

Safeguarding News

August 2024

Greetings all,

Welcome to your Safeguarding HeartBeat segment.

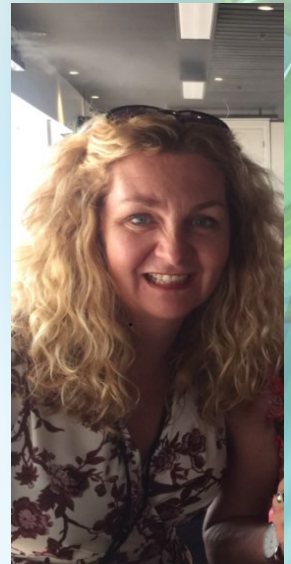
I have returned to work (and a mountain of emails), after a period of leave. I feel refreshed and excited about the future projects and tasks planned.

International Safeguarding Conference

Whilst on leave, I had the privilege of attending the International Safeguarding Conference, which was held at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. The 2024 conference theme was 'Safeguarding and Disability' and showcased a number of international keynote speakers.

One of the standout sessions for me, was delivered by Professor Mariele Wulf, who is a professor from the Centre for Safeguarding Minors and Vulnerable Adults, Faculty of Canon Law at St Paul University in Ottawa, Canada. Professor Mariele focused on 'Hidden handicaps – Vulnerability resulting from psychological issues and wounds'. Professor Mariele shared the notion that '*he who has more needs, has more rights*' and that psychological handicap impacts a person's self-functioning, it impacts a person's ability to lead a professional, social, and emotional life, and people often feel a disconnect or lack of access to their own personality. One of the key learnings from this session was the reinforcement that there needs to be more sensitivity afforded to people with reduced psychological resilience.

There was a large contingent of Australian professionals from dioceses and religious institutes in attendance at the conference. Australia's very own Father Justin Glyn provided an opportunity to further consider the definition of 'vulnerable adult' with reference to boundaries and belonging within the church. Father Justin spoke with great insight when he commented "*the road to authentic safeguarding lies in belonging*".



The closing 2024 Conference declaration committed all to an inclusive and participatory church, and there was great applause when the theme for the 2025 International Safeguarding Conference was announced as: *'Women of Faith; Women of Strength – a Safeguarding Conference'*.

SOSJ Safeguarding Policy Review

It seems like only yesterday when we consulted and created the Sisters of Saint Joseph framework of Safeguarding policies. It is important that policies and procedures remain alive and relevant, hence our commitment for these policies to be reviewed every three years. We will first be focusing on the review of the current SOSJ Child Safeguarding Policy and SOSJ Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct. Given such, I would like to encourage you to reflect upon these two documents (which you can find on SPIRIT and the SOSJ public website), and send any suggested amendments, inclusions, redactions, which you would like to see in relation to these two documents.

Once these documents have been reviewed and approved, we will all be required to re-sign our commitment to the newly revised Safeguarding Code of Conduct. So, this is your opportunity to make this document relevant to you!

National Child Protection Week

As we do each year, SOSJ recognises National Child Protection Week, which is celebrated from 1–7 September. The 2024 message remains, 'Every child in every community needs a fair go' and is complemented with the theme 'Every Conversation Matters'.



We are invited to speak up and speak together about what needs to change for every child in every community to have a fair go. The theme provides a platform to:

- Engage in important conversations,
- Promote the value of conversations, and
- Equip us to have conversations that keep kids safe.

I invite you to contact me should you have any safeguarding questions or matters you would like to discuss. I can be contacted by phone, email, or the old-fashioned way – in person!

Take care,

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