



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC
BISHOPS CONFERENCE



Church publishes fifth annual report on child safety

MEDIA RELEASE

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The ongoing work to ensure Catholic settings are safe for children and that organisations are responsive to safeguarding concerns has been outlined in the Church's fifth annual report to the National Office for Child Safety.

One of the recommendations of the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse was the publication of annual reports on progress that organisations were making. The requirement was for such reports to be submitted for at least five years.

The 2022 annual report, which focuses on progress made between October 2021 and October 2022, collates information from dioceses and religious institutes, as well as the work of some key national entities.

In the report's foreword, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference president Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB and Catholic Religious Australia president Fr Peter Jones OSA reiterated earlier statements that the Church is deeply sorry for the abuse that occurred in Catholic settings.

"We renew our pledge for the present and the future of a Church that listens, that seeks the truth, that responds compassionately, that desires healing and that acts with justice," they wrote.

"Our shameful past informs and energises our ongoing efforts. We are mindful that for the Church to carry forward God's mission for us, we must take seriously our responsibilities to keep all people safe, and especially children."

Archbishop Costelloe and Fr Jones acknowledge that while the report outlines number examples of safeguarding work being undertaken across the Church, "many of the changes that are taking place – cultural and behavioural changes – are not easily captured in the pages of a report".

The report contains sections on progress and achievements by dioceses, religious institutes and some schools and school systems in the following areas: Governance and structures; Education and training; Cultural change; Pastoral responses; Participation of children; Community engagement; Engagement with victims and survivors.

It also captures national and international initiatives, including plans for a global report on the Church's safeguarding efforts, the publication of the second edition of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and the evolution of national frameworks for responding to abuse complaints and allegations.

The report can be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/CatholicNOCS2022>