

SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT FOR THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

During the mid and later twentieth century, a silent tragedy occurred. Across society's institutions an horrific number of children were the victims of child sexual abuse. The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle was particularly affected, abuse was committed by men associated with the Diocese, both clergy, religious and laity. Compounding the harm caused by these crimes was the failure of some diocesan leaders to ensure that perpetrators were stopped and brought to justice. Further, historic and current examples of institutional and societal failure to protect and promote the care, wellbeing and dignity of vulnerable persons continues to emerge through the media and commissions of inquiry. The Diocese takes a zero tolerance approach to abuse and is determined that similar circumstances will not arise again. Consequently, all those who work on behalf of the Diocese are required to commit to safeguarding children and vulnerable persons.

As a leader in the Diocese, I _____ commit myself to:

- fostering a safeguarding culture in my parish and across the Diocese that recognises and upholds the dignity, diversity and rights of all children and vulnerable persons with particular attention to those who have factors that increase individual vulnerability
- empowering children and vulnerable persons to have their say and to be listened to
- encouraging open communication with families and communities to enable them to participate in decisions about the safety of children and vulnerable persons
- fostering safe, respectful and supportive relationships between diocesan workers, children and vulnerable persons, both in person and online
- being aware of the causes and signs of abuse and the indicators of increased situational and individual risk in the physical and online environments
- responding to a disclosure of abuse from a child or vulnerable person appropriately, with the upmost care and support
- ensuring that concerns for the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable persons are reported to the Office of Safeguarding and external authorities, in accordance with my obligations
- giving appropriate support to police and other statutory and Diocesan authorities in conducting inquiries into alleged abuse, in accordance with those canonical, statutory and other obligations relevant to me
- participating in safeguarding training in accordance with Diocesan expectations
- supporting the Diocesan assessment and management of elevated risks to children or vulnerable persons
- acting in accordance with Diocesan policies and procedures in managing complaints
- contributing to Diocesan compliance with the NSW Child Safe Standards and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

Signed:

Date:

Ecclesiastical Office:
