

## SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY, 2021

by Clare Kennedy,

Local Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Representative

---



### LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS PARISH REPRESENTATIVE

Good evening/morning to you all. This time 7 years ago Fr Gerry commissioned me into the role of Local Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Parish Representative. Also accompanying me on this journey and standing in when I'm not available is Lisa Harrison. I thought it timely to recap on what this position involves.

In this role we are responsible for making sure the parish is aware of the importance of safeguarding all children and vulnerable adults – promoting safe practice, including what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and along with the Parish Priest assisting in the administration of the [Archdiocesan Safeguarding Children Policy](#). These tasks and duties are well and truly in practice in our parish in accordance with the Archdiocesan Policy and Code of Conduct.

To assist us in best practice Terry Tolhurst was employed in the role of Parish Administration Officer. Terry is responsible for WH&S issues, maintaining register for on-going training of all volunteers, checking Risk Assessments for activities conducted in the parish, for example any Youth Group Activities, Concerts, Easter ceremonies that require lighting of fire etc. These activities must all be documented to make sure we have covered any area that may cause concern or harm.

The position of Local Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults was introduced all over Queensland and there is an appointed representative in almost every parish. The position has come about through the Church's reform program, the impacts of child sexual abuse **and the need for everyone in the church** to play a role in delivering best practice in prevention of harm to, and protection of, children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The Archdiocese of Brisbane has implemented standards of conduct for voluntary church workers to maintain a safe and healthy ministry environment and activities which respect and acknowledge the inherent dignity of each and every human being. Our commitment to these standards will assist our community to develop an extended culture of guardianship

and make clear to all who attend services in this Parish that it is a safe, protective and vigilant environment.

This past week, 5-11 September was set aside to promote National Child Safety Week and the theme is *"To treat all of Australia's children fairly we need to make sure every family and community has what all children need to thrive and be healthy"*. Children and vulnerable adults do best when we all play a part in creating safe environments where young voices are heard and valued.

\*\*Two new child sexual offence related crimes have been passed by Queensland parliament and came into effect on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021. this year. These crimes are:

- Failure to Protect a Child from a Child Sexual Offence (5 years imprisonment)
- Failure to Report Belief of Child Sexual Offence (3 years imprisonment)

"Failure to Protect" crime applies to the risk of a sex offence being committed against a child under the care, supervision or control of an organisation by any adult associated with the organisation.

"Failure to Report" crime applies to the suspected child sexual offences committed in the past or the present.

These crimes are serious and we need to be vigilant with all our parish activities that all safeguards are adhered to. Our aim is a safe Church for everyone.

I strongly believe that we are all in this together. While some in the parish have specific roles, we all have some level of responsibility to be involved, take action and report. After all, much of what occurred in the past has occurred because too many people did nothing when they should have spoken out.

In doing so, our Safeguarding stance will become a visible and measurable witness to the community: That Christ's Church cares for them as Christ himself does.

I thank you all for your time to listen and your continued support of myself, Lisa, Terry and Fr Gerry as we carry out our responsibility of making this parish a safe and welcome place to be a part of.

Clare Kennedy, Local Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Representative  
[Parish of St. Joseph & St. Anthony, Bracken Ridge / Bald Hills](#)



# SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY 2021

SEPTEMBER 12, 2021

[www.catholicreligious.org.au/resources](http://www.catholicreligious.org.au/resources) | [www.catholic.org.au/safeguardingsunday](http://www.catholic.org.au/safeguardingsunday)

## PRAYER

Gracious God,  
you love and care for all of your children,  
especially the smallest and most  
vulnerable.

We entrust to you the lives of children  
and adults at risk  
who have been sexually abused,  
and whose trust and innocence have  
been destroyed.

Help us to hear their cries of pain  
and to take responsibility for those  
whose lives have been broken.  
Help us to recognise the hurt felt by  
those wounded by abuse,  
and the failure to be heard.

We pray that with the help of your grace  
communities and families will find  
understanding and support,  
so that now and in the future  
their wounds may be healed  
and they may find lasting peace.

Let your grace and love fall gently now  
upon our children and adults at risk,  
giving them the inner strength, peace  
and resilience  
to seek out assistance when required.

We ask this prayer through our Lord  
Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God  
forever and ever.

Amen