



Most Rev Anthony Randazzo
Bishop of Broken Bay

Safeguarding Vision 7 March 2022

All children, young people, adults and the vulnerable must be valued and respected within our communities and have the inalienable right to live free from harm. Upholding and protecting the dignity of all who have been made in the image of God is foundational to our faith, and not simply a matter of civil compliance. While as Bishop, I have a responsibility to ensure there are strong systems in place to prevent, identify, and respond to concerns about people, and their conduct in relation to the treatment of children, young people and vulnerable adults, it is my vision that the role of safeguarding is shared by everyone in the Diocese. It is my vision we have a partnership of protection.

The safety and well-being of all people in the community of the Church and beyond is part of who we are as disciples of Jesus. Likewise, the conviction that all people in the community must be respected and cared for, will inform and direct what we do, as we live out our Christian vocation.

It is the Spirit of God who allows us to know our true identity in Christ and calls us to grow in greater likeness with Him. The Spirit is gifted to us in various ways so that we might live fully with the dignity that is ours in God, and be led in the way of Jesus, which is given particular expression in the Beatitudes. As disciples of the Risen Lord, we commit ourselves to giving witness to the life of Jesus Christ in our world today recognising the face of Christ in the most vulnerable.

There are so many accounts of Jesus in the gospels where he demonstrates his care for children and vulnerable people. It is from His example, we draw our core values: respect; care; and protection of others. They are always Christ centred, and people oriented. As a community of the faithful, an essential element of our vocation requires that we must be vigilant in living these values, and that we have robust, external processes to assist us in our mission to proclaim and live the Good News of Jesus Christ and to ensure the safety and well-being of all.

Today there is legislation, policy, systems, and support from qualified staff within our Diocese to provide direction and guidance to all persons engaged in work with children and vulnerable people. These are in place to strengthen our commitment and continually revise our practices. We are blessed to have a dedicated team whose mission is to assist us by our ongoing formation and education regarding the safety of our children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Office includes three different teams: for Chancery; Catholic Schools Broken Bay; and CatholicCare Broken Bay, which are under the strategic direction of the Diocesan Safeguarding Director. The work of our Safeguarding teams allows me to have oversight of child-related activities in our parishes, schools, and social services agency. It allows transparency and accountability, and it is supported by external processes in collaboration with the Office of the Children's Guardian.

The work of CatholicCare, as the merciful arm of the Church, and the many staff, volunteers and foster carers who commit to their work, make a valuable contribution to the lives of people in need throughout our Diocese.

In Catholic Schools Broken Bay, our team provide authentic professional Catholic education with care and compassion. They are committed to acting in the best interest of the children entrusted to their care and ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all.

The life and mission of our parish communities is enabled predominantly by volunteers and led by our clergy who have a very important role in ensuring children and vulnerable people of our Diocese are cared for pastorally in safe communities of faith.

Those who hold positions of authority in our community of the Church, also hold a great responsibility to act with integrity, and not take advantage of their position. The community has invested their trust in us, and we have a duty of care to ensure that children, and vulnerable people are not exposed to risk or harm. We are expected to act with integrity, be pastoral, compassionate and always conduct ourselves professionally, promoting a culture of excellence.

We each have a responsibility to be aware of relevant legislation, Codes of Conduct, and expectations of our role. Dignity, truth, and freedom are God's gifts to give. No one has the right to take them away. It's devastating to acknowledge that the abuse of children is part of the story of the Catholic community.

The past has taught us how things went wrong and urges us to refocus again, and again on our commitment to building safe communities with a healthy culture. Every person in the community of the Church has a role to play in this project and to act with courage and honesty, justice and peace, forgiveness and mercy.

I invite you to join me in my vision to live our moral and legal responsibilities, to always value and affirm the voices of our children the way God intended, and as our children grow, may their voices always be at the service of others contributing to the formation of a society in which human flourishing is lived for the common good.