



# Diocesan Protection and Safety Council

QUARTERLY REPORT

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2021

## Diocesan Protection and Safety Council Meetings

During the third quarter of 2021, the Diocesan Protection and Safety Council ('Council') met on 09 September. The meeting lasted one hour and twenty minutes and was conducted online via Zoom.

There was the provision of information from the various standing committees. The details of which are provided later in this quarterly report.

## Report from the Convenor of the Standing Committee for the Support and Guidance of Healing and Support Issues

The Standing Committee met twice during this time. At our July meeting we farewelled Maureen O'Hearn who was both the Manager of Healing and Support and Convenor of this Standing Committee. Unfortunately, due to the COVID lockdown we had to do this through Zoom! We look forward to an occasion in the not-too-distant future to have a fitting celebration and recognition of Maureen's immense contribution.

During this time, the Team supported 45 individuals (survivors and family members); two redress scenarios; and one session (Introduction to Child Protection Training). Due to COVID

restrictions no group sessions were held in person.

Perpetual Day of Remembrance: Due to COVID not much went on again this year. The Newcastle clock tower was lit up yellow from Saturday-Wednesday. Sacred Heart Cathedral was also lit up yellow. The lighting up of the Cathedral & Clock Tower will be ongoing in coming years to mark the Day.

Bishops Healing Fund: The Bishop's Healing Fund advertisement appeared on page three of the Newcastle Herald on 11th September. We are awaiting applications.

Diocesan Memorial: We remain in discussion to find the best way forward for the Memorial. There has been widespread community consultation.

## Report from the Convenor of the Standing Committee for Assisting in Resolving Claims

The Standing Committee met once during this quarter, on 02 July.

There was one mediation which was held in person in Sydney in late July which was unsuccessful.

The imposition of increasingly strict public health orders (as a consequence of the rapid spread of the delta strain COVID-19), likely impacted on the progression and settlement of claims during the third quarter 2021.

There were four RFI (Requests for Information) reports prepared and submitted during this quarter to the National Redress Scheme.

### **Report from the Convenor of the Standing Committee for the Oversight of the Office of Safeguarding**

The third quarter of 2021 proved to be a period of significant change for the Office of Safeguarding since its establishment in September 2019.

As noted earlier in this report, the long standing and highly respected Manager of Healing and Support, announced her retirement. With a change of leadership in Healing and Support, it was the appropriate time to transition the service out of the Office of Safeguarding to the clinical and counselling service arm of CatholicCare Social Services. This transition will reinforce Healing and Support's capacity to provide clinically sound, client focused service.

During the third quarter 2021, the ADR Coordinator resigned for a role in the newly established Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. Based on earlier endeavours to consolidate the Diocese's tertiary complaints resolution resources, funding for the ADR position was transferred out of the Office of Safeguarding. Subsequently, a broader discussion has occurred on the pros and cons of building internal capacity compared to establishing a panel of third-party mediators. The Diocese is committed

to ensuring a panel of qualified and experienced mediators to assist parties to achieve workable solutions to enduring or intractable conflict.

With these changes the internal structure of the Office of Safeguarding was simplified, with the establishment of the 'operational' and 'executive' arms. The Office of Safeguarding leadership group now consists of the Director, an Operations Manager and Executive Coordinator.

Thanks to the support and generosity of Gerard Mowbray, Director of Schools, the secondment of Liz Latham from the CSO has been approved through to the end of 2022. This ensures that the successful strategy of mentoring or 'coaching' local school and parish leaders to champion the ongoing enhancement and improvement of safeguarding standards will continue.