3070  
Facsimile: (07) 3405 1122  
Email: [enquiries@oic.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oic.qld.gov.au)

If your complaint involves your health information then you can also contact the relevant health services commissioner in your state or territory.

## **Changes to this Privacy Policy**

The PSOQ may, from time to time, update or change this Privacy Policy to ensure that it reflects the acts and practices of the PSOQ as well as any changes in the law. Any changes will take effect from when they are posted on our website <http://psqld.catholic.net.au/>.