

# THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND DIOCESE

## OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

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## Announcement

### Safeguarding Our Church Community

In June 2025, our Diocese made a commitment to implement seven key reforms to strengthen the safety, accountability, and integrity of our Church community.

Over this period, we have been building and implementing a comprehensive framework to safeguard our Church community, provide support and care, address misconduct, and ensure that all who serve in our Diocese are fit to do so.

The “Safeguarding Our Church Community Framework” is a holistic approach to reform, ensuring the trauma of the past is addressed and supported, and our duty to protect the most vulnerable among us is a priority.

I wish to share with you the work done so far, what tasks lie ahead, and how we can work together to ensure a safer church community.

#### 1. Applying Canon Law & Establishing Professional Standards Governance

The Diocese has now established the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) — a permanent standing committee and the central decision-making body for all formal complaints of misconduct.

The PSC operates as a formal, permanent governance structure to ensure all misconduct matters are handled with rigour, fairness, and independence, as detailed within the newly approved Policy for the Diocese Professional Standards Committee (POL018).

Accountable directly to the Ruling Bishop, the PSC ensures that all determinations are made in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness, justice, and the regulations of the Synod of Bishops.

Key features of the PSC include:

- Chaired by the Ruling Bishop, with a minimum of three appointed members

- Members drawn from a variety of backgrounds that may include law, human resources, social work, theology, and governance
- Authority to issue directions to Church Authorities on all misconduct outcomes
- Responsibility to review and maintain the entire Safeguarding Our Church Community Framework

## 2. Support & Counselling Resources for Survivors and Families

Our second commitment was to ensure that survivors of abuse and their families have access to professional, compassionate support.

The Diocese has entered into an arrangement with Kooyoora — a fully independent professional services body — to operate a dedicated hotline for our Church community providing support and counselling services to survivors and their families.

The Kooyoora Hotline provides a confidential, independent, and impartial service for anyone wishing to raise concerns or make a complaint about the conduct of a Church Worker, whether past or present. In the past three-month period, Kooyoora report counselling information has been provided to six community members with one person accepting and engaging in counselling services.

Please be assured the service is provided by Kooyoora in strict confidence and the Diocese are not provided with names or any personal details.

Your voice will be heard, your concerns will be taken seriously, and handled with the highest standards of sensitivity, fairness, and confidentiality.

### **KOOYOORA Hotline — Independent Complaints & Support Service**

**Phone:** 1800 135 246

**Email:** [contact@kooyoora.org.au](mailto:contact@kooyoora.org.au)

Available to all within our Church community. All contacts are strictly confidential.

## 3. Independent Review of Child Protection Policies & Procedures

Our third commitment is the independent review of our child protection policies and procedures, Church worker codes of conduct, and other related policies, by qualified experts.

All relevant policies have been reviewed by Kooyoora, whose recommendations have been incorporated into the updated policy suite now before the Diocese for final approval.

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This independent expert review ensures our framework meets contemporary best practice standards and is consistent with legal requirements across Australia and New Zealand.

As part of their operating mandate, the PSC is tasked with ensuring regular independent reviews of these policies and procedures are maintained.

#### 4. Enhanced Safeguarding Measures & Mandatory Reporting Protocols

This foundational commitment was to implement robust safeguarding measures and mandatory reporting requirements.

We have now established a comprehensive Safeguarding Our Church Community Framework — a suite of interconnected policies that together form the governance backbone of our Diocese's approach to safety and accountability.

The Framework applies across all jurisdictions in which the Diocese operates, including Australia and New Zealand, and will be distributed to all church entities upon final approval.

The attached infographic provides an overview of the Framework's guiding principles and associated policies that underpin the Framework.

#### 5. Ongoing Trauma-Informed Training for Clergy, Staff & Volunteers

This important reform is a commitment to provide ongoing, trauma-informed training for all clergy, staff, and volunteers.

With expert guidance from Kooyoora, we are developing comprehensive awareness and training program that will commence rolling out to parishes across the Diocese over the course of the next six months.

This training is designed to equip all Church Workers with the knowledge and skills required to recognise, prevent, and appropriately respond to misconduct — while maintaining a compassionate, trauma-sensitive approach to all those affected.

More detail will be announced regarding this initiative very soon.

#### 6. Strengthening Safe Pathways for Reporting Concerns

The Diocese made a commitment to strengthen safe and accessible pathways for reporting concerns. This has been achieved through our partnership with Kooyoora, which now operates a fully independent complaint management and response system on behalf of the Diocese.

The complaint process ensures that every person who raises a concern is treated with dignity and respect.

Attached to this announcement is a poster that we encourage all parishes to post in a prominent location.

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Further awareness of these reporting pathways is now being actively raised at the parish level to ensure all community members know how to access support and make a report if needed.

## 7. Implementing & Supporting the National Redress Scheme

The Diocese has actively pursued entering the National Redress Scheme (NRS).

Whilst the ANZ Diocese of ROCOR may not appear on the NRS website as a “participating organisation” yet, the Diocese has formally confirmed our commitment and support of the Scheme and continues to maintain ongoing direct contact with the Scheme Administrator.

The Diocese is fully trained and prepared for NRS applications.

We have instructed the Kooyoora Hotline to provide assistance and information to all callers regarding the NRS, ensuring that survivors are connected to this pathway as part of every interaction where it may be relevant.

The Diocese will continue to honour and fulfil all obligations arising from the NRS.

For further information and applications to the NRS, visit:-

<https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/>

or, call the KOOYOORA Hotline

This month the updated Diocese website will go live, with a dedicated “**Safe Ministry**” section containing the complete framework, including information on accessing services and important announcements and updates. As new and updated policies are released, they will appear in this section.

The work of safeguarding is never finished. The establishment of these policies, committees, and systems represents a significant and necessary step — but the true measure of our commitment will be in how faithfully we live these values every day, in every parish, in every interaction.

I ask for your prayers, your patience, and your active participation in building a Church community where every person is safe, valued, and treated with the dignity befitting a child of God.

With pastoral love in Christ,

+ Archbishop George

### Attachments

1. Infographic for Safeguarding Our Church Community Framework
  2. Infographic for Complaint Management Pathway
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# SAFEGUARDING OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK

## Our Commitment

The Diocese is committed to a Church environment that is nurturing, sustaining, faithful to Orthodoxy, and expressing the love we have been asked to reflect by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church must be a place of trust, care, and accountability - for everyone.

### Applies to ALL Church Workers

Clergy · Lay Ministers · Admin Staff  
Teachers · Youth Leaders · Volunteers  
Committee Members · Music Leaders

## THE 8 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE FRAMEWORK

### Safety & Protection

The safety and well-being of all people, especially children and vulnerable adults, is our highest priority.



### Fitness for Service

The primary focus is assessing a Church Worker's ongoing fitness for their role — not purely punitive.



### Fairness & Procedural Justice

All complaints are handled fairly, impartially, and in a timely manner with respect for all parties.



### Independence & Impartiality

Complaints are handled by independent bodies to ensure objectivity and freedom from bias.



### Transparency & Accountability

A culture of accountability where all Church Workers are responsible for their conduct.



### Confidentiality & Privacy

The privacy of all parties is respected and information is kept confidential to the extent possible.



### Trauma-Informed Practice

The system is administered with sensitivity to the needs of those who have experienced trauma.



### Review & Improve

The Diocese is committed to learning from complaints, to review and improve its policies and practices.



## THE POLICIES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK

### POL016 Safeguarding Our Church Community Policy

The high-level overview of the entire system — its purpose, principles, and how all Framework policies interrelate.

### POL015 Code of Conduct for Church Workers

Sets the specific standards of behaviour and conduct expected of all Church Workers within the Diocese.

### POL010 Child-Safe Policy

Specific requirements for Church Workers dealing with children, reflecting state and territory legislative requirements.

### POL018 Professional Standards Committee (PSC) Policy

Defines the structure, powers, and procedures of the PSC, the central decision-making body of the Framework.

### POL019 Complaints Management Policy & Procedures

The detailed operational manual for the complaints system, covering investigation, reporting, and resolution processes.

### POL020 Clearance for Service Policy

Outlines the procedures for screening, inducting, and verifying all Church Workers prior to service.

## KEY ROLES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK

### Church Workers

Understand & comply with the Code of Conduct and all Framework Policies

### Kooyoora Hotline

Independent external body - receives, assesses & investigates all complaints

### Professional Standards Committee (PSC)

Central decision-making body reviews reports & determines outcomes

### Church Authority

Vicar Bishop, Dean or Rector - implements PSC directions within the parish.

### Diocesan Council

Procedural oversight of Framework - receives de-identified annual PSC report

# SAFEGUARDING OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY - Complaint Pathways

## Kooyoora Hotline

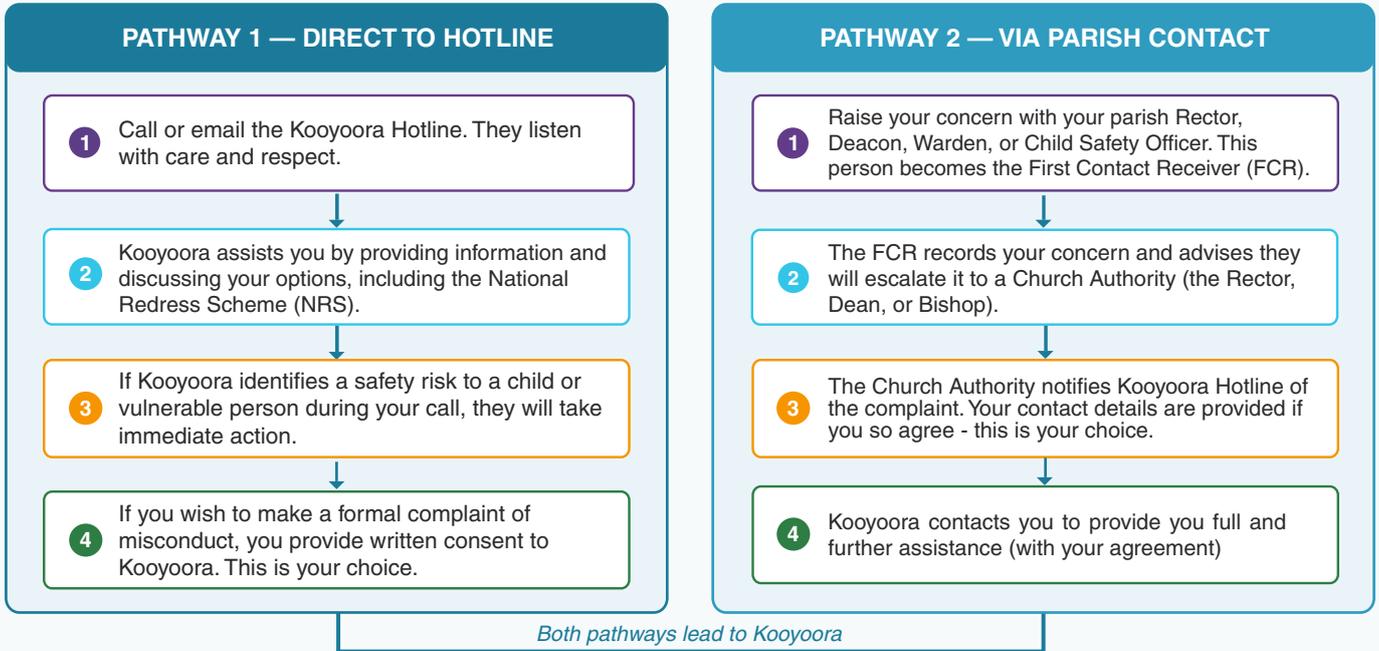
**1800 135 246**

contact@kooyoora.org.au

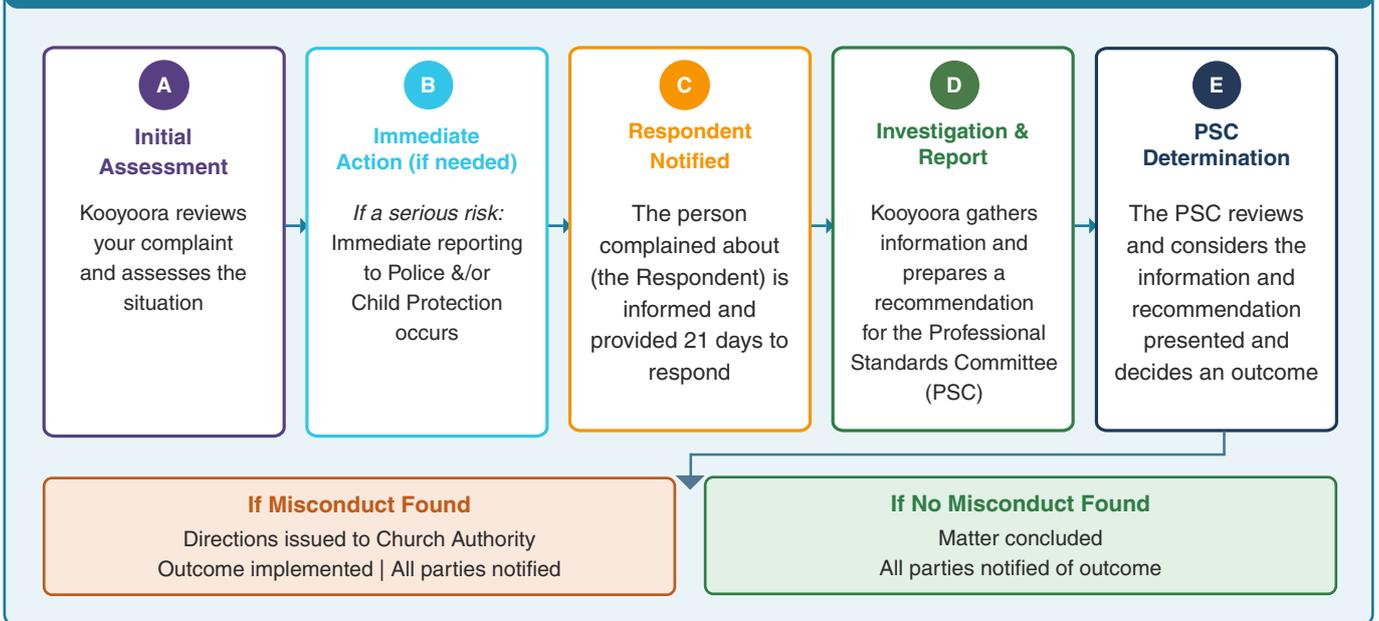
*Kooyoora is the Diocese's independent, external organisation responsible for receiving, assessing and investigating complaints of misconduct against Church Workers.*

### HOW TO REPORT A MISCONDUCT CONCERN & WHAT TO EXPECT

There are two ways to report a concern or complaint of misconduct — both pathways lead to Kooyoora.



### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOUR COMPLAINT IS RECEIVED BY KOOYOORA



### YOUR RIGHTS & PROTECTIONS AS A COMPLAINANT

- Confidentiality**  
 Your personal information is handled with strict confidentiality
- Regular Updates**  
 You will receive progress updates on your complaint at every stage
- Support Available**  
 Information on support services and the NRS is provided to you
- Independent Process**  
 Kooyoora operates independently to ensure an impartial process