



## CATHOLIC PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FAQs

22 NOVEMBER 2016

**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 21 NOVEMBER AT MIDNIGHT AEDT**

### **What is Catholic Professional Standards (CPS)?**

Catholic Professional Standards is a company being established by the leadership of the Catholic Church in Australia to promote the dignity and welfare of all persons who come into contact with the Church and its works, especially children and vulnerable people.

Catholic Professional Standards is committed to creating an environment that ensures the safety and protection of children and vulnerable people. It seeks to do this by setting consistent national standards and auditing compliance with those standards.

### **What type of company is Catholic Professional Standards?**

Catholic Professional Standards is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee.

### **What is the mission of Catholic Professional Standards?**

Catholic Professional Standards will strive to ensure that all persons within and those who engage with the Church in any way are treated with the reverence and respect which the Gospel requires.

In setting consistent national standards and auditing compliance with them, Church leadership seeks to promote accountability, transparency and trust in the life of the Church and its engagement with society.

### **What are national professional standards?**

Catholic Professional Standards will be developing new national standards in addition to the State and Territory based legislative requirements regarding the safeguarding and the protection of children and vulnerable people.

### **What are the functions of Catholic Professional Standards?**

In order to care for, protect and support all who come into contact with the Church; to promote the safety of the young and vulnerable; to prevent abuse and/or professional misconduct and to respond to allegations of abuse and/or professional misconduct by Church personnel.

Catholic Professional Standards will:

- Develop new child and vulnerable persons standards across Church entities particularly in areas where there are currently no such standards; and
- Audit and report on the compliance of each Church authority against the relevant national professional standards set.

Essentially, Catholic Professional Standards will set and audit compliance with the national professional standards to ensure the protection of vulnerable people including children, the elderly, disabled, mentally ill, other impairment and those in need of pastoral support across the Catholic Church in Australia.

### **Will the reports be made public?**

Yes, Catholic Professional Standards will release public reports on each of the dioceses or religious institutes it audits, which will clearly show if the leadership of that Church authority has ensured that the national professional standards are being met.



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### **Is this simply another layer of paperwork given the many mandatory statutory standards already in place?**

No, if there is already a statutory standard in place, which deals with a particular issue then Catholic Professional Standards will not replicate this. A bishop or religious leader will need to demonstrate to Catholic Professional Standards that their diocese or organisation is compliant with the statutory requirement and any additional standards set by Catholic Professional Standards.

In schools, for example, it is not anticipated that Catholic Professional Standards would need to develop new standards given the current statutory standards and other protections already in place. However, in seminaries, for example, it may be necessary to develop new curriculum standards regarding child protection.

Catholic Professional Standards will be developing new standards only where they do not exist at present.

### **How will the standards be developed?**

Where there are appropriate existing statutory or other standards that are either being used or could be used within a particular Church authority, these will become part of Catholic Professional Standards audits.

Where there is a clear need to develop a new standard to deal with an area in which the Church operates, the standard will be developed by Catholic Professional Standards in consultation with the bodies or people who will be affected by the new standard.

### **Who will pay for Catholic Professional Standards and the auditing and reporting process?**

The costs of establishing Catholic Professional Standards will be met by Catholic Religious Australia and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

The cost of each audit and reporting process will be met by the Church authority that is the subject of the review.

Catholic Professional Standards will become a 'user pays' operation over time.

### **Will all Church authorities be part of and compliant to Catholic Professional Standards?**

Catholic Professional Standards will enter contractual arrangements with each of the Church authorities that it will audit agreeing to comply with the standards of Catholic Professional Standards and to an audit of their compliance. Each authority entering contractual arrangements must be compliant with Catholic Professional Standards following an audit and review of standards.

### **What type of additional workload or requirements will be put on bishops and religious leaders following the commencement of Catholic Professional Standards?**

Where a diocese or religious order is fully compliant with national professional standards requirements, there will be little additional workload or cost other than collating all compliance documentation and providing access to this documentation for audit by Catholic Professional Standards.

Where it is clear that professional standards will need to be developed, and complied with, the relevant Church authority will be required to make the necessary changes in order to meet the national professional standards.



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### **Can Catholic Professional Standards force a Church authority to make changes to the way it operates if it receives a negative audit report?**

Catholic Professional Standards will not have the jurisdiction to force any Church authority to implement any recommendations.

However, Catholic Professional Standards can and will publish regular reports and listings on the Catholic Professional Standards website and in other ways make it known that a particular Church authority has failed a national professional standards audit.

The influence which Catholic Professional Standards will have over any Church authority will be through public accountability.

### **Why should the community have any faith that Catholic Professional Standards, which is being set up by the Church will be independent?**

Catholic Professional Standards is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee. It will have an independent board of directors made up of lay people who will operate the company independently from Church. It will be functionally if not structurally independent and every effort will be made to ensure that this is so.

### **Who are the members of the company?**

The Members of the Company are the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia and any other entity that is admitted as a Member, in accordance with the Company's constitution.

### **How will the Board of Directors be appointed?**

The three directors designate are:

The Hon Geoffrey Giudice AO, who was President of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission from 1997 until 2009 and the inaugural President of Fair Work Australia (now the Fair Work Commission) from 2009 until February 2012;

Patricia Faulkner AO, who was secretary of the Department of Human Services in Victoria with this portfolio including the child protection system and in 2015/16 was a deputy Commissioner of the Victorian Royal Commission enquiring into family violence;

The Hon John Watkins AM, who was a member of the NSW Parliament between 1995 and 2008 with Ministerial portfolios including Education, Police and Transport, serving as Deputy Premier for three years and is currently CEO of Alzheimer's Australia NSW.

A Nominations Committee has been formed comprising two Catholic Professional Standards directors, a member of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, and a member of Catholic Religious Australia, to consider the appointment of additional Directors to the Board of Catholic Professional Standards.

The Board will recruit and appoint a Chief Executive Officer.

### **Will Catholic Professional Standards handle complaints and compensation for survivors?**



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Catholic Professional Standards will not handle complaints but sets standards and audits compliance with these standards in the area of safeguarding in order to prevent abuse.

However Catholic Professional Standards will assume the responsibilities of the National Committee for Professional Standards in the event that a complaint is made against a bishop or a leader of a religious institute.

Catholic Professional Standards will encourage anyone with a complaint to report it to the police when the alleged behaviour is criminal or to the appropriate Director of Professional Standards or the relevant Church agency when the alleged behaviour is not criminal. It is hoped that compensation claims will be handled by the Commonwealth Government's National Redress Scheme and will not be the responsibility of Catholic Professional Standards.

### **Who will be managing Catholic Professional Standards?**

Catholic Professional Standards will be governed by the Board of Directors.

The Chief Executive Officer, once appointed, will manage the day-to-day activities and employees at Catholic Professional Standards. The Chief Executive Officer will report to the Board of Directors.

The office for the Company will be established by the Board of Directors following the appointment of the CEO.

### **Why is the Church developing Catholic Professional Standards?**

Catholic Bishops and Religious Leaders in Australia are determined to do all in their power to ensure that abuse, in any form, should never again occur in the Church. The setting of consistent national standards and auditing compliance with them is a key element in this.

### **How does Catholic Professional Standards relate to the Royal Commission?**

Catholic Professional Standards has been established as a carefully considered response by the Catholic Church to what has already emerged in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Catholic Professional Standards will pay close attention to the relevant recommendations that the Royal Commission makes in its final report to the Government and will be obliged to implement any subsequent related legislation.

### **What does it mean for lay Catholics?**

Catholic Professional Standards will set and audit compliance with the new professional standards particularly where there are no current statutory standards in place.

For lay Catholics, this will mean the Church will continue to focus on being a safe and respectful place for all.

### **How is Catholic Professional Standards different to the TJHC or the NCPS?**

The work of the National Committee for Professional Standards will be absorbed eventually into the new entity. The State based Professional Standards Offices will continue their work, which does not fall within the competence of Catholic Professional Standards. The work of the Truth, Justice and Healing Council will conclude when the Royal Commission concludes towards the end of 2017.



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Catholic Professional Standards is a positive development for the Catholic Church in Australia continuing the work of cultural change which has been promoted by the Truth, Justice and Healing Council and the roots of which go back further.

### **Does Catholic Professional Standards represent the Church?**

Catholic Professional Standards represents a collective agreement by the Catholic Bishops of Australia and Religious Leaders across Australia. Catholic Professional Standards will also include any other entity that is admitted as a Member, in accordance with the Company's constitution and set standards and audit a Church Authority that enters into a contract with Catholic Professional Standards.

### **How can people contact Catholic Professional Standards?**

The central source of information about Catholic Professional Standards is the official website, [www.catholicprofessionalstandards.org.au](http://www.catholicprofessionalstandards.org.au).

### **What is the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference?**

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is a permanent institution of the Catholic Church in Australia and the forum used by the Catholic Bishops of Australia to act nationally and address issues of national significance.

### **What is Catholic Religious Australia?**

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) is the peak body for leaders of Religious Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life resident in Australia. The CRA membership comprises more than 130 congregations of Sisters, Brothers and Religious Priests living and working in all states and territories.

### **What is the Truth, Justice and Healing Council (TJHC)?**

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia together established the Truth, Justice and Healing Council in recognition of the importance of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the imperative for the Church to address the past openly and honestly.

The formation of the Truth, Justice and Healing Council allows the Church to speak with one voice before the Royal Commission representing the numerous organisations that make up the Catholic Church in Australia.