

22 March, 2018

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF TOOWOOMBA COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

The Bishop of Toowoomba, the Most Rev. Robert McGuckin over the last two days, 20-21 March, has met with more than 85 members of the Diocese's clergy, religious, lay leadership and volunteer Safeguard Representatives from Toowoomba, the Northern Downs, the West, and the Southern Downs in the James Byrne Centre in Highfields. They examined the measures in place to ensure the safeguarding of children and the vulnerable that come into contact with parishes, schools and other pastoral ministry outreach activities.

There was resounding support from all those present that protecting children and other vulnerable persons from any potential abuse or harm must be at the very centre of the Church's mission.

Guest speakers including Ms. Kathleen McCormack AM (recently retired from the Catholic Church's Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors), Fr Frank Brennan SJ OA (an accomplished human rights lawyer and activist and CEO of Catholic Social Services Australia), and Ms. Sheree Limbrick (CEO Catholic Professional Standards Limited) while acknowledging the good work already undertaken within the Diocese in protecting the vulnerable from harm stressed the ongoing need to consider how best to implement the child safe standards as recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. This was a high priority. Greg Gebhart from eSafety Commissioners Office in Melbourne also contributed to these discussions acquainting those present on the latest measures available to combat cyberbullying and/or the exploitation of images.

In commenting on the Conference Bishop Robert McGuckin stated "I am delighted by the passion, commitment and interest of those present in these developments. Those who come into contact with the Church can be assured that we are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment at all times for children and the vulnerable in our society and in our care."

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