

# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN



## ANNUAL REPORT – 2016/17 AUSTRALIAN PROVINCE OF **THE SOCIETY OF JESUS**

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# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN



The safeguarding of all people in our care, particularly children and vulnerable adults, is a fundamental concern for the Australian Province of the Society of Jesus. In fact, there is no greater responsibility for those that care for others than keeping them safe.

It is clear to me that in the past we, and many other organisations, have failed the children and young people in our care. Appearing at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse earlier this year reinforced the responsibility I have for ensuring that, in our Jesuit circles, this never happens again.

All within the Australian Jesuit Province are committed to this and we have taken practical measures to support this commitment. In 2016, we launched a comprehensive strategy to enhance professional standards for the safeguarding of children and young people. This strategy is detailed on our website – [www.jesuit.org.au](http://www.jesuit.org.au) – and this inaugural report is part of our commitment to openly sharing our work.

This Safeguarding Children Annual Report is designed to inform all people in the community of the initiatives the Australian Province has taken to ensure children and young people in our care are safer from harm.

**Fr Brian F. McCoy SJ**  
Provincial

## REMEMBERING SURVIVORS: A SERVICE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & DEDICATION

On 14 July 2016, a service of acknowledgement and dedication was held at Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview. A memorial in the grounds of the College was unveiled to recognise all victim survivors of abuse. An apology was offered by Dr Paul Hine, Principal of the College:

*Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview acknowledges that some students have suffered harm and abuse during their time at the school.*

*For that, the Society of Jesus, College Council, the School Executive and College community express a profound statement of regret and offer a sincere apology to the students and their families.*

*Saint Ignatius' College commits to creating a place where all feel welcomed and are safe for present and future generations.*

*May those who have experienced pain and suffering in the past find healing and peace.*

These words appear on a plaque at the memorial which is permanently located off Fraser Walk within the College's grounds.

With assistance from the In Good Faith Foundation, a similar service was held at Xavier College, Kew for victim survivors in early 2016.

A victim survivor of abuse at Saint Ignatius' College offered the following words at the service:

*I'm speaking on my own behalf and for myself, but am sure my thoughts and sentiments will be the same for many survivors of abuse during one's schooling.*

*But, I don't really want to talk about the doom and gloom—I want to talk about whatever good can come out of such a horrendous experience which no one should ever have to endure.*

*Surviving abuse takes you to the darkest places imaginable—hell could almost be a better place than where I, and I'm sure other abuse survivors have been.*

*I was afraid to speak out about my abuse, I was ashamed of what happened to me so I bottled it up for around 30 years—it consumed me and who I was by suffering in silence; the best thing to happen to me was speaking out; if anyone present knows of someone who has been abused support them, stand by them and ask them to seek help and for them to know they aren't alone.*

*So what does one take from all of this, I see the main messages as:*

- We the abused aren't alone and we don't have to be*
- We don't have to suffer in silence*
- That there is a light at the end of the tunnel*
- That those who abuse will be held to account*
- To be strong, face it head on and to know you have support from those in one's life that really care*
- To realise as hard and confronting as it is that crap happens in life but it's still worth living for.*

# SHARING OUR COMMITMENT



The Royal Commission commenced its important work on 11 January 2013, over four and a half years ago. Since then, it has held 57 public hearings (14 of which focused on institutions of the Catholic Church), handled 39,480 telephone calls, received 23,691 letters and emails, held 7,113 private sessions with victim survivors, and referred 2,165 complaints to the authorities, including the police.

Armed with various learnings and recommendations from the Royal Commission and other state inquiries into sexual abuse, the Australian Province has continued on its path of ongoing improvement in the area of safeguarding children and young people. Over the past 12 months, significant initiatives have been commenced and refined to ensure all Province ministries are 'child safe'. The Safeguarding Children Annual Report is intended to share details of these initiatives and the Australian Province's progress in this area.

The Province's Professional Standards office will continue to support the Province to implement and maintain the best safeguarding practices, and to support victim survivors of abuse.

If any person wishes to make a complaint or seek non-urgent counselling, they are encouraged to do so by contacting the Province's office for Professional Standards on (03) 9810 7312 or [professionalstandards@sjasl.org.au](mailto:professionalstandards@sjasl.org.au).

Anyone wishing to report a crime is encouraged to contact the police in their state or territory.

For urgent counselling support, please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon Davies." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Simon Davies**  
Director of Professional Standards

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PROGRAM

The Royal Commission has highlighted the importance of mitigating the risks to children and young people in organisational settings.

On 8 August 2016, the Australian Province commenced a partnership with the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF). The ACF is an independent, national not for profit organisation that works to prevent child abuse and reduce the harm it causes to children, families and the community.

It provides specialist trauma counselling and therapeutic care programs to children and young people, as well as conducting research, education and community awareness initiatives. It works in partnership with other non-government and government services.

Working closely with the ACF, the Province is implementing the ACF's Safeguarding Children Program.

The program is designed to assist organisations to:

- use evidence based standards to design policies and procedures to protect children in their care from abuse or exploitation
- promote an organisational culture that safeguards children and young people
- provide training that enables staff and volunteers to become skilled in protecting children and young people
- gain independently audited accreditation that recognises an organisation's systematic effort to protect children and young people
- improve risk management as it relates to staff and volunteers
- demonstrate an organisation's commitment to protecting children and young people.

To achieve accreditation as a 'child safe organisation' under the Safeguarding Children Program, all ministries within the Province will be audited against the following standards:

- **Standard 1 – Commitment to Safeguarding Children**  
Through its 'safeguarding children' statement our organisation documents its clear commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect.
- **Standard 2 – Personnel Roles and Conduct**  
Our organisation ensures that each person involved in our delivery of services to children and young people understands their role and the behaviour we expect in safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect.
- **Standard 3 – Recruitment and Screening Practices**  
Our organisation has appropriate measures in place to minimise the likelihood that we will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work with children or young people.
- **Standard 4 – Personnel Induction and Training**  
Our organisation's induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect.

- **Standard 5 – Involving Children and Parents**  
In developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment our organisation involves, and communicates with children and young people, and their parents. We encourage parental involvement and behaviour that helps to protect children and young people.
- **Standard 6 – Child Abuse Reports and Allegations**  
Our organisation has measures in place to ensure that our ‘involved’ personnel understand their responsibility to report possible abuse or neglect of children or young people, and understand our reporting procedures.
- **Standard 7 – Supporting A Child Safe Culture**  
Our organisation is committed to maintaining and improving its policies, procedures and practices to safeguard children and young people from abuse and neglect.

Accreditation of the entire Province will be undertaken over a three year period with Xavier College, Kew and the Provincial Office having already commenced implementation of the program. Priority is being given to ministries within the Province that regularly engage with children and young people, such as schools.

**To find out more about the program please visit:**

[HTTP://WWW.SAFEGUARDINGCHILDREN.COM.AU/](http://www.safeguardingchildren.com.au/)



## STATEMENTS OF COMMITMENT

In 2017, the Province and all its ministries published their Statements of Commitment to Safeguarding Children and Young People. These statements appear on all ministry websites and also physically within the foyer of each ministry. The statements meet Standard 1 of the Safeguarding Children Program.

### THE PROVINCE'S STATEMENT READS:

The Society of Jesus, often referred to as 'the Jesuits', was founded by Saint Ignatius Loyola more than 450 years ago. It is an international Catholic men's religious order comprising priests, brothers and those in formation for these roles. The Australian Province of the Society of Jesus had its beginnings with the arrival of the first Jesuits to Australia in 1848. Jesuits, lay staff and volunteers from the Province now minister throughout Australia and the world.

Since it began, the Province's educational, social, spirituality and pastoral ministries have served children and young people under 18 as well as adults.

*Cura personalis* or the care for the entire person is a value central to our Ignatian tradition. To that end, all within the Province are committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is safe, supportive, caring and nurturing for all children and young people. We commit ourselves to safeguarding children and young people from all abuse and neglect.

### Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is any act in which a person with power or authority over a child (female or male) uses a child for sexual gratification. An abuser can be an adult, adolescent or older child.

Sexual abuse spans a range of contact and non-contact behaviour.

### Non-contact behaviour includes:

- making sexual comments (in person, in letters, or by telephone, text messages or email)
- voyeurism – including commenting on physical attractiveness
- exposing a child to pornography
- nudity – an abuser exposing parts of their body or the child's body.

### Contact behaviour includes:

- fondling or kissing
- sexual penetration
- exploiting a child through prostitution.

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a parent or caregiver subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally, or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning and kicking.

**Emotional or psychological abuse**

Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a caregiver or parent repeatedly rejects or threatens a child. Often there is a pattern of emotional or psychological abuse, rather than a single incident. Such abuse may involve humiliating, terrorising, name-calling, belittlement, inappropriate symbolic acts or continual coldness from the caregiver or parent, to an extent that results in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.

**Neglect**

Neglect occurs when a parent or caregiver fails to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

**Witnessing family violence**

Witnessing family violence is a specific form of emotional or psychological abuse. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

We expect all within the Province, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children and young people from such harm by:

- complying with all Australian laws in relation to Child Protection and Child Safe Standards
- upholding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- adopting the practices and behaviour we have set as our standard when carrying out their roles
- reporting any abuse or neglect of which they become aware to our leaders and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection and/or to police, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by personnel within our organisation, or by those outside our organisation including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

The Province's commitment to providing a safe environment for the children and young people to whom we minister is endorsed and approved by me as the Provincial.

**Fr Brian F. McCoy**

Provincial

**The statement is available at:**

[HTTP://JESUIT.ORG.AU/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/STATEMENT-OF-COMMITMENT-ONLINE-VERSION-PROVINCE.PDF](http://jesuit.org.au/wp-content/uploads/statement-of-commitment-online-version-province.pdf)

# PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS CONSULTATIVE PANEL

The Professional Standards Consultative Panel is an independent group established by the Australian Province to advise the Provincial on matters related to professional standards.

The five member panel is made up of professionals with experience in a range of areas, including safeguarding and supporting young people, understanding and preventing sexual violence and abuse, psychology and risk assessment.

## **Mr Bernie Geary OAM**

Bernie Geary has been working with vulnerable children, young people and their families over the last 40 years. He began his career as Victoria's first outreach youth worker in Melbourne's West Heidelberg area. He then worked at Jesuit Social Services, where he was the CEO from 2001 to 2005. In his early years with Jesuit Social Services, Bernie managed the Brosnan Centre, assisting young people upon their release from prison. He has been an advisor and advocate on issues relating to young people and families throughout his career.



Bernie served on the Victorian Youth Parole Board from 1988 to 2005, and was a member of the initial Premier's Drug Advisory Council in 1999. Bernie was a member of the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council from 2005 to 2008.

In 2001 Bernie was awarded the Centenary Medal for his voluntary service to the community through health and legal centres. In 2001, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to youth from disadvantaged backgrounds through the community health and employment access program, and in criminal justice settings. Bernie also holds an honorary Masters Degree in Social Work.

Bernie was the inaugural Victorian Child Safety Commissioner in 2005, a role he held until 2015. As Child Safety Commissioner, his office audited and monitored a range of Government services directed towards Victorian children in the areas of Child Protection, Out-of-Home Care and general safety standards for Victorian Children.

### Professor Stephen Smallbone

Stephen Smallbone worked as a prison psychologist before joining Griffith University in 1998, and is now a Professor at the Griffith Criminology Institute. Stephen's research practice team is concerned primarily with understanding and preventing sexual violence and abuse.



His publications include the books *Situational prevention of child sexual abuse* (Criminal Justice Press, 2006), *Preventing child sexual abuse: Evidence, policy and practice* (Willan, 2008), and *Internet child pornography: Causes, investigation and prevention* (Praeger, 2012).

Stephen has provided expert evidence to the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry and the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations, and was engaged by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse as an independent expert witness in two of the Commission's public hearings.

### Dr June Kane AM

June Kane is an internationally respected expert in human rights, specifically in the fields of violence against children and women, child labour, sexual abuse and exploitation of children, and human trafficking. As an independent expert since 1996, June has worked with governments, UN agencies (particularly the ILO and UNICEF), regional bodies and grassroots organisations on a wide range of initiatives. Her work has covered research and writing; strategy, programme and policy planning; capacity building; evaluation and monitoring.



From 1996 to 2001, she was spokesperson for the UN-led World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children, and in 2007 was spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children.

June has a profound understanding of current issues in child abuse and exploitation and in 2008 developed the first anti-child trafficking training manual and resource kit for UN.GIFT, the UN's global initiative to fight human trafficking. She has written more than a dozen books in the areas of sexual abuse of children, child labour, human trafficking, domestic labour and violence against children and women.

On Australia Day 2007, she was made a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of her work. She is also a recipient of the Albert Schweitzer Medal for Humanitarian Action.

### Ms Simone Shaw

Simone Shaw holds a Masters of Psychology and is a Forensic Psychologist, consultant and Associate of the University of Melbourne, Commercial Ltd. She has many years of experience in the assessment, treatment, and management of male and female violent offenders and high-risk sexual offenders in both prisons and the community, across Australia. She has worked in senior management positions within correctional systems, supervising and training psychological and allied-health staff in the treatment and management of sexual offenders, including managing Victoria's Sex Offender Program.



As an independent consultant, she conducts high-risk sexual offender risk assessments for statutory schemes aimed at the preventative supervision and detention of dangerous offenders.

Simone lectures a post-graduate course in sexual offender management at the University of Melbourne and delivers training to correctional staff in areas such as sexual offender management, mentoring, and professional boundaries.

Simone consults on a range of psychological issues, including staff debriefing and training, offender risk assessment, treatment, and management. Simone is a co-author of *Applying the Good Lives Model to the Case Management of Sexual Offenders: A Practical Guide for Probation Officers, Parole Officers, and Case Workers* (Safer Society Press, 2013).

### Mr David White

David White has been involved with mentoring young people at risk since 1984. The Founder and former Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia, he established the fledgling Big Brothers Big Sisters Melbourne in 1985 and over the following 15 years built the organisation into a strong and viable service.



Building on his significant experience in mentoring marginalised young people, he became manager of youth mentoring for YMCA Victoria, designing and establishing bespoke mentoring programs for isolated young people and later for those exiting youth justice. David also established community-based and school-based models of mentoring in various sites across the YMCA network.

He is Chair of Startout Australia Ltd. (a support organisation for those of diverse sexuality and gender), a board member and ex-Chair of the Australian Youth Mentoring Network, committee member and ex-Chair of the Victorian Community Services Panel for the Churchill Fellowship Foundation (a Churchill Fellow himself), and was Chair of the Board for the Sisters of Charity Community Care Inc.

## ELECTRONIC FILE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In 2016 the Australian Province implemented the Polonius electronic file management system. Previously, paper-based files were relied on to manage complaints, correspondence and other administrative matters, and individual ministries maintained their own files.

The implementation of the Polonius system has provided significant improvements in the area of complaint management. All complaint files have now been centralised, which has resulted in greater oversight and tracking of both historic and contemporary issues within the Province.

The transfer of historic complaint files to the new system has also allowed for historical files to be reviewed to ensure complaints were managed correctly in the past. Where oversights have been identified, every effort has been made to rectify them.

## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC MINISTRY REGISTRY

The Australian Catholic Ministry Registry (ACMR) is a new national Catholic database which allows bishops and leaders of religious congregations to check the background of clerics and brothers visiting or moving to their region. For the first time, it provides up-to-date online information on whether a priest or male religious has a valid Working with Children Check and has been 'licensed' to work in a diocese or religious congregation.

The ACMR has been developed and is operated by the Catholic Church's National Committee for Professional Standards. The ACMR provides a personalised ID number to each person on the register, which can be given to a church leader to verify the professional standing of the visitor.

It is envisaged that all Jesuits in the Australian Province will be registered on the ACMR by June 2018.

Since its commencement, the Australian Province has engaged openly with the Royal Commission. The Province has provided extensive data and multiple statements to the Royal Commission to assist them with their important work.

#### CASE STUDY 45

In October 2016, Dr Paul Hine, the Principal of Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview appeared as a witness before the Royal Commission's case study 45. This public hearing inquired into the response by schools to allegations of problematic or harmful sexual behaviours by students at those schools.

Dr Hine provided evidence concerning the support Saint Ignatius' College had provided to a student who was alleged to have been sexually abused at another school. His evidence also highlighted the systems, policies, procedures and practices Saint Ignatius' College had in place for responding to allegations of problematic or harmful sexual behaviours of children.

#### CASE STUDY 50

In February 2017, four Jesuit priests (three from the Australian Province) appeared as witnesses before the Royal Commission's case study 50. Fr Brian McCoy SJ, the Australian Provincial; Fr Frank Brennan SJ; Fr Brendan Kelly SJ; and Fr Gerry O'Hanlon SJ of the Irish Province all appeared to give evidence concerning various topics.

The scope and purpose of this public hearing was to inquire into:

- the current policies and procedures of Catholic Church authorities in Australia in relation to child protection and child-safe standards, including responding to allegations of child sexual abuse
- factors that may have contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse at Catholic Church institutions in Australia
- factors that may have affected the institutional response of Catholic Church authorities in Australia to child sexual abuse
- the responses of Catholic Church authorities in Australia to relevant case study report(s) and other Royal Commission reports
- data relating to the extent of claims of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church of Australia
- other related matters.

Evidence concerning the following topics was given:

- structure, governance and culture – Fr Gerry O'Hanlon SJ
- the sacrament of reconciliation – Fr Frank Brennan SJ
- formation – Fr Brendan Kelly SJ
- religious institutes – Fr Brian McCoy SJ.

**FOLLOWING HIS APPEARANCE AT THE ROYAL COMMISSION, FR BRIAN MCCOY SJ PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING REFLECTION:**

**Hope that the Royal Commission Marks a Turning Point**

Last week I attended the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. I was on a panel with representatives of other religious congregations, five male and one female.

Like so many Australians I have been horrified and ashamed by the extent of sexual abuse of children in Catholic institutions, including our own, laid out by the Commission. I have been overwhelmed by the terrible and lasting damage done to so many who had suffered abuse and to their families and friends. I recognised afresh the weight of my responsibility to ensure that, in our Jesuit circles, it never happens again.

I was nervous before my appearance at the Commission. It recalled an experience in my final year in Theology when we faced a long and demanding oral exam. While we worked hard to prepare all the set topics, we knew that, in the course of the conversation about these topics, we could end up being questioned on any theological question at all and found wanting in many! And, watching some of the Catholic Church case study in the Commission these past weeks, I knew there was a large range of possible topics that had been raised. They included not only child safeguarding policies and practices but also celibacy, women in the church, confession, homosexuality, admission of candidates, formation, professional supervision and much more.

Being questioned at the end of a long day had some benefits. I was not asked some questions that others were asked. That also had its disadvantages. Unlike some other orders who have none or few in formation we are fortunate to presently have five novices and another eighteen Jesuits between first and final vows. I have a strong commitment to their future and how we are all called to live the best of gospel and Ignatian values.

The occasion also brought back memories of working as a Research Officer for the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, some 25 years ago. I now realise it is much easier to work up the questions that you think go to the heart of the issues at hand than to answer some of the hard ones others put before you.

Recently I came across a US study, ACE: Adverse Childhood Experiences. The study showed that large numbers of children suffer trauma, more than is often realised. In a survey of mostly white, middle class, middle aged, well educated, and financially secure people, only one-third reported no adverse childhood experiences. These personal experiences include verbal or physical abuse and the witness of such abuse in the family. What is now becoming more evident is not only the vulnerability of many children but also how these experiences can lead to serious health issues in later adult life.

I mention this ACE study to emphasise the importance of our three-year Province commitment to the Australian Childhood Foundation's Safeguarding Children Program. We are committed to improving our child safety policies and protocols and being audited on them. This is not a fear-driven exercise, one to avoid media scrutiny or future legal claims. It is to make sure, as much as humanly possible, that all our Province ministries are safe and welcoming, especially for children and the vulnerable.

When we look back at this current Commission, as we have recently at the 25th anniversary of Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, I hope we can say it was a turning point for renewal in our Church and Province life: that it did make a difference, that children do feel safe in our institutions and that we, Jesuits and lay, remain the committed carriers of that gospel message about children: 'to such as these the Kingdom of God belongs'.

## REPORTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (REPORTED DURING 2016/17)

The Australian Province provided child sexual abuse data to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

In the interests of transparency, the Australian Province has committed to publishing, on an annual basis, any reports of child sexual abuse that are received by the Province in that year. This includes reports that relate to previous decades or to someone who is now deceased.

The Australian Province is deeply committed to assisting and accompanying victim survivors of child sexual abuse and takes a 'survivor-led approach' to handling reports. This includes ensuring that victim survivors direct the manner and speed at which they would like to progress to the next steps.

The following child sexual abuse reports were received by the Australian Province in 2016/17. It should be noted that these reports are yet to have findings made.

ALLEGED OFFENDER	DECADE TO WHICH THE ALLEGATION/S RELATE	STATUS
Jesuit *#	1950's	Awaiting further engagement from the victim survivor
Lay person#	1980's	Awaiting further engagement from the victim survivor
Jesuit	1960's	Awaiting further engagement from the victim survivor
Former Jesuit	1970's	Police undertaking investigation
	1970's	Police undertaking investigation
	1960's	Awaiting further engagement from the victim survivor
	1960's	Awaiting further engagement from the victim survivor
Jesuit	1980's	Police undertaking investigation
Jesuit *#	1950's	Awaiting further engagement from the victim survivor
Former Jesuit	1970's	Awaiting further engagement from the victim survivor
Lay person	1960's	Police undertaking investigation
Former Jesuit	1980's	Police undertaking investigation
Jesuit *#	1960's	Awaiting further engagement from the victim survivor

\* Deceased

# First and only report received



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