

If you, or someone you know, has been abused by Church personnel, or you are concerned about conduct that may amount to a criminal offence, you should **report the incident directly to the police**. Alternatively, you can contact your local Church Authority or the Queensland Professional Standards Office who will assist you.

If you choose not to report the matter to the police, you may wish to consider resolving the matter via the Church's Towards Healing process.

Towards Healing was established in 1996 and is a process offered by the Catholic Church to those who has been abused by a priest, religious or other Church personnel including employees and volunteers appointed to positions of pastoral care on behalf of the Church. Towards Healing also formalises the Church's principles and procedures for responding to incidents of abuse.

The Queensland Professional Standards Office is responsible for managing the Towards Healing process. The Office is independent of Church Authorities, and a neutral party, which ensures that proper processes are followed, and the matter is resolved as quickly as is possible in the circumstances. The Professional Standards Office is committed to making balanced and well-informed decisions and will manage the process fairly and impartially.

You Can Contact the Queensland Professional Standards Office By:

Email

psqld@catholic.net.au

Phone

1800 337 928 (free call)

Post

PO Box 3264
Brisbane Qld 4001

Office hours 9.00am to 4.00pm
Monday to Friday (excepting public holidays).

You may also contact your local Church representative who is required to refer the matter to his or her Church Authority and/or the Professional Standards Office.

Website

For more information on the Queensland Professional Standards Office or the Towards Healing process go to the Professional Standards website at **www.psqld.catholic.net.au**

All concerns about the conduct of Church personnel that may amount to a criminal offence should be reported directly to the police for investigation.



Professional Standards Office

Catholic Church Queensland



'Professional standards' are the qualities essential for the ethical and safe practice of pastoral ministry.

(Towards Healing protocol – Definitions)



Our Role

The role of the Professional Standards Office is to assist the Catholic Church in Queensland to implement and continuously improve safe and ethical practices and respond appropriately to incidents of abuse and misconduct by Church Personnel.

Our Functions

The functions of the Professional Standards Office are:

- To assist Church Authorities to develop, implement and continually improve safe and ethical practices to reduce incidents of abuse and misconduct by Church personnel.
- To assist Church Authorities to respond appropriately to incidents of abuse or misconduct committed by Church personnel.
- To assist those who have been abused and Church Authorities to manage and resolve incidents of abuse against Church personnel.

Our Commitment

The Professional Standards Office will provide stewardship in our approach embedding safe and ethical practices, responding to incidents of abuse and misconduct and managing the resolution of cases.

The Professional Standards Office will provide a professional, fair and impartial case management service for the resolution of cases of abuse and misconduct.

The Professional Standards Office will be responsive to incidents and events when notified and provide assistance where possible.

The Professional Standards Office will work in partnership and collaboration with Church Authorities in implementing and improving safe and ethical practices, responding to incidents of abuse and misconduct and managing the resolution of cases.

Governance

The Professional Standards Office is overviewed by and reports to a Professional Standards Liaison Committee established by the representatives of the Dioceses and Religious Orders of Queensland on behalf of the Conference of Queensland Bishops and the Catholic Religious Australia (Queensland).

Why Should You Make a Disclosure?

Anyone can make a disclosure about how the Church operates and how its personnel conduct themselves. Only by making a disclosure can the Church address these issues. To make a disclosure, you can take it up with your local Church representative or contact the Professional Standards Office.

Contact Your Local Church representative

Discussing concerns with your local Church representative is often the quickest and easiest way to resolve the problem. Think about what the problem is and what you would like to happen. Be realistic and offer constructive suggestions to resolve the issue. Raising your concerns with the representative directly helps to maintain a good relationship and may identify ways they can improve things.

Make a Formal Disclosure

You may decide to make a disclosure to the relevant Church Authority who is responsible for the situation or particular Church personnel. This may be a Director, Institutional Leader or Bishop. You may wish to involve a support person.

Alternatively you may contact the Professional Standards Office who will hear your account and discuss with you options for addressing the matter. Depending on the nature of what is disclosed, the Professional Standards Office may assist you by referring the matter to the relevant Church Authority.