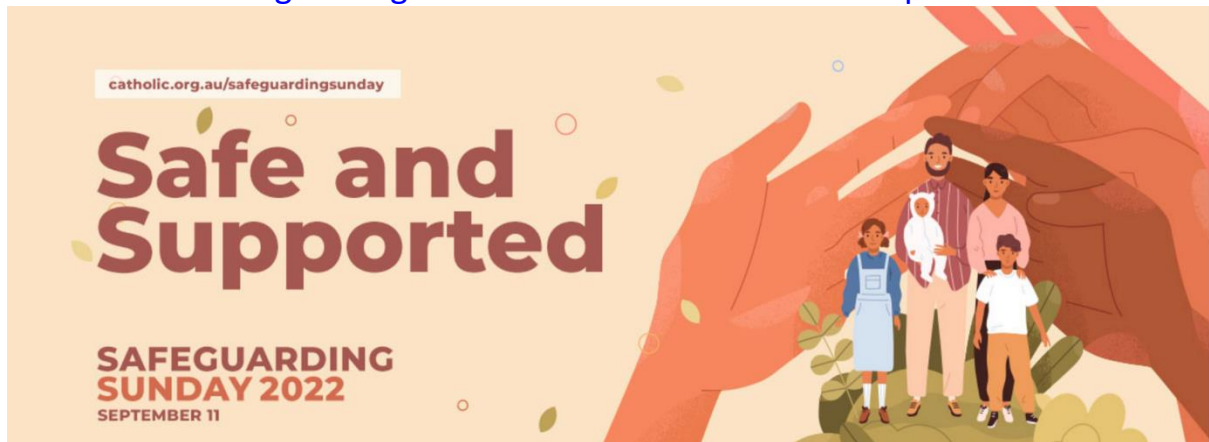


SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY, 2022  
by Clare Kennedy,  
Local Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Representative



This year [National Child Protection Week](#) was celebrated from 4 – 10 September and yes, we are at the end of the week, but we all know that Child Protection is a 24/7 all year round responsibility. This year's theme is *"Every child in every community needs a fair go"*. We are reminded of the importance of culture and belonging, in creating safe and supportive communities.

Just over a year ago [Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd known as ACSL](#) , was created, bringing a single point of reference to ensure national oversight of the policies, practices and culture within Australian Catholic entities with respect to safeguarding children and adults at risk.

We are all now called to a higher standard of safeguarding and professional standards because of the terrible suffering of people who were abused as children and young adults in our Church and have resolved, "Never Again". This resolution is central to our Catholic Church.

The Church is called to be a place of love, generosity, respect, forgiveness, prayer and hospitality – all the qualities found in Jesus' life.

It is just over 4 years since the [final report of the Royal Commission](#) was handed down. There is still much to be done to strengthen that culture of safety.

We need to be ever vigilant to the issues of safeguarding and the work of ACSL is to support the church to do everything it can to grow a culture of respect and safety for everyone who engages with the Church.

This means in liturgical, ministerial, social or pastoral spheres, that everyone will be treated respectfully and professionally in keeping with the Gospel values.

On 1 May 2022 another milestone – Blue Card turned 21.

[\[https://www.qld.gov.au/.../regulated.../blue-card-services\]](https://www.qld.gov.au/.../regulated.../blue-card-services)

Over the years, the blue card system has been strengthened with greater powers to screen people working with children and added safeguards prohibiting certain people from entering or remaining in the system.

The system has certainly grown in size and strength in the last 21 years, as we've worked together to keep children & vulnerable adults safe.

The blue card system regulates activities which are essential to children's lives.

These include childcare, education, sport, cultural activities, disability and health services, and foster care.

They check and monitor people who work in these industries and help organisations such as our parish to create safe environments for children.

They work closely with child-related regulated organisations to provide resources and a compliance framework to help identify and manage risks to children.

Children and young people rely on the adults who care for them to both protect and empower them to be safe from harm.

Harm can take many forms, such as accidental injury, exposure to physical hazards, bullying, neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting child-related regulated organisations to be child-safe. As a parent or carer you should feel comfortable speaking with an individual or organisation about what policies and procedures they have in place to keep your child safe.

We are hoping to recommence our Children's Liturgy in the 4th term and the Blue Card system is a very important part of selecting those volunteers chosen to perform this important ministry in our parish.

As part of all the new practices and procedures in place all parishes now undertake an annual online self-assessment and earlier this year External Auditors conducted a review process of 15 parishes randomly chosen across all of Queensland and our parish was "lucky" enough to be one of those chosen. 3rd time in 5 years in fact! We are either so bad they need to keep checking up on us or so good that we increase the % of compliance.

As it happens the official parish audit results of overall compliance of Queensland Parishes was 75% - not good enough you might say.

Well, St Joseph & St Anthony of Bald Hills/Bracken Ridge came in at 91 ½ %!!

Well done to Fr Gerry and the team for the commitment to their roles within our Parish Ministry that helps make our community a safe place for all.

If you have any concerns about our Ministries and associated activities, please don't hesitate to have a chat with me.

My contact details are always on the front page of our parish newsletter and more information is on our notice board regarding the STOpline Service where information can be shared anonymously.

Thank you for taking the time to be informed.

Clare Kennedy, Local Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Representative

[Parish of St. Joseph & St. Anthony, Bracken Ridge / Bald Hills](#)