



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Independence of Catholic Professional Standards Ltd questioned by Hunter survivors of child sexual abuse**

Tuesday 3 July 2018

Following a consultation with survivors of child sexual abuse, their advocates and their families in Newcastle yesterday the Chair of Catholic Professional Standards Limited (CPSL), Geoff Giudice AO, has reiterated the company's independence from the Church leadership.

In a statement provided to ABC radio in Newcastle and read on air this morning, Geoff Giudice said:

CPSL is owned and funded by the Catholic Church. However, it has been set up to be functionally independent of the Church in crucial respects. The Directors are all independent of the Church – none of the directors are clergy or members of religious orders.

The immediate objectives of CPSL are to establish national standards for the safeguarding of children who come in contact with the Catholic Church, to audit the application of those standards and to report the audit results. It is important to realise that under CPSL's constitution the Church cannot exercise control over the Directors in relation to the audit process and the publication of audit results.

CPSL is currently undertaking a broad-based consultation process, State by State, on draft national child safeguarding standards, before finalising and publishing those standards nationally.

Today's consultations are part of that process. Some survivor groups have already participated in consultations in other States and their contributions have been welcome and valuable.

It is of course entirely up to the respective individuals and groups but anyone who wishes to participate is most welcome to do so.

The statement followed criticism from a number of high profile Hunter survivors questioning the independence of CPSL.

Sheree Limbrick, CEO told ABC radio Newcastle yesterday that she could fully understand the scepticism survivors might have in dealing with CPSL.

"We have done a number of these consultations around the country and the starting point with survivors is scepticism, that is absolutely reasonable," she told Paul Turton on ABC Newcastle yesterday.

"There is no reason they should trust us until we have done the work. So really the important thing for us is to have the conversation and we are keen to hear from any survivor about anything we are doing, and we will take that feedback on board quite seriously.

“We need to build trust by putting some runs on the board and by having a genuine and transparent approach to everything we do,” she said.

Listen to [Sheree Limbrick interview with Paul Turton](#), ABC Radio Newcastle - 2 July 2017

Listen to [Kate Eversteyn, CPSL Director of Safeguarding, interview with Garth Russell](#), ABC Radio Newcastle – 3 July 2017

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