

Six month review of the pilot ‘Parish Safeguarding Volunteer’ role in South Belconnen Parish. (May 2020)

The pilot of the Parish Safeguarding Volunteer (PSV) role in South Belconnen Parish was launched on 30 November 2019, the First Sunday of Advent.

This was the result of several months of work undertaken by Fr Simon Falk, Parish Priest, Maria Hicks, Manager of Institute for Professional Standards and Safeguarding (IPSS) in the Archdiocese, and Beth Gibson, the initial PSV.

As part of the launch, it was agreed there would be a review of the PSV pilot at six months and then at twelve months to ensure the role was rolling out as intended.

This six month review was conducted on Wednesday 27 May 2020 by Fr Simon, Maria Hicks, Kate Whitton (Parish Secretary), and Beth Gibson.

The overall agreement was that the pilot is progressing as planned, and Beth is to continue to undertake the role as outlined below.

Task or action	Outcome
Articles written for the Parish Bulletin	Beth has written articles relating to; Elder Abuse (in Seniors’ week), ABC Program ‘Revelation’, Jean Vanier’s abusive behaviour in L’Arche, High Court result for Cardinal Pell and the Redress Scheme, and one about family violence in COVID-19 times (yet to be published).
Write up parish based documents re general safeguarding	Still to do.
Attend PPC meetings and report on safeguarding matters	Ongoing
Visit appropriate parish groups to discuss safeguarding.	Still to do.
Use special events to highlight safeguarding issues.	Yes, in Seniors Week. Beth will do a similar thing in Child Protection Week and Mental Health Week. Beth plans to work with the Liturgy Committee to arrange some sort of liturgy in Child Protection Week, using the memorial tree as a focal point.

Explore training for parish volunteers.	Beth participated in 3 webinars looking at 'grooming', and 1 for the Reportable Conduct Scheme in NSW. Beth will now look at how this information can be shared more broadly in the parish.
Risk assessments for children's and young people's activities in the parish.	Beth attended a parish meeting with relevant parish volunteers, Kate Whitton, and Maria Hicks from IPPS. Beth wrote up the Minutes and checked two draft risk assessments before they were sent to Kate for signing off by Fr Simon and filing.
Contact Child Safety Advocates in the schools.	Still to do.
Support PSV	Beth met with a parishioner to explore his interest in becoming a support PSV in the Parish.

It was noted that there is interest from other parishes in the PSV role.

After the review meeting, Fr James Antony from Corpus Christi Parish and an interested parishioner, joined the meeting to discuss the role of a PSV in their parish.

Besides the actions in the table above that are still to be completed, Beth will be in touch with the interested person as Corpus Christi parish sets up their PSV.

South Belconnen will consider setting up a specific safeguarding email address.

The Archdiocese more broadly recognises that Beth is doing a great job in raising the profile and commitment of this parish and its people, to safeguarding our most vulnerable within our parishes.

She has attended child protection webinars and provided valuable input into the new Child Protection Code of Conduct for the Archdiocese.

The many volunteer hours put in by Beth to bring this pilot to life is very much appreciated.

The draft Review was tabled at the South Belconnen Parish Pastoral Council meeting on Wednesday 1 June. There were no requests for changes.

The 12 month review for the pilot of the PSV role will be held in November 2020.