

Child Protection Sunday is a time to consider how you can play your part

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Mark Eustance

August 30, 2018

National Child Protection Week starts Sunday, September 2 and runs through to Saturday, September 8.

The Sunday September 2 launch of this National initiative has been chosen by the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) to coincide with the celebration of Father’s Day.

According to NAPCAN, National Child Protection Week serves as a reminder that the little things we do every day can help to create safer environments for children. The importance of kindness, being good role models and acting on genuine concerns for a child’s safety and wellbeing are a few simple ways we are all able to do this. By building stronger communities at our local parishes & ministries, we can create safer environments for children. Father’s Day also draws attention to the important part men play in the lives of children, their wellbeing and protection.

National Child Protection Week also provides an opportunity for Archdiocesan parishes, ministries, agencies and services to showcase the activities they undertake to care for and protect children.

With the formal joint response of the Catholic Church in Australia to the final recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse only just released, this year’s National Child Protection Week will carry a heightened awareness of the need to continually strive to improve safeguarding efforts.

Archdiocese of Brisbane’s Office of Safeguarding Services Director Mark Eustance said “Child Protection Sunday calls each of us to embrace our Christian duty to care for and protect others from abuse, but especially children.” “More deeply it is a time for asking how we can make the Church a more welcoming and safer space in which children can flourish.”

Along with training and raising awareness of safeguarding needs, the OSS team works closely with parishes, ministries, agencies and services to satisfy the Archdiocesan safeguarding strategy, policy and procedures.

Mr Eustance said he was pleased that efforts to achieve compliance with the safeguarding policy and procedures were increasing, but acknowledged that there is a need to lift that effort to realise Archbishop Mark Coleridge's vision for child safety and satisfy the pending National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

“Our history tells us that, in respect to child sexual abuse, there can never be too much of a spotlight on children.” “While our parishes, ministries, schools, and services are safe there is no room for complacency.” “Safeguarding is all about preventing child abuse rather than reacting after the fact in a hope that the damage can be fixed or healing can be achieved.”

In its new Safeguarding Strategy the Archdiocese has adopted a zero tolerance approach to abuse by church personnel and others involved in its parishes, ministries, services and agencies. The Archdiocese is committed to responding effectively to all incidents, disclosure, allegations or concerns of abuse.

Incidents, disclosure, allegations or concerns can be reported via the STOPLine Service. STOPLine is an external service that receives information about reportable conduct under the Archdiocesan whistleblower policy. The service is open to all Church personnel and the community. Information can be provided anonymously.