



A safe Church for everyone



ANNUAL REPORT
1 JULY 2020 – 30 JUNE 2021

[ACSLTD.ORG.AU](https://www.acsltd.org.au)

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd acknowledges the lifelong trauma of abuse victims, survivors and their families, the failure of the Catholic Church to protect, believe and respond justly to children and vulnerable adults, and the consequent breaches of community trust.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd is committed to fostering a culture of safety and care for children and adults at risk.



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Available at www.acsltd.org.au

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Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of Australia. We pay respect to their Elders, past and present, and young leaders of today and the future. ACSL commits itself to the ongoing work of reconciliation with our Aboriginal families and communities.

Contents

About ACSL	4
Our Work	5
Message from the Chair	6
Message from the CEO	8
Our Board of Directors	9
Our Members	13
With deep thanks to our inaugural CEO & outgoing Board	15
Program updates:	19
<i>Supporting Church entities to build safe environments for everyone through:</i>	
Leading development of the NCSS Edition Two – for adults and children	19
Providing training and education opportunities for safeguarding professionals and Church Authorities	21
Helping Church entities to review and improve their ability to safeguard children through safeguarding audits	26
Enabling the ongoing safe movement of clergy through administration of the ACMR, and driving continuous improvement	31
Providing oversight of complaints response at a national level through development and refinement of a complaints management framework and management of specific complaint categories	32
Community Engagement	33
Concise Financials	36



About ACSL

WHO WE ARE

ACSL has been created 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.

We bring together the functions of Catholic Professional Standards, the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards and the administration of the Australian Catholic Ministry Register to support a safe Church for everyone.

OUR VISION AND MISSION

ACSL's vision is a safe Church for everyone.

Our mission is to work with Catholic organisations across the country to establish the processes and environments that ensure that everyone who comes into contact with the Catholic Church in Australia is safe.

VALUES

Courage We stand firm, act responsively and persevere.

Compassion We honour the dignity of all people and work with understanding, respect and care.

Honesty We embrace openness and transparency, and act with integrity, probity, fairness and consistency.

Our Work

WHO WE ARE

We provide integrated safeguarding services that are informed by Catholic social teaching, and support Church entities to meet their responsibilities to provide safe environments for children and adults at risk.



Message from the Chair



This report covers the final six months of Catholic Professional Standards Limited (CPSL) and the first six months of Australian Catholic Standards Limited (ACSL). CPSL represented a new way for the Catholic Church to approach safeguarding children by adopting a whole of Church standards of good practice combined with a monitoring and reporting regime on Church performance. While the model was sound in concept, and its implementation was carried out by a dedicated and skilled team of professionals led by CEO Sheree Limbrick and an engaged diligent Board chaired by Geoff Guidice, it was not fully embraced by the Church.

Understanding the reason for the disconnect and adjusting the model was the task of reviews commissioned by the members of CPSL— the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and Catholic Religious Australia (CRA). The review process culminated in the creation of ACSL which was in effect a merger of the role of CPSL with the complaint investigation and review functions conducted by the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Services (ACCPs) and the operation of the Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR). Just as important was the expansion of ACSL members to include the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (AMPJP).

I've viewed the mandate of ACSL as helping the Church to be the best version of itself in terms of being a safe and nurturing environment for all, with a particular emphasis on caring for children at adults at risk. The Catholic Church is enormously diverse in its ministries, operations and structures. ACSL seeks to have a nationally consistent set of standards for safeguarding but to work with Catholic entities to build the capacity of the Church through a community of practice, supported through education and resources, and backed up by monitoring and reporting that is fit for purpose. ACSL's complaints role is centred on being a review mechanism for processes conducted at a Catholic entity level and the insights from handling complaints is a data source for the risk model to help direct where the energies of the company can be concentrated for maximum impact.

The first period of ACSL was naturally focused on bringing together the predecessor bodies and functions, developing the strategic objectives for the company, establishing stakeholder relationships and continuing the work in progress such as the consultations on the second version of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. This initial work was led by the inaugural CEO Sheree Limbrick. With Sheree leaving ACSL at the end of March 2021, the focus of the Board was on the selection process for a new CEO. In some ways, selecting a CEO is the Board's most critical task and ACSL has been fortunate to recruit Dr Ursula Stephens to the role. Ursula's experience in public life, not-for-profit bodies, and her depth of understanding of the Church in Australia has made her a great choice for a demanding role.

While there is much more work to be done, ACSL has started strongly. There is goodwill in the Church for the way in which the company has approached its renewed safeguarding mission. Good progress has occurred on modernising the IT platform for the ACMR. The risk and the audit and review models

are advanced in development. The subscriber model of the engagement and commitment of individual Church entities in the company is moving forward. The incorporation of adults at risk into the second version of the Safeguarding Standards is being socialised across the Church. Audit and review work has continued. The complaints function has been successfully moved into ACSL.

I thank my fellow Directors, both from CPSL and now ACSL, for their commitment, advice and good counsel. Special thanks to the staff of CPSL/ACSL, who have stayed the course, kept up their energy in the wake of uncertainty, change and then much new policy development. And all in the period of the COVID pandemic which like for all Australian organisations (particularly those with a significant Melbourne presence) has thrown up challenges not confronted for over a century.

Professor The Hon. Michael Lavarch AO

Board Chair



Message from the CEO



Dr Ursula Stephens was appointed as CEO in April 2021. Prior to joining ACSL, Dr Stephens was CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia. Ursula served for 12 years in the Australian Parliament as a Senator for New South Wales from 2002 to 2014.

It has been a great privilege to join ACSL at such an important time in Australia's national endeavour to ensure that children and adults at risk are able to live safe, happy and healthy lives. I pay tribute to Sheree Limbrick who led so much of the foundation work of CPSL.

We are all living with the legacy of the devastating findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and a determination to ensure that we embed a safeguarding culture into all that we do within the Church. This year, the findings of the Royal Commissions into Aged Cared and Disability Care highlight where adults in our care who are vulnerable also need protection from abuse.

At ACSL our responsibility is to support the Catholic Church to be, as our Chair so often says "the best version of itself." During this period of transition and change for ACSL, we have concentrated on the integration of the functions that have been brought into ACSL's constitution, and the practical implementation of these changes. We are connecting with Catholic organisations across the country, to find many ways to add value to their safeguarding work and to support their journeys of continuous improvement and vigilance.

The year ahead will be one of significant developments for ACSL. The development of the subscriber model is an important priority for our members. The implementation of a national complaints management system will provide a data source for whole of church reporting.

These initiatives and the roll out of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Edition Two, which includes adults at risk, will contribute to the ambition for a nationally consistent approach to safeguarding and complaints management across the Church.

Dr Ursula Stephens
Chief Executive Officer

Our Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors have experience and credentials in child and adult safeguarding, professional standards, law, governance, Church administration, and finance and management. The ACSL Board met five times in the reporting period.



PROF THE HON MICHAEL LAVARCH AO

(AUG 2016)

LLB, BA

Michael has had extensive involvement in Australian public life, serving in local government before being elected to Federal Parliament in 1987, serving as Attorney General in the Keating Government from 1993-1996.

Appointments during the period:

- Chair, Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman Ltd
- Chair, Way Forward Debts Solutions Ltd
- Chief Adjudicator, Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code Adjudication Panel
- Co-Chair, Path to Treaty Panel



MRS MARY MCCOMISH

LLB, LLM

Mary McComish has a background in commercial law and human rights. She has degrees from the University of WA and London University. Mary was the foundation Assistant Dean of the Law School at the University of Notre Dame Australia in Fremantle and served as Dean until 2008.

She was the Director of Daydawn Advocacy Centre from 2009 to 2013. She has been a Commissioner of the WA Gaming Commission and a Referee of the WA Small Claims Tribunal. Since retirement Mary has been very involved in the governance of PJPs.

Appointments during the period:

- Trustee, St John of God Australia
- Trustee, MercyCare WA



DR ROBYN MILLER

(AUG 2017)

PHD, MFT, GRADDIPFT, BSOCSC (SOCIAL WORK)

Robyn brings over 30 years' experience in community services, local government and child protection sectors, and has practised in both the public and private sectors as a therapist, clinical supervisor, consultant and lecturer.

Appointments during the period:

- Chief Executive Officer, MacKillop Family Services
- Board Member, Catholic Social Services Australia
- Board Member, Association of Children's Welfare Agencies
- Member, Expert Advisory Committee (Countering Violence Extremism), Department of Justice & Community Safety (Vic)
- Member, Ministerial Advisory Group (Youth Justice Custodial Facilities Work Group), Department of Justice & Community Safety (Vic)



MR DAVID PENNY

BHS (MANAGEMENT), MB (GENERAL), MA (PASTORAL THEOLOGY),
CERT IV (ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING)

David is currently Executive Leader Operations The Institute of Sisters of Mercy Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG). Prior to this David held executive roles within the Diocese of Broken Bay and Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes.

He has significant experience in the management and governance of the not-for-profit organisations including the Centre for Christian Spirituality, Broken Bay Institute and Calvary Health Care. David is currently a Trustee Director of Calvary Ministries.

In 2017 David was the project manager of the task force which established Catholic Schools NSW.

David holds degrees and diplomas in Health Science and Administration. He completed the Intensive Executive Management Program for Non-Profit Leaders at Stanford University, CA, USA in 2004. David has a Master's degree in Management and a Masters degree in Pastoral Theology at Heythrop College, London University, UK.

Appointments during the period:

- Executive Director, ISMAPNG
- Director, AMPJP
- Trustee/Director, Calvary Ministries



SR KATH TIERNEY RSM AO

B BUS.

Sr Kath Tierney rsm AO has been a Sister of Mercy for 45 years and during this time was in ministry in Child and Family Welfare for 19 years. Following roles in the welfare sector, Kath was elected to the position of Congregation Leader for the Sisters of Mercy, Melbourne Congregation, and served two terms (12 years), concluding in this position in December, 2011.

From 2012-2014, Kath was engaged by the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne and worked in the area of Professional Standards, Conduct, Ethics and Investigation. From 2014-2019, Kath was engaged by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne as Senior Advisor to the Vicar General.

Kath has also been engaged in consultancy roles in professional standards, education, health and welfare and currently serves on a number of Boards, Advisory Boards and Committees within the Catholic sector.

Appointments during the period:

- Deputy Chair, Catholic Social Services Australia Ltd
- Professional Standards Consultative Group, Christian Brothers
- Safeguarding Advisory Group, Good Samaritan Sisters
- Member, Professional Standards Resource Group Victoria/Towards Healing
- Pallotti College Advisory Board, Pallottines
- Archdiocesan Finance Council, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
- Child Safety, Audit & Risk Committee – Diocese of Sandhurst
- Senior Advisor - Safeguarding, ISMAPNG



MR JULIAN WIDDUP

BEC, FAICD, FIAA

Julian Widdup has been a director of ASX-listed, international and unlisted Australian companies in various industries including airports, power utilities, port corporations, financial services, superannuation, healthcare, education and the public sector. Julian has a strong background in finance and risk management, having held executive leadership roles with Palisade Investment Partners, Access Capital Advisers and previously worked with the Australian Government.

Julian is a fully qualified actuary, a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has a Bachelor of Economics and Master of Business Administration from ANU.

Appointments during the period:

- Director, Rural Funds Management Limited and related entities including Rural Funds Group (ASX:RFF)

MR JULIAN WIDDUP *CONTINUED*

- Director, SCS Super Pty Limited trustee of the Australian Catholic Superannuation & Retirement Fund
- Director, Catholic Schools NSW
- Director, Screen Canberra
- Board Member, Cultural Facilities Corporation
- Member, Australian Catholic University Limited
- Director, FPL Strategies Pty Limited and its subsidiary companies
- Fellow, Institute of Actuaries of Australia
- Fellow, Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Member, Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees
- Member, Archdiocese Finance Council
– Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn



ACSL's Board and senior staff meeting online in 2021.

Our Members

ACSL is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee and registered as a charity in Australia.

Our mandate is to support Catholic entities to create a safe Church for everyone. The establishment of ACSL is part of the Church leadership's commitment to doing all in its power to ensure that abuse, in any form, should never again occur in the Catholic Church in Australia.

Our independent Board of Directors are responsible for the strategic directions of ACSL.

Sitting alongside our Board of Directors, ACSL's three member organisations support and advise the Board. They are the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (AMPJP), the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and Catholic Religious Australia (CRA).

Our governance arrangements are outlined in our company's constitution, available on our [website](#).

CPSL MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES

Our member representatives met with CPSL's Board twice in the reporting period. We thank CPSL's departing member representatives for their work.

July 2020 – 2 December 2020

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference:

Most Rev Mark Coleridge, Archbishop of Brisbane
Most Rev William Wright, Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle

Catholic Religious Australia:

Sr Clare Nolan RSC, Provincial, Sisters of Charity
Fr Tom McDonough CP, Provincial, Passionist Fathers

ACSL MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES

3 December 2020 – June 2021

The incoming ACSL Member Representatives took position on 3 December 2020 and met with ACSL's Board of Directors twice during the 2020-21 financial year. The Member Representatives for ACSL are:

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference:

- Most Rev Michael McCarthy DD, Bishop of Rockhampton
- Most Rev Gregory Bennet MS STL, Bishop of Sale
- Mr Henry Pruyn, Secretary, NSW/ACT Bishops

Catholic Religious Australia:

- Sr Eveline Crotty RSM, Institute Leader, Sisters of Mercy - Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea
- Fr Tom McDonough CP, Provincial, Passionist Fathers

Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons

- Ms Eva Skira AM, Trustee Chair, St John of God Health Care





Top row, from left: CPSL Board Directors Dr Ruth Shean; Prof the Hon Michael Lavarch AO; CPSL Chairman the Hon. Geoff Giudice AO; the Hon John Watkins AM; CPSL CEO Sheree Limbrick. Bottom row, from left: Dr Kerrie Tuite; Dr Robyn Miller; and Deputy Chair Patricia Faulkner.

With deep thanks to our inaugural CEO and outgoing Board

In April 2021 we said a fond farewell to outgoing CEO Sheree Limbrick, who steered CPSL through its establishment and commenced the transition to ACSL. We thank Sheree for her dedication and steadfast commitment to supporting the Church to be a safe place for children and adults at risk.

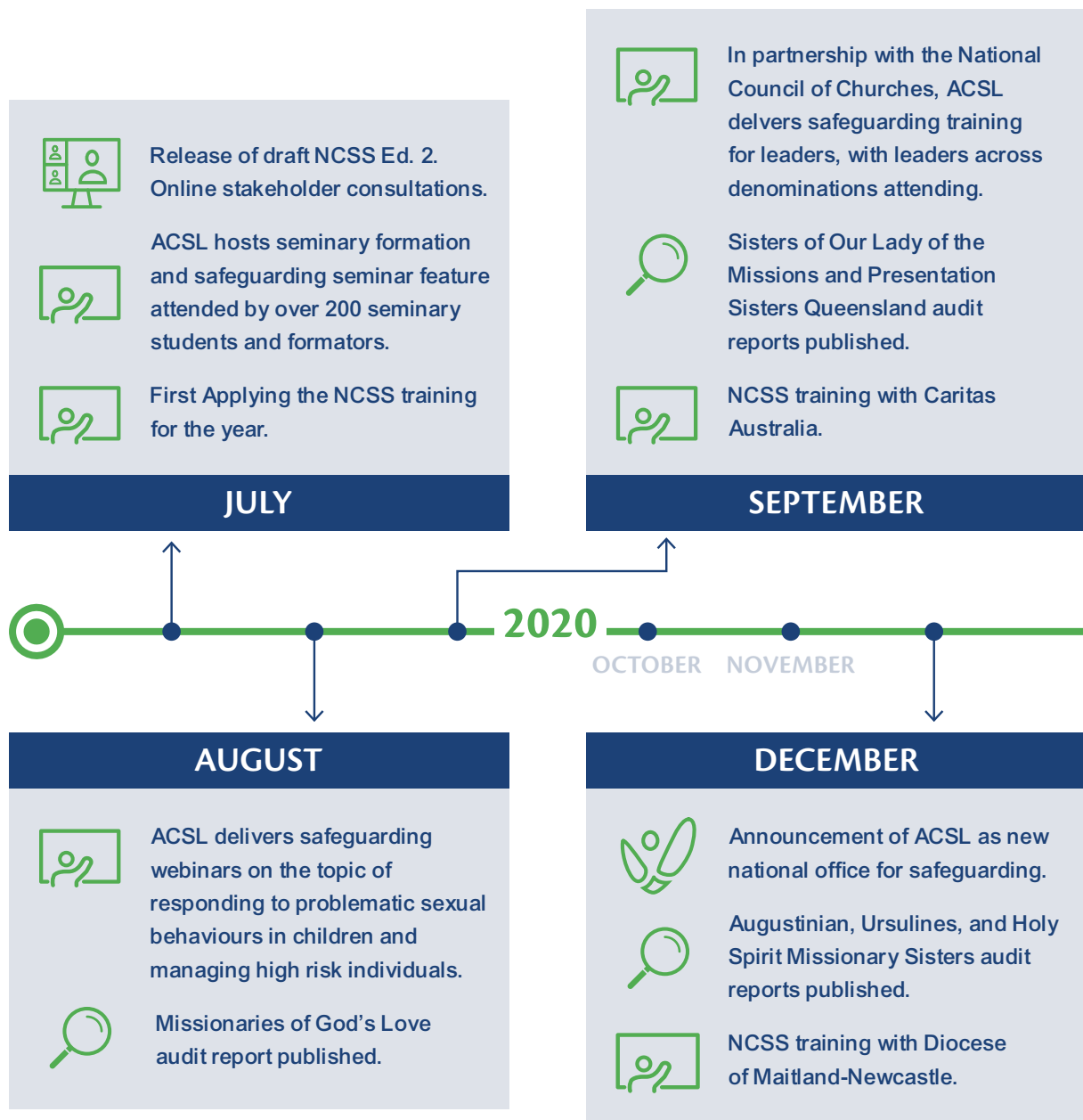
“And just like that, it is my final day! Three years and ten months have passed at once in a whirlwind and also a lifetime. It has been an absolute privilege to lead the establishment and operations of CPSL and more latterly the transition of CPSL to ACSL. As with all jobs, people are key to the experience and I could not have been more fortunate than to work alongside and learn from the board members of both CPSL and ACSL - I have learnt so much from the wisdom, experience and fortitude of all of the Directors...”

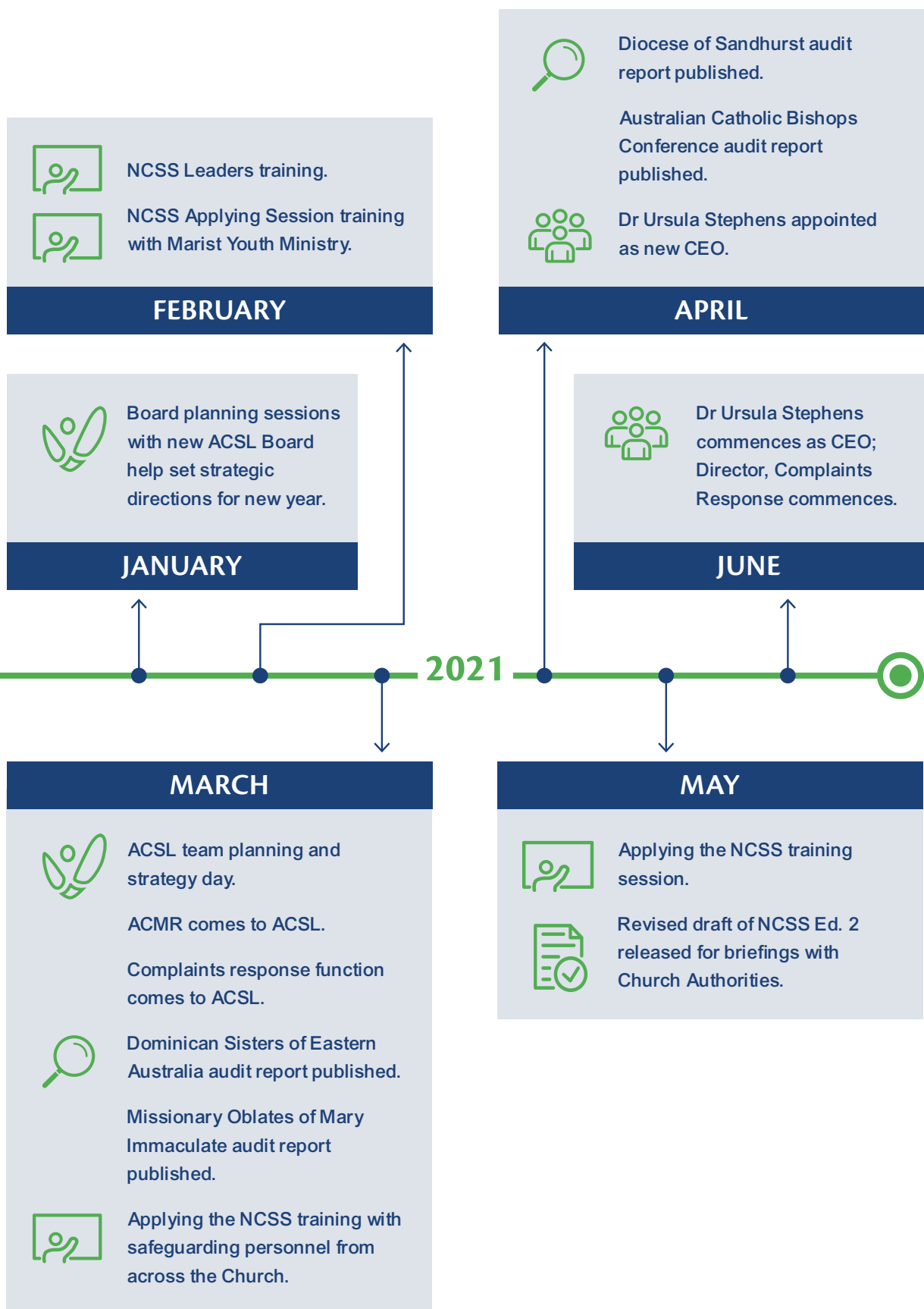
- Extract from Sheree's last column in our April 2021 newsletter

We also said goodbye to CPSL's Board, who shared the monumental task of laying the foundations for CPSL and later ACSL. Their tireless work to establish the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and design an audit program to engage Church Authorities with the Standards has been invaluable.

The CPSL Board met six times from July – December 2020.

Our Year







Program updates:

How we've supported Church entities to build safe environments in 2020-2021.

SUPPORTING CHURCH ENTITIES TO BUILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR EVERYONE THROUGH: LEADING DEVELOPMENT OF THE NCSS EDITION TWO – FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Edition Two expands the safeguarding framework to include adults as well as children, with a focus on adults at risk.

In 2020 and 2021, we laid the groundwork for the current shape of Edition Two, now in its final draft form, through extensive consultations with Church entities.

Consultations with key Church stakeholders July and August 2020

The initial draft for Edition Two was published in July 2020 after a nine-month development phase assisted by a National Reference Group, an advisory group of experts and leaders in adult safeguarding. Survey and online live consultations were conducted following the release of the first draft.



What we learnt from the consultations

There was overwhelming support for the overall framework of integrating protections for both children and adults into one set of Standards. The consultations also revealed several issues to be addressed, including:

- Reducing duplication of requirements across indicators.
- The Catholicity' of the Standards and the language used throughout: a view that these are Standards for the Catholic Church and should therefore be inherently 'Catholic' which reflect the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- A need for a clear implementation plan for rollout of the second edition.

"Edition Two is a huge step in the right direction to promote the dignity and human rights of adults, ensuring they are valued and respected in church policy and practice."

Consultation survey respondent

Second draft published in May 2021

Responding to the feedback received in the consultations, we released Draft Two, Edition Two in May 2021.



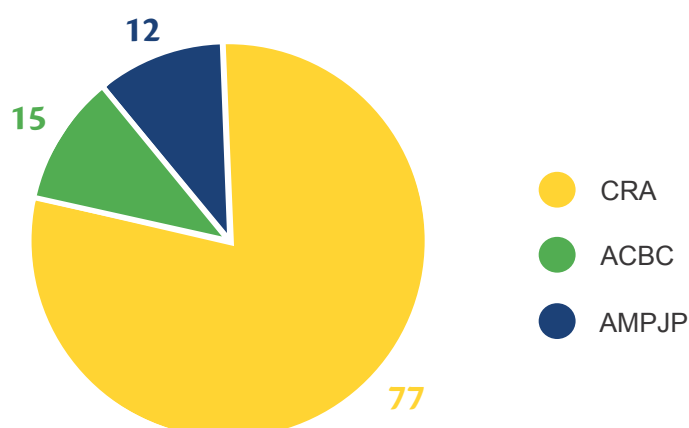
To provide Church Authorities with an overview of the changes from the first to second draft, we facilitated

15 briefing sessions for **104** Church Authorities and leaders across our member entities in May and June 2021,

which included **12** Bishops, **53** Leaders of Religious Institutes and **11** Trustees of AMPJP's.



ACSL MEMBER ENTITY PARTICIPANTS



Church Authorities and leaders provided feedback on the work undertaken and consultation process, the risk-based focus of the emerging audit framework, and themes relating to specific criteria and indicators.

Next steps

Taking into consideration this feedback from Church Authorities in May and June 2021, ACSL is now proceeding with the final draft of NCSS Edition Two for approval by our Board and release in early 2022, which will be accompanied by an implementation and training plan.

SUPPORTING CHURCH ENTITIES TO BUILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR EVERYONE THROUGH:
PROVIDING TRAINING AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR SAFEGUARDING PROFESSIONALS AND CHURCH AUTHORITIES

Our training and learning opportunities strengthen awareness and build the knowledge, skills and capacity of Catholic Church entities to safeguard children and adults.

While in-person training was once again off the cards due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions, ACSL delivered a range of public and custom online training sessions to Church Authorities and safeguarding personnel across the Australian Church during this reporting period.

346 

**PEOPLE ATTENDED
TRAINING ON THE NCSS**

This included the NCSS Introductory Session for Leaders attended by bishops, provincials and their teams, and the Applying the NCSS sessions, attended by safeguarding personnel across the country.

We also delivered custom training on the NCSS to individual Church entities across the country.

203 people from across the denominational spectrum attended specialist safeguarding webinars.



The topics for these webinars were *Managing High Risk Individuals, and Responding to Problematic Sexual Behaviour in Children.*

Both series featured presentations from leading Australian and international safeguarding experts.

200 seminarians, formators and seminary rectors participated in a safeguarding roundtable delivered in partnership with Catholic Theological College. 

Fr Hans Zollner SJ, Director of the Institute of Anthropology - Interdisciplinary Studies on Human Dignity and Care at the Pontifical Gregorian University, provided an opening keynote, setting the stage for a multi-session discussion on safeguarding and formation in seminary programs.

Catholic Church leaders join an NCSS Introductory Session for Leaders in 2020



A still from the 2020 webinar series on Problematic Sexual Behaviours in Children. Left: Presenter and safeguarding expert, Robert Tucker. Right: ACSL's Director, Safeguarding and Improvement, Daniele Donnini

TRAINING IN FOCUS:

NCSS training with Caritas' Australia-based staff helps build sense of shared responsibility

Caritas Australia works with some of the most vulnerable communities in Australia and globally to address the immediate challenges of poverty today, and drive lasting change for a just tomorrow. Core to Caritas Australia's mission is the safety and protection of children and young people. Caritas Australia adheres to sector standards such as the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct and Australian Government accreditation requirements. The organisation also works within the broader Australian community through personnel and volunteers in the areas of people management, community engagement, communications and fundraising.

To promote a whole of organisation safeguarding effort, Caritas Australia approached ACSL to deliver training on the NCSS to its team of human resources, community engagement, communications and fundraising personnel.

Safeguarding Coordinator Jacinta Ankus who organised the training said that Caritas Australia was keen to engage directly with ACSL and to get as many people trained on the Standards as possible.

To ensure the content was relevant and engaging, Caritas Australia and ACSL's Director, Safeguarding and Improvement, Daniele Donnini worked collaboratively to develop case studies relevant to the work of the team. Discussion scenarios focused on relevant areas such as volunteer management and engagement to

explore how safeguarding practice applies to all volunteers and how best to support volunteers to understand child protection. Participants at the session also considered how to contextualise the Standards in risk management practice when engaging with schools, speaking engagement or fundraising activities, at various levels within the church community and public. By bringing the team together to allow for robust discussion, the message of the Standards was socialised effectively amongst the team.

Through the tailored training session with ACSL, Caritas Australia personnel were able to learn about the Standards in depth and consider the application of the Standards across the work of the whole organisation.

"I really enjoyed that Daniele worked closely with us to make sure it was really facilitated with us, it needed to be how this applies to Caritas Australia, and this made it far more engaging and impactful".

Jacinta Ankus,

Caritas Australia Safeguarding Coordinator



Resource Hub

In 2020-2021 we continued to add to our online resource hub where we've created tools and guides for Church entities, collected best practice templates and examples from across the Church, and curated sector resources that help Church entities implement the Standards. The resource hub contains:

50+

ACSL-developed tools and guidance materials to help entities meet safeguarding requirements

80+

examples of best practice from across the Australian Church, covering safeguarding policies, procedures and initiatives

110+

sector resources from a range of Australian and international experts and organisations to help Church entities build safe environments for everyone

Next steps

In 2022 we will be delivering more capacity building initiatives which will support the publication of the NCSS Edition Two and help Catholic entities implement safeguarding initiatives for both children and adults at risk.

Along with practical resources like tools and guides, a core component of this will be targeted training and awareness raising sessions focusing on the key concepts regarding 'adults at risk' and contextual application of the Standards across Catholic entities.

SUPPORTING CHURCH ENTITIES TO BUILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR EVERYONE THROUGH:
**HELPING CHURCH ENTITIES TO REVIEW AND IMPROVE THEIR ABILITY TO SAFEGUARD
CHILDREN THROUGH SAFEGUARDING AUDITS**

ACSL's Audit Program is designed to assess how well an entity or ministry that is governed by a Church Authority is applying the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. We publicly report on the progress of entities in implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

The combined impact of COVID-19 and the transition from CPSL to ACSL meant that fewer audits were carried out in the reporting period than initially anticipated.

Despite this, the feedback from entities who have undergone audit has been positive. Entities who have not yet been audited are reading with interest the reports of others as they are released, are examining the recommendations, and are contacting each other to seek advice on the experience of undergoing an audit, in preparation for their own. This lateral exchange across Church organisations has been encouraging to see.

During 2020-21, ACSL audited 10 entities against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. The entities were:

- Augustinians of the Province of Australasia
- Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
- Diocese of Sandhurst
- Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands
- Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters
- Missionaries of God's Love
- Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
- Presentation Sisters Queensland Congregation
- Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions
- Ursulines of the Roman Union

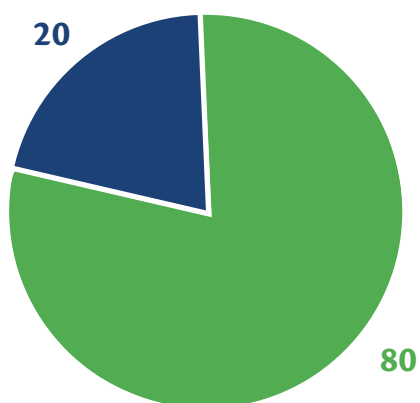
"The audit enabled our entity to sharpen its approach to safeguarding. [It] noted gaps in our systems that need improvement and highlighted the importance of safeguarding across the entity, especially the ministries with children."

Customer Audit Survey respondent



Image supplied by Marymead.

ENTITIES AUDITED IN 2020-21 BY ENTITY TYPE:



- Religious institutions
- Dioceses and episcopal conference

"I liked that the audit was not there to just to point out deficiencies or a markdown on things that are wrong, but to help improve what we have in place and bring us up to best practice."

Customer Audit Survey respondent

Audit in focus: Diocese of Sandhurst

In April 2021, the Diocese of Sandhurst became the fifth Australian Catholic diocese to complete a safeguarding audit against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

A rural Victorian diocese with 40 parishes, when the Diocese welcomed its new Bishop Shane Mackinlay in 2019, one of his top priorities was for the Diocese to undergo a safeguarding audit with ACSL.

Safeguarding Coordinator Anne McIntosh, who has the busy responsibility of visiting all parishes across the Diocese and helping to implement both the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and the Victorian Child Safe Standards, felt that the Diocese was ready too.

The focus of the audit, which commenced in October 2020, was on the ministries and activities conducted in parishes and the parish volunteer network, which are not subject to external assurance processes. Nine parishes amongst the forty were selected as part of the sample for interviews, documentation and policy review.

“The nine parishes that were selected were very keen to show to the auditors the work that they had done. As well as the parish priest and parish secretaries, there are a lot of volunteers who have put their hands up to be involved in safeguarding and they have done a great job. They always make themselves available to the auditors too,” explained Ms McIntosh.

“While they were a little bit anxious in the lead up to the audit, the feedback I received was that the ACSL auditor Tania was easy to get along with and that they didn’t feel they were out of their depth. Ultimately they were ready for the audit and wanted to showcase what they had put in place.”

After some delays due to COVID restrictions, the final audit report was delivered by ACSL in April 2021. The Diocese received a score of 96% compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, proving that the long-term work of the safeguarding teams throughout the parishes and Diocese as a whole is contributing to a safe environment.

Twelve recommendations were provided to the Diocese to strengthen safeguarding practice, which included more public promotion of the parish child safety officers, more frequently reviewing risk assessments at the parish level, and collating parish risk assessments into an overall diocesan risk register.

Six months on from the audit, the Diocese is well on track to implementing all recommendations within the agreed timeframe. Following the audit, there was increased engagement with parish child safe teams who started meeting online to discuss their activities and determine the next steps in implementing the recommendations of the audit.

While there is a lot of work that goes into an audit, Ms McIntosh said that it’s an undertaking she would recommend to other dioceses.

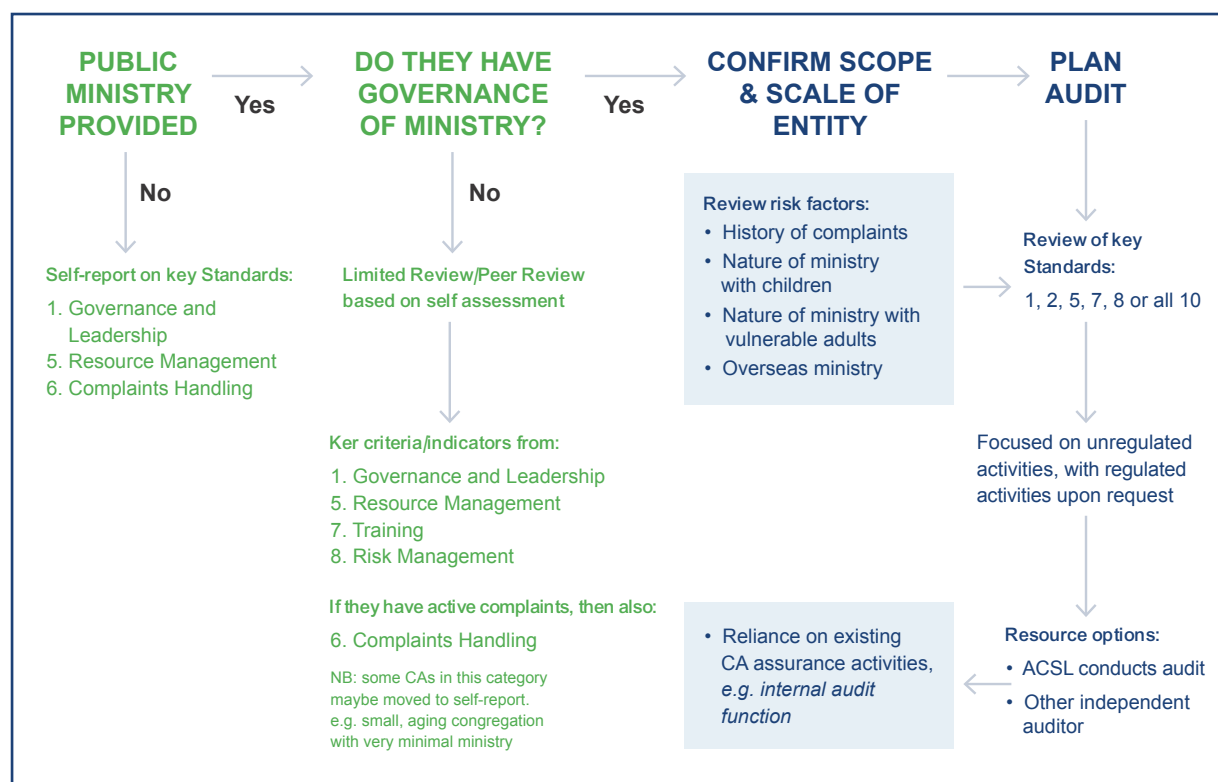
“The recommendations we received from ACSL were valuable and there were other benefits too. Doing the audit has put us in good stead for the upcoming Victorian Standards in 2022, which we are now well on track to meeting too.”

“Overall, the audit has put us in a positive light. People are happy with the results – the people who were involved in the audit particularly, it’s been a really good result and they feel that is their report”.

Work begun on the new audit and review framework

In 2020-21, ACSL commenced work on a new audit and review framework, based on the principles of risk-based audit criteria. The move to create this new framework responds to the feedback we received from Church entities seeking more flexible audit options that reflect the diversity of their sizes, resources, ministries, structures, and which take into account the activities they carry out which are already subject to external regulation. The first phase of this work, which took place from January 2021 to June 2021, has been to establish a range of future review and auditing options to respond to these concerns.

AUDIT FRAMEWORK



A simple flowchart overviewing pathways for entities in the proposed audit and review framework

Next Steps

In 2021 and 2022 the development of the new audit and review framework will progress. The appointment of an Audit Advisory Panel with membership from across the Church will ensure that a range of viewpoints are considered in the new framework. Alongside the Advisory Panel, ACSL will work to adapt the audit and review criteria to the updated second edition of the NCSS, which incorporates protections, and measurable safeguarding indicators, for adults and risk.

In the meantime, safeguarding audits against the NCSS under the current framework will continue.



SUPPORTING CHURCH ENTITIES TO BUILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR EVERYONE THROUGH:
**ENABLING THE ONGOING SAFE MOVEMENT OF CLERGY THROUGH ADMINISTRATION
OF THE ACMR, AND DRIVING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The ACMR assists clerics, religious and their Church Authorities in the safe management of movement for ministry.

Under the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, Church Authorities are required to seek a safeguarding statement before a cleric or religious is allowed to perform ministry in another jurisdiction. The ACMR acts as a simple, secure and convenient online database which allows for these statements to be provided once. Successful applicants receive a unique ACMR ID, which is provided to any Church entity to demonstrate the individual's good standing.

Integration into ACSL

Launched in 2015, the ACMR was initially built and maintained by the National Committee for Professional Standards, and later transitioned to the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards, operating in close cooperation with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC).

As part of the effort to unify national safeguarding responsibilities with ACSL, the ACMR formally came under the administration of ACSL on 1 March 2021.

Growth

DURING THE

2020-21 financial year the ACMR added more than **200**

NEW individual ACMR ID holders to the ACMR, reducing the administrative burden on Church entities to provide and seek one off safeguarding statements while *enhancing the safe movement of clergy and religious across jurisdictions.*



Also during this period, the ACMR passed the milestone of **75%** of coverage for clergy and male religious across Australia.



Next Steps

For the rest of 2021 and into 2022, we will focus on providing new materials, better processes and general improvements to the system, including technical infrastructure, to ensure the stability and security of the system.

From November 2021 ACSL will be inviting women religious to join the ACMR. With improvements to the system, the long-term goal of accommodating women religious on the ACMR will be possible. The inclusion of women religious is another step in fulfilling our mission to assist all Church entities in their safeguarding responsibilities.



**SUPPORTING CHURCH ENTITIES TO BUILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR EVERYONE THROUGH:
PROVIDING OVERSIGHT OF COMPLAINTS RESPONSE AT A NATIONAL LEVEL THROUGH
DEVELOPMENT AND REFINEMENT OF A COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK
AND MANAGEMENT OF SPECIFIC COMPLAINT CATEGORIES**

In March 2021 ACSL incorporated the complaints functions previously undertaken by the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards.

ACSL now provides the following complaint functions:

1. Complaints under Vos Estis Lux Mundi — If requested, ACSL can assist to facilitate complaints management under the Vatican procedural Vos Estis Lux Mundi;
2. Complaints against a Church Authority — ACSL can provide an independent process for facilitating complaints against a Church Authority that are not captured by Vos Estis Lux Mundi (a Church Authority is a Bishop, Australian Major Superior or the Canonical Steward); and
3. Review of the outcome of a complaint managed by a Church Authority — ACSL can provide an independent review mechanism for complainants, respondents and Church Authorities for complaints managed under Towards Healing or the National Response Protocol.

The role of Director, Complaints Response was established to oversee ACSL's complaints management functions.

Since the appointment of the Director, Complaints Response, work has commenced on development of ACSL's Complaints Management Framework, policies and procedures. The initial phase of this work has been to establish the principles that will underpin and support ACSL's ongoing role in complaints management.

Next Steps

In the 2021-2022 financial year, work in ACSL's complaint management functions will focus on developing and implementing a robust Complaints Management Framework that incorporates contemporary best practice in complaints management. The Framework will embed a positive complaints culture that is transparent, impartial and trauma informed. It will also include a range of policies and procedures that establishes and ensure a consistent approach to complaints management.

We will also be developing and implementing a Complaints Management System that enables effective management of complaints for ACSL and its subscribers.

As well as these efforts, in 2021-2022 ACSL will incorporate the records management functions for the former NSW Professional Standards Office. These functions will include embedding appropriate policies and procedures for responding to subpoenas and requests for information.



CULTURE

ACSL is committed to developing a culture that respects complaints by demonstrating an ongoing and explicit commitment to effective complaint management at all levels within ACSL and its Members.



FACILITATE

ACSL is committed to facilitating an easy complaints process by providing accessible information, and by adopting a trauma-informed approach to support complainants.



RESOURCE

ACSL is committed to providing adequate training, empowerment and resources to deliver effective best practice by facilitating training and support, delegations and suitable technology solutions.



ANALYSE

ACSL is committed to creating and maintaining appropriate and adequate records and undertaking proactive analysis to identify trends and support continuous improvement.



GUIDE

ACSL is committed to the development and maintenance of clear policies and procedures and ensuring that information is accessible.

Community Engagement

ACSL has a national role to promote the safeguarding efforts of the Church. We share our work via reports, our newsletters, speaking engagements and membership of sector groups. Part of this role is to partner with organisations from outside the Catholic Church working in the safeguarding space, to ensure we are pursuing a community approach to safeguarding.

In 2020-2021 outgoing CEO Sheree Limbrick presented at events on the Catholic calendar, including:

- Helping to deliver a unit of study on 'Pastoral Leadership for a Safe Church' as part of Catholic Theological College's Graduate Certificate in Professional Supervision.
- Delivering the 2020 Knox lecture at Catholic Theological College on the topic of Safe Church: Commitment, awareness & action for cultural change

We also continued to promote the work of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors throughout our newsletters and mailing lists and engaged with our international safeguarding counterparts.

Our work with other churches

In 2020-21 we continued our partnership with the National Council of Churches Safe Church Program to deliver two sessions on the National Child Safe Principles and NCSS, adapted from ACSL's training for Catholic leaders. Representatives from the Chaldean Diocese of Australia, Coptic Diocese of Melbourne, Coptic Diocese of Sydney, Armenian Diocese of Australia & New Zealand, Lutheran Church of Australia, Baptist Union of Victoria, Society of Friends, and Uniting Church in Australia Northern Synod attended these training sessions.

"It was useful gathering as an ecumenical group who are all expressing the 'how to' of the standards being implemented, and having such clear resources and responses to Standards."

Ecumenical session for
Leaders participant

Our work with community partners

In the reporting period we continued our role on the National Office of Child Safety Leadership Advisory Group. The Group provides sector advice to the Federal Government through the National Office for Child Safety. Being part of this group enables ACSL to provide feedback on the range of issues that our own stakeholders within the Church experience and learn from our peers in this space.

We also progressed our partnership with the Australian Catholic University's Institute of Child Protection Studies with the commencement of the rollout of the Safeguarding Capabilities Survey and contributing to the development of case studies for the Children's Safety Survey.

3,098 
**subscribers to
ACSL's monthly
e-newsletter**



Next steps

In the coming year we will be extending our efforts to connect more widely with the diverse range of groups within the Catholic Church. We will also continue to seek opportunities to partner with peer organisations in the community, including the Australian Childhood Foundation, to share safeguarding training and research amongst our networks.

“We were able to connect with other churches and we know that our needs are very similar. The access to new resources was useful too.”

Ecumenical session for
Leaders participant





ACSL's executive team, from left: Karen Mosley, Nicole Young, Tania Stegemann, Ursula Stephens and Daniele Donnini

Staff

Ursula Stephens

Chief Executive Officer

PhD Public Administration, B.Ed

Tania Stegemann

Director, Risk, Audit & Review

MComm, FCA, CIA

Daniele Donnini

Director, Safeguarding & Improvement

MEd (SCYP), GDDiv, GCRM, GradCertEd (SCYP), BTheol, Dip Mgt, DipCommServ

Karen Mosley

Director, Complaints Response

MCrim, BSocSc, DipPM, CertIV Investigations

Nicole Young

Executive Support Manager

Llywellyn O'Brien

ACMR Supervisor

BDEVS

Katherine Beavis

Manager, Communications & Media

MIR, BA (Politics)

Maree Charnley

Senior Payroll & Finance Officer

BSocSc (Family Studies)

With thanks to staff who ended their employment in 2020-2021

Sheree Limbrick

Chief Executive Officer

Mandy Fielding

Executive Assistant

Genevieve Lown

Administrative Assistant

Danielle Messina

Administrative Assistant

Concise Financials

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
Income		
Members Contribution/Levy	1,351,500	1,248,151
Service Income	266,694	266,352
Interest Received	62	576
Other Income	295,450	158,000
Total income	1,913,706	1,673,079
Expenses		
Cost of rendering services	(126,337)	(474,349)
Administration expense	(289,539)	(144,625)
Staff costs	(1,119,038)	(909,836)
Director fees & related costs	(250,259)	(313,818)
Depreciation and amortisation	(107,317)	(115,875)
Auditor's Remuneration	(7,000)	(6,537)
Finance costs	(912)	(846)
Total expenses	1,900,402	1,965,913
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	13,304	(292,834)
Other comprehensive income		
Other comprehensive income for the year (net of tax)	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	13,304	(292,834)

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	802,457	835,938
Trade and other receivables	51,652	94,699
Other Assets	5,896	61,517
Right-of-use assets	25,072	33,711
Total current assets	885,077	1,025,865
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	-	-
Total non-current assets	-	-
Total assets	885,077	1,025,865
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	243,896	350,673
Provisions	39,298	60,751
Lease liabilities	10,233	34,951
Total current liabilities	293,427	446,375
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	8,336	9,480
Total non-current liabilities	8,336	9,480
Total liabilities	301,763	455,855
Net assets	583,314	570,010
Equity		
Accumulated funds	583,314	570,010
Total equity	583,314	570,010



A safe Church for everyone

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www.acsltd.org.au