

Key challenge is to maintain Royal Commission momentum: Chair of new Catholic child safety standards setting body says

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The Hon. Geoff Giudice, Chair of the Catholic Church's new safeguarding body, Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL), has told a meeting of Australian Bishops that one of the key challenges for the Church and for CPSL over the next few years will be to maintain the momentum created by the Royal Commission.

Speaking at the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Plenary Council in Sydney yesterday (May 10 2018), Mr Giudice said that no matter how much better informed the community and the Church is as a result of the Royal Commission, the danger has not passed.

"Evil will always exist. A sustained effort is needed to create and maintain a culture of safety and care. That realization is central to CPSL's operations.

"Two things in particular flow from this realisation.

"The first is that safeguarding of vulnerable people should be at the forefront of conversations within the Church at all levels and the second, because of the ever-present possibility of abuse and misconduct of other kinds, CPSL will be persistent and uncompromising in implementing the national standards.

"This means our default position is that audit reports will be publicly available and that stronger action could be taken against a Catholic entity which does not comply.

"Audit reports, positive and negative, will be of great practical and symbolic significance. When the child safeguarding standards have been approved later this year, CPSL will carry out its responsibility to implement them with perseverance, compassion and transparency," he said.

CPSL was established by the Catholic Church leadership to:

- Develop standards in relation to children and other vulnerable people who come into contact with the Church. The standards are to deal with the promotion of safety, the prevention of abuse and misconduct and responses to allegations of abuse and misconduct;
- to provide education and training in relation to the standards and, in doing so, foster a culture of safety and care; and
- to enter into contractual arrangements with Church authorities to ensure ongoing compliance with the standards by all Catholic entities, to carry out audits and to report on the results.

Ms Sheree Limbrick, CEO of CPSL, gave the Bishops a comprehensive presentation detailing the work which has already been done and the standards consultation process that is now underway.

"We have now gone out to all Church organisations asking them to comment on the Safeguarding Standards we have drafted and the way in which they can be implemented.

"The draft standards are now on our website and we welcome feedback.

“We will soon also be starting an Australia-wide consultation process where we will visit every state to engage with survivors, family, advocates, religious leaders, educators, social services, disability and children services, government authorities and many others,” she said.

To comment on the CPSL draft National Catholic Safeguarding Standards go to [CPSL website](#)

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