



Prot: 24260:MMsp_1001

28 August 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Re: Professional Standards & Safeguarding Office Arrangements

Since becoming your Bishop in 2014, there have been many changes to our Diocesan structures and processes.

Very early in my time as Bishop, I was confronted with the realities of the Royal Commission and the need to put into place a robust safeguarding and professional standards approach to all that we do here in the Diocese. The failures have caused incredible damage. To the people who suffered, I cannot apologise to you enough for this damage caused.

The Royal Commission highlighted just how important a proactive approach to safeguarding and professional standards was the way forward to the future.

In this past decade, I re-established a Professional Standards Committee and established a Safeguarding Committee. This latter committee, with representatives from CatholicCare and Catholic Education, oversees the policies and procedures of the Diocese's proactive stance for safeguarding and training for all who exercise a ministry or are in employment within the Diocese. Dr Lorna Duggan has chaired this committee for the past nine years and has now completed her time on the committee. I am grateful to Dr Duggan for her incredible guidance and wisdom in this area of the Church's mission.

I am delighted that Sr Noreen Dunne smsm will take over this important role within the Diocese. Sr Noreen has taken up as Chair from 1 August 2024.

During this past decade, the Diocese has been privileged to have three incredible people filling the role of Manager of Safeguarding and Professional Standards. In the early days, Melissa Davey filled this role as we as a Diocese responded to many people in the aftermath of the Royal Commission. Daniele Donnini continued in this role and in these later years, Judy Pidcock has been a great anchor for the Diocese in assisting all of us in our mission of safeguarding. Judy is retiring at the end of August, and I am so grateful for her wonderful work among you in the Diocese. During these years with us, Judy has led us through our first audit, been an incredible presence in our parishes and agencies and more important, a wise person on the end of the phone. I am grateful for Judy and now wish her and her family all of God's blessings.

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Bishop Michael McCarthy

Emma Finlay, who provided administrative support to Judy in the Professional Standards & Safeguarding Office has also recently left to take up a new position with one of our colleges. I thank Emma for her assistance and wish her all the best for her new role.

Recently, we conducted a recruitment process for the Professional Standards and Safeguarding Manager's position and unfortunately the position is still vacant. In the interim, I have asked Mr Brett Halter to assist me with professional standards for the Diocese. Brett is the Student Protection Officer at the Rockhampton Diocesan Catholic Education Office and has worked closely with our Diocesan Office.

As we continue the process of recruitment, please continue to use the current Diocesan Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office contacts for any matters involving professional standards and safeguarding:

- Phone – 4887 3080 (8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)
- Email – pssomanager@rok.catholic.net.au

My Personal Assistant will direct your matters for attention as required.

With every best wish.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Rev Michael McCarthy
Bishop of Rockhampton