

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LIMITED | FAQs

1. Why has the Church established a new body when it already had one in place in Catholic Professional Standard Limited (CPSL)?

CPSL has provided much to the Church since its establishment, including the development of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. CPSL operated alongside other agencies which provided support and services on a number of other elements of professional standards and safeguarding systems at a national level.

Over time, it became clear that there was a need for one national agency incorporating CPSL, the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards (ACCPS) and oversight of the Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR). That new agency is called Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) and represents an evolution of safeguarding in the Church.

The bringing together of these former bodies will provide a richer data source in order to manage and identify risk and be clearer about where energy and resources should be directed to continue to improve safeguarding efforts.

2. When do those existing entities cease?

It will take some time for ACSL to take over the functions of ACCPS and ACMR. The ACSL board will meet shortly to determine its initial priorities, which will include the transition from the existing bodies to the work of ACSL.

3. What happens to the services offered by the previous bodies, such as training, the ACMR, audits etc?

The board of ACSL will be working to allow for a smooth and efficient bringing together of the services currently delivered through the previous bodies. ACSL will communicate widely as changes start to take effect. In the meantime, all services offered by the previous bodies will continue as planned and all contact details remain the same.

4. What is the difference between CPSL and ACSL?

ACSL is the new national agency which incorporates CPSL and ACCPS and the functions of the ACMR. There is continuity with CPSL, but also consolidation of the other national bodies with responsibility in various areas of professional standards and safeguarding.

The new national agency recognises that each Catholic entity has responsibilities with regards to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

ACSL will actively work with Catholic entities to promote and oversee a nationally consistent, comprehensive and sustainable framework and culture within the Catholic Church in Australia which works to safeguard all who come into contact with the Church, especially children and adults at risk.

ACSL will continue to develop and maintain professional and safeguarding standards and assist Catholic entities to implement those standards. It will also develop risk-based review criteria to assist Catholic entities to arrange audit/reviews of their systems and processes.

5. Who are the members of ACSL?

The members of ACSL are:

- Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC)
- Catholic Religious Australia (CRA)
- Association of Ministerial PJPs (AMPJP)

The ACBC and CRA were the members of CPSL. AMPJP has joined them as a member of ACSL.

6. Who are the directors of ACSL?

The directors who comprise the board of ACSL are:

- Professor the Hon. Michael Lavarch AO (Chair)
- Mrs Mary McComish
- Dr Robyn Miller
- Mr David Penny
- Sr Kathleen Tierney RSM AO
- Mr Julian Widdup

Michael Lavarch and Robyn Miller were members of the CPSL board and continue on the board of ACSL.

Biographies of the ACSL directors can be found [here](#).

7. ACSL has subscribers. What are they?

Each Catholic entity will need to opt in as a subscriber. In doing so, they will formally agree to:

- comply with the professional and safeguarding standards;
- arrange independent audits/reviews, consistent with the risk-based review criteria developed by ACSL, of their systems and processes at least every three years or such other term that ACSL may determine;
- provide ACSL with a copy of their audit/review reports, which will be published on ACSL's website.

8. What happens if a Catholic entity decides not to become a subscriber of ACSL?

While it is hoped that all Catholic entities will become subscribers, it is not mandatory to do so. A Catholic entity that is not a subscriber will need to ensure it creates and maintain safe environments for all people.

9. Who will undertake audits/reviews?

The audits/reviews will be undertaken by suitably qualified independent persons/entities in accordance with risk-based review criteria developed by ACSL.

ACSL can undertake the audit/review if requested by a Catholic entity.

10. Who will run ACSL on a day-to-day basis?

The board of directors and management of ACSL is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the company.

11. CPSL was seen as independent of the Church. Is this a less independent structure?

The company remains independent. Like CPSL, ACSL is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee which must operate in accordance with its Constitution, the Corporations Act and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission.

ACSL brings together a range of functions which were previously managed by three separate entities with different governance structures and will therefore provide consistency in governance and a more integrated approach.

Like CPSL, under the ACSL constitution, the board of directors have a duty to act in the best interests of the company, and to ensure the objects of the company are met. The board retains an important feature of the previous CPSL model which is the discretion to publish audit/review reports of Catholic entities.

Directors on ACSL's board have experience and credentials in child and adult safeguarding, professional standards, law, governance, Church administration, and finance and management. Their experience and qualifications will be vital in providing leadership and direction to the operation of ACSL.

12. How will ACSL be funded?

ACSL will be funded through subscriptions from Catholic entities who elect to be subscribers.

The annual subscription fee will be dependent on the type, size and complexity of the Catholic entity. The members will develop a methodology applied to determine the fees for each of their subscribing members. The ACSL board will determine the subscription fee for other Catholic entities.

13. Why does the ACBC have more member representatives than CRA and the AMPJP? Does this mean the bishops have more influence/control?

The number of member representatives broadly reflects the level of funding provided by the subscribers from each member group, however no single member has more than 50 per cent of the member representatives.

The reserve powers vested in members requires approval by way of a special resolution, i.e. at least 75 per cent of the member representatives voting for any resolution.

14. What public reporting will ACSL conduct?

ACSL will publish an annual report on its activities, plus the audit/review reports from each subscriber – as has been the case with CPSL.

15. Will ACSL oversee *Towards Healing* and *The Melbourne Response*?

No. *Towards Healing* and *The Melbourne Response* will shortly be replaced by new protocols. ACSL will have a role to support the implementation of the National Response Protocol and monitor its application.

16. Church leaders have conceded the Church must stop policing itself. Isn't this the Church policing itself again?

No. Catholic entities which opt to become subscribers are publicly committing to comply with standards, have their systems and processes independently audited/reviewed and the reports published.

17. Will the new entity have 'teeth' or authority to make Catholic bodies comply? Can it make a Catholic entity act in a certain way?

On this point, nothing has changed between CPSL and the establishment of ACSL. The ultimate responsibility for compliance with meeting safeguarding expectations of the community and the obligations under Commonwealth, State or Territory law rests with each Catholic entity.

ACSL provides a single point of reference whereby Catholic entities can subscribe to a consistent set of professional and safeguarding standards. If a Catholic entity has opted to become a subscriber and subsequently does not meet the requirements, ACSL has the option to remove them as a subscriber.