



## Fact Sheet: Relevant Government Agencies

*Several government agencies have a role in Safeguarding.*

*It is important that Parish Priests, Agency Heads, and Workers and others in the diocese have a basic understanding of the functions of all the government agencies described below, even if they will not have direct or regular contact with them.*

The following government agencies have a role in Safeguarding:

### 1. NSW Office of the Children's Guardian

Parish Priests and Agency Heads will need to verify with the Children's Guardian that all Workers have a valid WWCC clearance. The Children's Guardian provides support to organisations to develop and implement child safe standards and strategies.

Under the Children's Guardian Reportable Conduct Scheme, the bishop is under an obligation to report Reportable Allegations or convictions considered to be Reportable Convictions to the Children's Guardian.

Parish Priests and Agency Heads must act in accordance with the Policy, including notifying the Safeguarding Office of any Safeguarding Complaints relating to employees (broadly defined under the *Children's Guardian Act 2019* (NSW) to include Employees, Volunteers, contractors, Clergy, Religious Appointees and any other person who holds a WWCC), any Reportable Allegations or any convictions they consider to be Reportable Convictions, so that the bishop can discharge his obligations under the *Children's Guardian Act 2019* (NSW).

The Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse provide a framework for organisations to enable them develop strategies to keep children safe from harm. These standards have since been adopted by the Office of the Children's Guardian to form the basis of their regulatory framework. Child-related organisations in NSW are required to comply with the Office of the Children's Guardian 10 Child Safe Standards under the *Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Act 2021*.

### 2. NSW Police

Parish Priests, Agency Heads, Clergy, Religious Appointees, Employees, Volunteers and contractors are under a personal legal obligation to report Reportable Crimes to the NSW Police. In practice, the Office of Safeguarding will assist with reporting and will provide a copy of the report as evidence that this personal obligation has been met.

### 3. Department of Communities and Justice

Mandatory reporting is the legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the Department of Communities and Justice. It is mandatory for persons in paid roles in religious ministry or persons providing religion-based activities to Children to report suspicions of risk of harm in relation to Children. Mandatory reporting obligations apply to persons who deliver services wholly or partly to Children as part of their professional work or other paid employment or those in management positions.

Parish Priests and Agency Heads should notify the Safeguarding Office of Safeguarding Complaints regarding child abuse and neglect, or if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a Child is at Risk of Significant Harm, so that it can make a determination as to whether these should be reported to the Department of Communities and Justice.

#### **4. NSW Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People**

The NSW Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People is an independent statutory office reporting to the NSW Parliament through the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People.

#### **5. National Children's Commissioner**

The National Children's Commissioner focuses on the interests of Children at a national level. Parishes and Agencies have no direct connection with the National Children's Commissioner.

#### **6. eSafety Commissioner**

The eSafety Commissioner is responsible for promoting online safety for all Australians (adults and Children). It operates a complaints service for Children who experience cyber bullying and is responsible for removing illegal or abusive content from the internet.

#### **7. National Office for Child Safety**

The National Office for Child Safety provides national leadership to deliver national policies and strategies to enhance Child safety. Parishes and Agencies have no direct connection with the National Office for Child Safety.

#### **8. National Redress Scheme (administered by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services)**

In response to recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Commonwealth Government established the National Redress Scheme to facilitate access to redress and to provide support to people who were sexually abused as Children while in the care of an institution.

#### **9. Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**

The Commission's principal role is to protect and enhance the safety, health, well-being, and quality of life of people receiving aged care funded by the Australian Government. It is the single point of contact for complaints, quality, and regulation in aged care.

#### **10. NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission**

The NDIS Commission responds to concerns, complaints, and reportable incidents, including abuse and neglect of NDIS participants. The Commission promotes the NDIS principles of choice and control and works to empower participants to exercise their rights to access quality services as informed, protected consumers.