
Catholic Education welcomes a strong national office to lead the Church's response to child safety

Catholic Education has welcomed the Church's decision to consolidate its professional standards response under a new national office.

National Executive Director Jacinta Collins said the creation of a single entity would help provide streamlined support to Catholic schools, parishes and agencies in their work of keeping children and vulnerable adults safe.

"The Royal Commission identified the need for institutions to have stronger leadership and governance processes to address child safety failings," Ms Collins said.

"A consolidated national office will provide greater clarity and shine a light on the areas that still need to be addressed. It will strengthen the governance, oversight and training available to Catholic schools, parishes and agencies to respond to the recommendations of the Royal Commission and better support our child safety efforts."

"Well before the Royal Commission, Catholic Education has been working to improve our protocols and procedures, but we know there is more work to do to ensure a consistent and high standard in all school communities and Catholic Education systems.

"With the various state, territory and Commonwealth bodies with responsibility in this area, a single body will help to see the big picture and develop a national approach to child safety, while at the same time reducing duplication, identifying gaps in practice and helping to share expertise across the Church.

We strongly supported the National Standards for Working with Children Checks, which were endorsed by federal, state and territory jurisdictions late last year, to strengthen the consistency of screening across Australia, and these standards need to be applied across our Catholic Education systems.

"We are working with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations to identify areas of further refinement and improvement, and we welcome the continued independence of the national body to audit and oversight our schools in this critical area of child safety."

Nationally, Catholic schools educate more than 768,000 students – or one in five Australian students - in 1,751 schools, the vast majority of which are low-fee schools.