



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD

A safe Church for everyone

Australian Catholic Ministry Register

Procedures guide

First edition

September 2021

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.

This Procedures Guide is available on [ACSL's website](#).

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Introduction

Who this guide is for:

This guide is aimed to help those tasked with interacting with the ACMR on behalf of Church entities. It focuses on outlining the procedural steps involved in the ACMR, to be as practical as possible.

Purpose of the Australian Catholic Ministry Procedures Guide:

This guide and the procedures included are intended to assist you in fulfilling the requirements of National Catholic Safeguarding Standard 5.7.1¹ through the Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR or the Register). This standard requires that clergy, religious and Church Authorities provide and seek safeguarding statements before permission is granted to minister in a Church jurisdiction. The ACMR offers an easy means of fulfilling this requirement for those eligible. For further information on the requirements of 5.7.1 see [ACSL's website](#).

We hope that this guide will be useful for reference and clarification as well as for explaining the system to new staff or others who need to use the Register. It has been a priority to ensure that the procedures are clear and self-explanatory. To learn more about the Register please visit [ACSL's website](#) or contact the ACMR administrator if you need any assistance.

Each section of this guide will feature both a detailed breakdown of the steps and a quick checklist intended to help you complete each process.

This guide will be updated as required, so please check that you are using the current edition by referring to [ACSL's website](#) where the current version, as well as all current forms can be found. ACSL will keep you updated with changes to the Procedures Guide (including updates to any of the forms contained within) through email communication.

Note: although this guide will touch on your civil legal responsibilities and the procedures adopted by your Church Authority, it will not exhaust these. Please ensure that you comply with all relevant legislation and your entity's policies.

¹ NCSS 5.7.1: The entity implements a system to assess the safeguarding credentials and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy and religious moving between different seminaries, formation programs and Church jurisdictions. For further detail see ACSL's [NCSS 5.7.1 guidance](#).

General notes

ACMR WWCC policy

Eligibility for use of the ACMR is dependent on both holding a valid WWCC or equivalent each state or territory in which a person ordinarily ministers, and providing updates of this clearance to ACSL. If an applicant cannot provide a valid WWCC or equivalent, they will not be able to be registered on the ACMR. If the expiry date of a required WWCC, as recorded in the Register, expires without new details of a valid check being provided, the individual's status will no longer be able to be verified via their ACMR ID until this has been corrected. Until an update is provided, people who attempt to verify the ACMR ID will be directed to follow up with the relevant Church Authority.

Record Keeping

An entity should keep records relating to the ACMR. All applications, updates and changes of status should be retained. Additionally, you should ensure that you maintain a record of those individuals you have registered and their details, so that you can ensure ACSL has been notified of any changes.

For your convenience a report of ACMR ID holders registered with your entity will be sent out every six months (January and July). This report can also be requested at any time. A copy of this report is useful for your own records.

Forms

All forms can be filled out digitally, by hand or a combination of both. Electronic signatures applied using programs such as Adobe Acrobat are accepted. The person who handles Register matters, or another staff member, may pre-fill the forms and have them signed by the applicant and Church Authority. In these instances, the person signing the statement must be fully briefed on the nature and purpose of the document as well as the Register itself and instructed to read through the form before signing it. Applications may be submitted with each element (i.e., Individual Safeguarding Declaration, Church Authority Safeguarding Statement etc.) saved in a separate file or with one or more combined files.

1. Getting Started

Setting up your Church entity to begin enrolling members on the Register is a simple process. This process must be completed by the Church Authority of the Church entity, who should:

1. Speak to the ACMR Administrator and get a good understanding of the system; our [website](#) is a great place to start.
2. Check that the Church Authority Nomination and Delegate Nomination forms are up to date on our [website](#).
3. Complete the Church Authority Nomination form in order to be established as a Church Authority in the Register.
4. Identify a suitable person as a delegate:
 - The delegate will be able to assist in completing applications and any other paperwork on behalf of the Church Authority as needed. They do so on the authority of the Church Authority.
 - The delegate does not need to be the 'second in charge'. Any person who holds a senior position, including a lay person, is suitable. For example, this could be a person with safeguarding/professional standards responsibilities.
5. Nominate this person using the Delegate Nomination form.

With these tasks complete, the Church Authority and delegate are ready to complete the application forms and submit applications, as outlined in the next section.

Checklist

- Speak to the ACMR Administrator and become familiar with the Register.
- Check that your Church Authority Nomination and Delegate Nomination forms are current at [ACSL's website](#).
- Complete the Church Authority Nomination form.
- Choose a suitable delegate.
- Complete the Delegate Nomination form.
- Send these completed forms to ACMR@acs ltd.org.au.
- Begin applications for individuals within your entity, ideally starting with the Church Authority and delegate.

2. Applying for an ACMR ID

In order to add a person to the Register, the applicant and their Church Authority or Delegate need to complete the Individual and Church Authority statements. These completed forms are provided to the ACMR Administrator with a photo of the applicant. The corresponding Photo Testimonial form and the details of the applicants valid Working With Children Checks (WWCC) or equivalent clearance for each State or Territory in which they regularly minister are to be included. The procedure is as follows:

1. Ensure that you have the correct forms, including the Individual Safeguarding Declaration, Church Authority Safeguarding Statement and Photo Testimonial; the current forms can be found on [ACSL's website](#).
2. Have the applicant complete and sign the Individual Safeguarding Declaration form.
3. Have the Church Authority or their delegate complete and sign the Church Authority Safeguarding Statement form. Carefully check these forms.

Common problems which can cause delays in processing applications include:

- Inconsistent naming and use of Religious or informal names. The applicant's full legal name must be used, while any other name that they go by may be included in parenthesis after their first name. E.g. 'John (Jack) Anthony Davies' or 'Maricel (Catherine) Theresa Santos'.
 - Use of titles such as 'Rev' without specification that the applicant is a priest or deacon.
4. Obtain a digital photo of the applicant along with a photo testimonial declaring that it does show the person.
 - The photo can be of any size or format so long as it is sufficiently recent and clear to identify the person when displayed 200 x 200px online.
 - The photo should ordinarily be verified by the Church Authority or their delegate, but may be signed by another suitably senior member of the Church entity or staff (i.e., a professional standards officer, chancellor or vicar of clergy). Assistance to arrange the photo on the appropriate form for signing can be provided if required.
 - The photo may also be verified manually on any printed copy with words to the effect of "I [title, name and office] on behalf of [Church entity name] verify that this is a true image of [applicant's name as specified on the form]" along with a signature and date. This can also be done digitally.

5. Gather the details of the valid WWCC(s) or equivalent for the jurisdiction or jurisdictions in which the applicant ministers.
 - In the ACT a scan of the front of their WWVP card is required.
 - Where state or territory legislation allows Teacher Registration Cards or other exemption cards, please provide the details of these.
 - If an applicant's name differs on their WWCC registration from their full legal name, please provide this information.
6. Submit these to ACMR@acsltd.org.au. Multiple applications can be sent together. Additional information or explanation may be included in the email.

Once an application has been submitted it will be checked and processed, usually within ten business days. Should further information be required, the ACSL team will contact you as soon as possible.

Processed and approved applications will be confirmed via email. Two automated emails will be sent to the new ACMR ID holder. These will also be sent to the contact email that is listed for the Church entity. It is best to ensure that the applicant has received these notices. If they have not, ask them to check their spam/junk inboxes as the emails are sometimes diverted to these. If either email has not been received, please contact ACSL and we will seek to address this.

Checklist

- Check your forms are current. Current forms can be found on the [ACSL website](#).
- Review the requirements detailed in the statements and ensure they can be affirmed.
- Have the Individual Safeguarding Declaration form completed.
- Have the Church Authority Safeguarding Statement form completed.
- Check these carefully.
- Get a digital photo of the applicant and have this verified, using the Photo Testimonial form.
- Gather any information needed to check each required WWCC.
- Send these to ACMR@acsltd.org.au.

3. Changes of Status, Updates & Ongoing Maintenance

Ensuring that ACMR records are up to date is of vital importance to the safe and correct functioning of the Register and a part of the commitment made in registering a person for an ACMR ID.

There are four kinds of changes that we need to hear about including changes of status or jurisdiction; WWCC updates; notice of ordinations and deaths; and photo updates.

What changes do you need to notify ACSL about?

ACSL must be notified about any change which may relate to the safety of children and adults at risk.

The most critical change of status within the Register is that from 'Approved' to 'Restricted'. This change must be made, via the process below, immediately when a Church Authority has become aware of any information or allegation which may undermine their capacity to declare that the ACMR ID holder is in good standing. This change must not be delayed pending any investigation of the allegation and may be reversed on the basis of subsequent inquiries.

ACSL must be informed when:

- An ACMR ID holder's status needs to be changed (including if they have left the Church entity).
- An ACMR ID holder has moved between jurisdictions (States and Territories).
- The WWCC details of an ID holder have changed, especially if they have lapsed.
- An ID holder has been ordained or has died.

ACSL does not need to be informed when:

- An ID holder has moved address but remained within their home jurisdiction.
- The ministry or living circumstances of the ID holder have changed. For example, where a person has formally retired but continues to minister occasionally.

Procedure for Changes of Status

1. Determine the appropriate status for the person. The selection of the appropriate status is the sole responsibility of the Church Authority, though ACSL may provide advice when needed. The possible statuses are as follows:
 - **Approved***: For a person who has held any of the following statuses but has returned to active ministry in good standing and meets the requirements detailed in the Individual and Church Authority Statements (see [ACSL's website](#)). Only persons who are approved will appear when their ACMR ID is checked at acmr.acsltd.org.au
 - **Restricted***: For a person regarding whom the Church Authority may no longer declare every aspect of the statement made (see the Church Authority Safeguarding Statement at [ACSL's website](#)). Including through a lapsed or barred WWCC or equivalent.
 - **Laicised**: For a person registered with us as a cleric who has left or been dismissed from the clerical state, except where this has occurred as a result of the above.
 - **Resigned/Retired** (whichever is appropriate): For a person who has permanently and entirely ceased ministry in any circumstances other than restriction or laicisation.
 - **No longer part of this Church Authority**: For a person who has returned overseas, taken on ministry under a new Church Authority or otherwise is no longer a member of the Church entity with which they were registered, except where they fall into a previous status.
 - Where the person has moved to another Church entity in Australia, we ask that you refer to the section on Transfers below (page 13) and do not submit a Change of Status form initially, although the Church Authority is free to do so.

* Changing a person's status either of these statuses will trigger an email that will go to that person confirming the change and asking them to contact their Church Authority should they have any questions.

2. Check that you are using the current Change of Status form at [ACSL's website](#).
3. Complete the Change of Status form, selecting the appropriate status, and have it signed by the Church Authority or delegate.
 - If a person is being restored to 'Approved' having formerly been 'Restricted', this form must be accompanied by a signed letter. This must detail the reason for their restriction and the investigations, risk assessments and any other steps taken which allow the Church Authority to reaffirm each of the statements in the Church Authority Statement, available for reference on [ACSL's website](#).
4. Submit this to ACSL at ACMR@acsltd.org.au.

Procedure for changes of Jurisdiction (State or Territory)

When an ACMR ID holder is ministering in a new jurisdiction (generally when they have moved) the ACMR must be notified as soon as practical:

1. Ensure that the person has the appropriate WWCC or equivalent details for each jurisdiction in which they now regularly minister. Please check [step 5 from section two](#) 'Applying for an ACMR ID' at the top of page 8 for information on which details we will need in order to verify the clearance.
2. Send these to ACMR@acsltd.org.au along with a statement to the effect that they have moved.
 - If you have previously supplied the required clearance for the new jurisdiction, an emailed statement will suffice.

WWCC updates

If you become aware that an ACMR ID holder is accused of any actions which may lead to the loss of their WWCC, or if it has actually been withdrawn (even provisionally) the Church Authority must submit a Change of Status form urgently as per the above (page 10).

In addition, whenever an ACMR ID holder's WWCC or equivalent details change (i.e. renewal, conversion from volunteer to employee status etc.) the Register must be notified via email. The requirements listed above for the initial WWCC apply here;

ACSL will need the new ID and/or expiry date along with any other information needed to verify the clearance. This may include a scan of the card or letter of notice.

This should be done as part of your standard procedure so that as soon as a renewal/change comes through to you, you pass it on to ACSL to update the Register. Such details may simply be emailed to ACMR@acsltd.org.au. We will confirm that we have verified any changes and updated our records as soon as we are able.

Failure to update WWCCs has the potential to undermine the safety provided by the ACMR. Consequently, ACMR ID holders with expired WWCC details on the Register will not be able to use their ACMR ID until a current clearance has been provided to ACSL and verified (see the [note on WWCC policy](#) on page 5 for further details).

Notices

The final aspect of maintaining the Register regards updates on individual ACMR ID holders such as notices of death or ordination. Where these occur we ask that you simply email us at ACMR@acsltd.org.au as is convenient.

Photo updates

Periodically it will be necessary to update the photo used for identification of an ACMR ID holder in order to reflect changes in appearance. There is no fixed period for these updates to occur with the only requirement being that the photo is recent enough to clearly identifies the person. As such we suggest that photos be reviewed occasionally. We encourage replacement every five years, and after no more than ten.

When a photo needs to be replaced:

1. Acquire a digital copy of a photo of the ACMR ID holder which is sufficiently clear to identify them.
2. Check that you are using a current version of the Photo Testimonial form (see [ACSL's website](#)).
3. Have the photo verified via a Photo Testimonial form signed by the Church Authority, their delegate or another suitably senior person.
4. Send the digital copy of the photo and the completed and signed Photo Testimonial form to ACMR@acsltd.org.au.

4. Transfers

Part of the purpose of the Register is to facilitate the transfer of ACMR ID holders between Church entities. A transfer occurs when a person becomes a part of, or is formally loaned to, a new Church entity, such that the Church Authority of this entity becomes or acts as their Church Authority. This does not include short term visits or placements where there is no change of Church Authority. Managing transfers involves either ensuring that the person's new Church Authority takes over responsibility for declaring their good standing or removing the person from the Register where the new Church Authority cannot do so.

The timely and correct handling of transfers is vital to ensure that all people on the Register are associated with their proper Church Authority, that no Church Authority inadvertently continues to vouch for a person over whom they have no oversight and that ACMR ID holders are able to transfer easily. If transfers are handled well, they are simple for both the sending and receiving Church entities and the transferee will retain their existing ACMR ID.

When an ACMR ID holder formally joins or is loaned to a new Church entity, the Register must be informed of this transfer. This process involves responsibilities for both the sending and receiving Church entity. The procedure for each is as follows:

Sending Church Authority:

1. When you become aware of an upcoming transfer check whether the person has an ACMR ID. If not, the remainder of this procedure is irrelevant.
2. Inform the receiving Church entity that the person has an ACMR ID or contact the Register to liaise with the receiving Church entity about their responsibilities.
3. *If* the receiving Church Authority does use the Register, assist them in ascertaining the person's good standing and in gathering any other details that they may need.
4. *If* the receiving Church Authority does not use the Register or does not wish to transfer the person, submit a Change of Status form to remove the person.
 - i. It may also be best to submit a Change of Status form if there is an unreasonable delay in this process.

Once the person has been transferred in the Register you will be notified.

Receiving Church Authority:

1. Acquire and verify the ACMR ID of the person transferring.
2. Check that you have an up to date copy of the Transfer form and Safeguarding Statement.
3. The Church Authority or delegate must familiarise themselves with this form and the requirements involved.
4. The Church Authority must take steps to satisfy themselves that the statements included in the form are true of the person transferring. They may then complete the Transfer form.
5. *If* the person is moving across State or Territory boundaries, ensure that they have the WWCC or equivalent for their new Jurisdiction.
6. Review the signed Transfer form and submit this to ACSL.

6.1 *If* the person will be ministering in one or more a new State or Territory, also include a statement to this effect along with the details needed to verify their WWCC. To check which details are needed, please see [step 5 of section two](#) 'Applying for an ACMR ID' at the top of page 8.

You will be informed when the person has been assigned to your Church entity on the Register.

5. Checking ACMR IDs

A person seeking to minister in another Church entity should notify that entity as soon as possible and comply with whatever paperwork is required. When notifying the entity of their intention to minister, the individual should provide the entity with their ACMR ID which can then be checked [here](#).

When the unique ACMR ID of an individual approved on the Register is entered, the individual's name, title and status will be displayed along with a photo to confirm their identity. This result indicates that their Church Authority attests to the good standing of the individual. When an ACMR ID has been successfully checked, and this has been recorded, the person and both the sending and receiving Church Authorities have all fulfilled their responsibilities under NCSS 5.7.1. In such cases it is not necessary for the older statement forms to be requested or provided.

Important to note is that the process of verifying an ACMR ID does not satisfy the receiving Church entities' other legal responsibilities regarding WWCCs and equivalent clearances.

A failed verification attempt will display the generic message "No current record available. Please contact the Church Authority". This will be displayed whether the ID belongs to a person or not, and so mistaken IDs will yield this result.

Procedure for receiving authorities:

1. Follow your standard procedure for a visiting cleric or religious.
2. Gather the person's ACMR ID.
3. *If* the visit is imminent, verify the ID when it is collected (if this is unsuccessful, see below). If this is successful, go ahead with your standard procedures.
4. *If* the visit is not imminent:
 - 4.1 *If* the person does not need approval until shortly before the visit, verify the ID as close as is practical to the visit and give approval at this point.
 - 4.2 *If* the person requires approval well before the visit, you can either:
 - A) Perform an initial verification and proceed with your ordinary process, but make it clear that their approval is dependent on the person retaining their status and that this will be re-checked. Verify the ID a second time as close

as is practical to the visit to ensure that the person's status has not changed. If the person's status has changed, ensure that they do not perform ministry.

- B) Do not perform an initial check and proceed with your ordinary process, but make it clear that their approval is dependent on the success of a check shortly before their visit. Perform the search as close as is practical to the visit. If this is successful, no action is necessary. If this is unsuccessful you must ensure that they do not perform ministry.

Procedure for failed verification attempts:

(If any of the steps below yield a successful search, proceed to step 3 above)

1. Carefully check the details provided and repeat the search.
2. Contact the person who supplied the ID and confirm it with them.
3. Contact the person's Church entity and ask them to confirm the person's ID.
4. Contact the person's Church entity and inform them that the person is attempting to perform ministry and may not be approved to do so. Ask them whether there may be a reason that the person is not approved. It is possible that they have the person's ID recorded incorrectly or that an error has occurred.

6. Changes of Church Authorities or Delegates

Keeping ACSL up to date on changes of leadership within your Church entity allows for the smooth function of the Register. ACSL should be made aware of both changes of Church Authorities and delegates promptly, preferably before the change occurs (where it is known in advance). The approach to such changes will vary depending on whether the person has an ACMR ID and whether they are registered as a member of the Church entity of which they are taking on the leadership.

The person is an ACMR ID holder and registered as a member of the Church entity

Procedure for Changes of Church Authority:

1. Check that you have a current Church Authority Nomination form [at ACSL's website](#).
2. Have the new Church Authority fill in the Church Authority Nomination form.
3. Send this completed form to ACMR@acsltd.org.au.

Procedure for Changes of Delegate:

1. Check that you have a current Delegate Nomination form at [ACSL's website](#).
2. Have the Church Authority fill in the Delegate Nomination form.
3. Send this completed form to ACMR@acsltd.org.au.

The person is an ACMR ID holder registered with another Church entity

As above, but first a Transfer form and Safeguarding Statement from [ACSL's website](#) must be submitted for them according to the procedure detailed above (page 13).

The person is not an ACMR ID holder

They must apply for an ACMR ID before or at the same time as the form establishing them as Church Authority or delegate is sent. Where the person is going to be the new Church Authority, the existing delegate may sign their Church Authority Safeguarding Statement form.