

# Professional Development Program 2025



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
WOLLONGONG

## Safeguarding in the Diocese of Wollongong

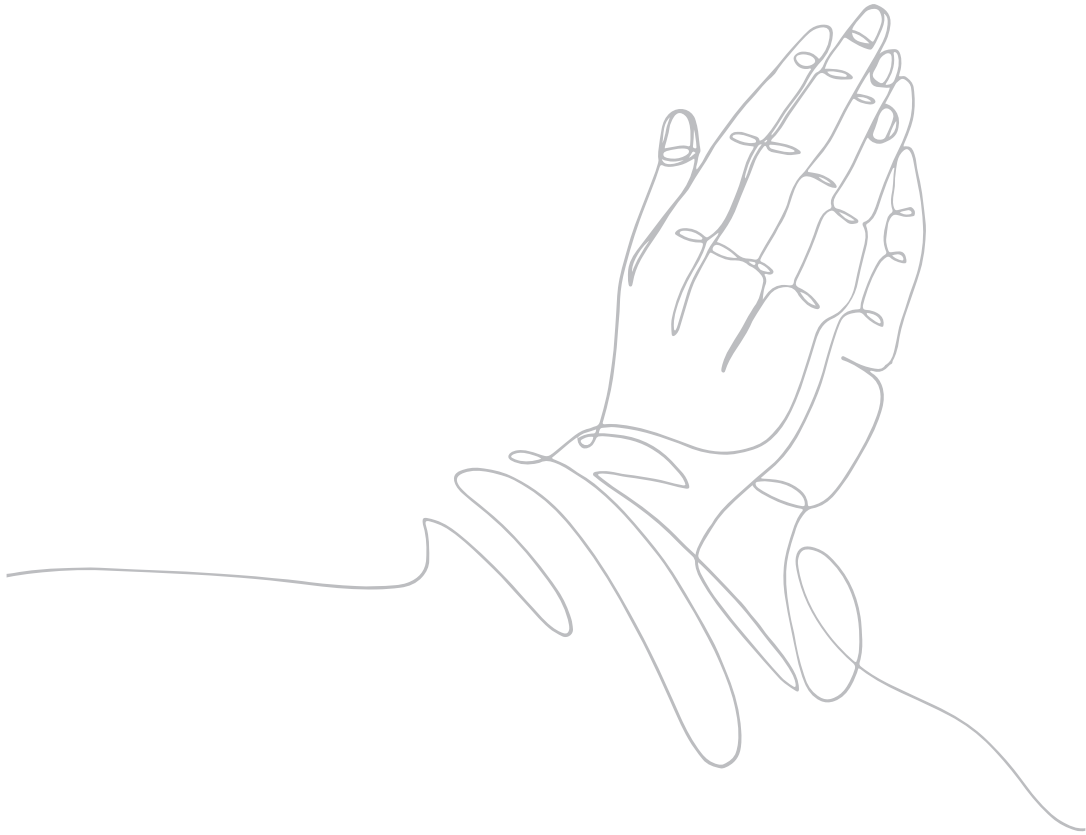
As leaders for the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong, **at the centre of each of our vocations and professions is Christ.**

In coming together for these professional development opportunities, we go forward together with hope and humility.

Let us seek the guidance, patience and Wisdom of our Heavenly Father as we utilise the talents, skills and gifts He has given us to ensure the safety of all His children.

## Acknowledgment of Country

We begin by acknowledging the Country upon which we call the home of the Diocese of Wollongong. We honour the Traditional Custodians of this land—the Dharawal, Gundungurra and Yuin nations—who have, over millennia, cared for and worked in harmony with our common home. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of recognition and reconciliation.



## Program Information

Welcome to the 2025 Professional Development Program for the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong. We are pleased to offer you a number of new options, both online and in person, that we hope you will find helpful for your continued professional development as part of the diocesan commitment to developing and maintaining safe environments for everyone.

As in past years, the Bishop has mandated that all diocesan leaders and other specified personnel must complete **at least 10 units** of professional development in the areas of professional standards and safeguarding each calendar year. On the calendar below, you can see what the Diocese has to offer for the coming year. We ask you to read the workshop descriptions carefully before enrolling to ensure that the content of the workshop will be valuable to your ministry/work.

### REGISTRATION IS NECESSARY

Only those who have registered for the workshops will get an email ahead of time with the ZOOM link or workshop specific information, such as changes to the method of delivery or location of the session. To register, click the following link [dow.sh/OPSS\\_LPDP](https://dow.sh/OPSS_LPDP) and fill out the online registration.

If you have any difficulties in filling out the form, please contact the Office of Professional Standards and Safeguarding (OPSS) at [training@dow.org.au](mailto:training@dow.org.au), or telephone us on **(02) 4222 2431**.

Registration will close one week before the start of each program, or when a workshop reaches capacity. If you are unable to attend a workshop, please inform OPSS at [training@dow.org.au](mailto:training@dow.org.au) since there is a limited capacity for each session and your registration can be transferred to another person. Once you receive the Zoom link, we respectfully ask that you do not provide the link to anyone else.

### HOW TO APPLY FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

There are several external professional development courses available that will fulfill the criteria for recognition of prior learning (RPL). If you attend a workshop that addresses subjects related to safeguarding or professional standards, Child Safe Standards or National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, you may be eligible for credit points.

To apply, please click on the following link [dow.sh/OPSS\\_LPDP](https://dow.sh/OPSS_LPDP) and apply for **recognition of prior learning**.

Please keep in mind that the workshop(s) must have taken place during the same calendar year for which you are seeking credit, and evidence of attendance and completion will be required to process your application

**All recognition of prior professional development is due by 28th November 2025.**

## NEW TO THE DIOCESE?

If you are new to the Diocese, it is strongly recommended that you attend the Building Foundations workshop before registering for other workshops. The Building Foundations workshop covers the fundamental knowledge and expectations of those in positions of leadership. It is the responsibility of each diocesan leader to guarantee that their duties under this program are met.

## WHO IS A DIOCESAN LEADER?

Please go to the website for deemed roles for the purpose of the Diocesan Leadership Professional Development Program: [safeguarding.dow.org.au](https://safeguarding.dow.org.au)

## 2025 Workshop Calendar

F2F = face to face

DATE	TIME	WORKSHOP	PRESENTER	LOCATION	UNITS
Thursday 8 May 2025	9:30am–4:30pm	<b>Building Foundations</b>	Michelle Scobie	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	10 units
Tuesday 27 May 2025	1:00pm–4:30pm	<b>“NEW” Hazard Management &amp; Risk Assessment</b>	Cassandra Hayden	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	5 units
Wednesday 11 June 2025	10:30am–2:00pm	<b>Privacy &amp; Confidentiality</b>	Alex Kohn	Zoom	5 units
Thursday 26 June 2025	10:30am –2:00pm	<b>“NEW” A Cultural Learning Journey</b>	Tina McGhie	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	5 units
Wednesday 23 July 2025	10:30am–2:00pm	<b>“NEW” Working with Vulnerable People–Disability</b>	Cassandra Hayden	Zoom	5 units
Tuesday 12 August 2025	1:00pm–4:30pm	<b>“NEW” Changing Nature of Childhood—Lessons from Child Safety</b>	Beth Woodstone	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	5 units
Wednesday 27 August 2025	10:30am–2:00pm	<b>“NEW” Keeping Yourself Safe Professional Boundaries with Children and Colleagues</b>	Halloran & Morriessey	Zoom	5 Units
Thursday 11 September 2025	10:30am–2:00pm	<b>“NEW” Conflict Resolution</b>	Anna Tydd	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	5 units
Wednesday 24 September 2025	1:00pm–4:30pm	<b>“NEW” Mental Health</b>	Rebecca John	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	5 units
Tuesday 21 October 2025	1:00pm–4:30pm	<b>Hearing the Voice of the Child when there are Issues of Safety</b>	Becc Waterson & TBA	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	5 units
Thursday 6 November 2025	1:00pm–4:30pm	<b>Creating Child Safe Organisations—NAPCAN</b>	Merrin Sulovski	Zoom	5 units
Thursday 13 November 2025	9:00am–4:30pm	<b>“NEW” Trauma Responsive Leadership—Self as a Leader</b>	Rose Mackey	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	10 units

## Locations for workshops

### (F2F) Xavier Centre Conference Rooms

38 Harbour Street, Wollongong  
(behind the Cathedral)

### (ONLINE) ZOOM session

Sessions take place via Zoom (a unique workshop link will be shared 2-3 days prior through email)

## Workshop details & descriptions

### Building Foundations

**Date:** Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**Time:** 9:30am–4:30pm

**Mode:** F2F

**Presenter:** Michelle Scobie

**Description:** An understanding of the legislative obligations and diocesan requirements is a crucial foundation preceding the attainment of specialised skills in the area of safeguarding and professional standards.

This workshop is designed to provide a foundational understanding of key safeguarding and professional standard principles and the content of the presentation will ensure that attendees have a comprehensive overview of the legislative obligations and diocesan requirements that are expected of those working and ministering in the Diocese with children, young people and vulnerable persons.

Leaders who are new to the Diocese or have recently taken up a leadership position in the Diocese are required to complete this workshop or a similar alternative foundational workshop. This workshop is also appropriate for anyone who would like a refresher on foundational child protection principles and associated diocesan policies.

### Hazard Management and Risk Assessment

**Date:** Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**Time:** 1:00pm–4:30pm

**Mode:** F2F

**Presenter:** Cassandra Hayden

**Description:** Safety in the workplace is everyone's responsibility. This practical workshop focuses on equipping all pastoral workers with the knowledge and skills needed to identify, manage, and mitigate workplace hazards effectively. By understanding the fundamentals of risk assessments, participants will foster safer environments for parishioners, staff, and the wider community. Through interactive discussions, case studies, and hands-on exercises, participants will learn how to apply hazard management principles tailored to their unique contexts.

### Privacy & Confidentiality

**Date:** Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**Time:** 10:30am–2:00pm

**Mode:** Zoom

**Presenter:** Alex Kohn

**Description:** As an employee, it is important to be aware of privacy and confidentiality responsibilities and procedures, as well as the rationale behind their existence. This workshop will assist participants in being informed about the various requirements, to develop an understanding of the importance of adhering to these requirements, and an understanding of. or an inability to maintain privacy and confidentiality across numerous platforms which may threaten the most vulnerable members of our community.

## Cultural Learning Journey—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

**Date:** Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025  
**Time:** 10:30am–2:00pm  
**Mode:** F2F  
**Presenter:** Tina McGhie

**Description:** Cultural Learning Journeys provide organisations and participants with opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their diversity, and their histories—both past and present. This training emphasises the importance of delivering respectful, culturally safe services through knowledge-building and reflection.

Curijo’s collaborative and transparent process creates a safe environment for participants to expand their knowledge and develop practical strategies for working positively and effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families, communities, and organisations. The training is interactive, reflective, and grounded in real-life experiences shared by our Aboriginal trainers, allowing participants to connect with the content and gain meaningful insights.

From learning the history, and the impact into the present, and strategies to working with Aboriginal colleagues and clients, participants will be able to reflect on their own knowledge, understanding, values, bias, and privilege through humanistic approaches.

## Working With Vulnerable People—Disability

**Date:** Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2025  
**Time:** 10:30am–2:00pm  
**Mode:** Zoom  
**Presenter:** Cassandra Hayden

**Description:** This session is designed to foster a deeper understanding of how to support individuals with disabilities, ensuring that diversity is respected and equality is promoted within the Diocese. The goal is to empower participants with the knowledge, skills, and understanding necessary to provide effective support and promote an inclusive environment for all individuals, regardless of their abilities. The focus on mental health, hidden disabilities, and the need for a shift in attitudes and practices is essential to breaking down barriers and ensuring everyone, regardless of ability, is treated with respect and dignity.

## Changing Nature of Childhood—Lessons from Child Safety

**Date:** Tuesday, 12th August 2025  
**Time:** 1:00pm–4:30pm  
**Mode:** F2F  
**Presenter:** Beth Woodstone

**Description:** The nature of childhood has changed significantly over the past 50 years. Factors such as globalisation, rapidly evolving technologies, changing gender roles, work patterns and cost of living have profoundly impacted the experience of childhood. It has also impacted children’s safety in childhood.

This session will explore the changing nature of childhood and discuss how these changes enable and endanger children’s safety today. The session will draw on case studies and learnings from current child safety practice.

## Keeping Yourself Safe: Professional Boundaries with Children and Colleagues

**Date:** Wednesday, 27th August 2025  
**Time:** 10:30am–2:00 pm  
**Mode:** Zoom  
**Presenter:** Halloran & Morrissey

**Description:** This session is designed for leaders working within the Diocese to explore professional boundaries in the context of all pastoral works. The session will focus on:

- **Understanding Professional Boundaries:** Participants will be able to define and explain professional boundaries and why they are crucial in maintaining a safe work environment.
- **Identifying Types of Boundaries:** Participants will learn to identify different types of professional boundaries and their roles in maintaining professional integrity.
- **Strategies for Boundary Setting:** Participants will develop practical strategies and tools for setting and maintaining healthy professional boundaries with both children and colleagues.
- **Recognising Boundary Transgressions:** Participants will be able to recognise signs of boundary transgressions and understand the steps to take when they occur.
- **Reflective Practice:** Participants will engage in reflective practice to assess their own boundary-setting practices and identify areas for improvement.

## Conflict Resolution

**Date:** Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025  
**Time:** 10:30am–2:00pm  
**Mode:** F2F  
**Presenter:** Anna Tydd

**Description:** Learning how to respond to and resolve conflict is a key skill for anyone who works in the community (including within a parish context) or within a workplace team. Understanding and exploring flexible responses to interpersonal conflict can be a very empowering process and should be prioritised at both an individual and collective level.

Workshop participants will be provided the opportunity to explore a deeper understanding of peoples' behaviours, attitudes and perspectives when engaged in conflict and how to respond in a way that listens and attends to individual and collective needs within the context of organisational conflict.

This workshop will also explore the factors that can contribute to the escalation of disputes, particularly where people raising concerns do not feel that they have been justly heard and considered early in the process, utilising scenario-based examples to be workshopped that relate to all pastoral works.

## Mental Health

**Date:** Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025  
**Time:** 1:00pm–4:30pm  
**Mode:** F2F  
**Presenter:** Rebecca John

**Description:** This workshop will focus on navigating mental health by raising awareness, strengthening support systems and promoting the well-being of vulnerable adults. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the mental health continuum and learn about various mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, and trauma-related disorders. This session will also provide practical strategies for supporting individuals facing mental health challenges, managing stress more effectively, and accessing appropriate resources and support.

## Hearing the Voice of the Child when there are Issues of Safety

**Date:** Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025  
**Time:** 1:00pm–4:30pm  
**Mode:** F2F  
**Presenter:** Becc Waterson & TBA

**Description:** Regardless of the organisational setting, as professionals working with vulnerable children and young people, it is integral that our work reflects a commitment to working with and for children and young people to ensure their voice is not lost in the execution of Policy and Procedure. Secondly, this workshop aims to highlight that the promotion of the child's voice enhances positive outcomes across all health and wellbeing indicators.

This workshop will call upon current evidence-based literature that strongly supports the prioritisation of the children and young people's voice in service provision, and provides ample argument that these benefits extend to the effectiveness of professional stakeholder relationships, and influence effective organisational output.

Further, this workshop provides a timely reminder post-royal commission that as workers who hold a privileged position, we should always remember that children and young people are experts in their own lives; our understanding of this is crucial to better support their safety and critically, prevent further harm.

## Creating Child Safe Organisations

**Date:** Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025  
**Time:** 1:00pm–4:30pm  
**Mode:** Zoom  
**Presenter:** Merrin Sulovski

**Description:** 'Creating A Child Safe Organisation', presented by NAPCAN, aims to provide participants with a foundational understanding of these legislative requirements and best practice approaches. The workshop also focuses on instituting a culture that supports and engages children and families as a key component in maintaining child safe environments.

Further, the module covers content related to the development of the right policies, procedures, and practices to keep children safe, including the existence of conduct requirements, effective recruitment practices, and trauma-informed complaints management processes. Through participation in this workshop, participants will acquire information and strategies that can be taken back and applied to their local contexts.

## Trauma Responsive Leadership Series—Self as Leader

**Date:** Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025  
**Time:** 9:00am–4:30pm  
**Mode:** F2F  
**Presenter:** Rose Mackey

**Description:** This training focuses on the foundational work of a leader in understanding themselves as leaders and developing a secure base for their team to work from. The workshop will provide strategies to reflect on self and own leadership styles, before applying this in practice. This follows the Leadership Framework and covers the underpinning elements of the application of trauma-informed principles and creating and understanding secure base attachment dynamics.



## Presenter Biographies

### Michelle Scobie

Integroe Partners

*Partner*

A recognised expert in complex and sensitive workplace investigations, Michelle has handled matters involving bullying and harassment, sexual harassment, performance and conduct issues, and serious misconduct.

Michelle has extensive experience working with regulatory frameworks, including investigations into disability reportable incidents under the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission.

Michelle holds a Master's degree in Labour Law and Relations from the University of Sydney Law School, with a focus on Alternative Dispute Resolution. Michelle has successfully supported religious institutes in navigating transitional challenges by facilitating strategic planning initiatives that address evolving operational and regulatory landscapes while maintaining alignment with their values and mission.

### Cassandra Hayden

CatholicCare Wollongong

*Strategy Implementation Lead & Aged Care Reforms Lead*

Cassandra is a dedicated professional with over 15 years of experience in the aged care and disability sectors, particularly in community care settings. A Registered Nurse by background, Cassandra has held diverse roles spanning operational management, business development, service model design, clinical care, policy development, quality, and service improvement.

Currently serving as Strategy Implementation Lead and Aged Care Reforms Lead at CatholicCare Wollongong, Cassandra is passionate about driving meaningful change and improving care outcomes. Her expertise lies in crafting innovative solutions and fostering continuous improvement to enhance service delivery and support vulnerable people.

### Alex Kohn

Makinson d'Apice

*Partner*

Alex has extensive experience in providing legal advice and representation for a wide variety of organisations, including Catholic Diocese across Australia, in understanding their obligations and navigating complex high-risk situations. Alex is able to assist clients in navigating their way through the many and varied legal issues confronting this sensitive sector and has been accredited by the Law Society of New South Wales as a specialist personnel in injury litigation. More broadly, Alex has extensive general and commercial litigation experience and is a trusted advisor in risk management and dispute resolution techniques.

### Tina McGhie

Curijo

*Co-CEO & Senior Aboriginal Consultant*

Tina has extensive experience within the employment, social and community services sectors and is well known for her leadership and managerial skills. Tina has worked at a state-wide level with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities in service delivery, community development, organisational development. At a national level, Tina has worked with the Human Rights Commission as a key representative body, whilst maintaining Federal and State government guidelines with comprehensive understanding of government operations, policies, and practices. Tina's qualifications as a Trainer and Assessor has allowed her to deliver to Corporate and Government agencies in cultural awareness, Cultural Safety, and Trauma Informed Care.

Tina specialises in working with both Aboriginal and non-aboriginal children, young people and adults within the Out-of-Home Care and Family Support fields.

## **Beth Woodstone**

Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong

*Senior Child Protection Advisor*

Beth has a masters degree in International Relations with a focus on conflict resolution. Beth has worked for the Department of Communities and Justice in frontline child protection and health and immigration. Beth currently works in the Catholic Education Department of Wollongong as a Senior Child Protection Advisor. Beth is passionate about protecting and empowering young people, particularly in the areas of disability, youth mental health, cultivating opportunities for them.

## **Anna Tydd**

OneResolve

*Director & Founder*

Anna is a highly experienced mediator, restorative justice facilitator, policy advisor and previous solicitor. Anna has spent her entire career focused on the prevention of harm to children and adults and the provision of a compassionate and just response to those who have been harmed.

Anna has worked in senior legal, policy and advocacy roles in Royal Commissions and other governmental inquiries both in Australia and overseas, with a particular focus on the factors that enable sexual harm and failed institutional responses to child sexual abuse and sexual harm experienced by adults. Anna has consistently adopted a trauma informed and survivor led approach in her professional work.

Anna also has over 20 years' experience facilitating alternate dispute resolution and restorative approaches to conflict and abuse occurring in familial, organisational and community settings. Anna is particularly passionate about ensuring that people impacted by abusive and harmful behaviour, including interpersonal conflict, are given alternative response and justice choices.

## **Rebecca John**

CatholicCare Wollongong

*Group Facilitator*

Rebecca is an experienced group work facilitator, with many years working in Early Intervention space, engaging with the Aboriginal Community and providing parenting education programs. Rebecca has a background in psychology and is currently furthering her education.

## **Becc Waterson**

CatholicCare Wollongong

*School Counsellor*

Becc is a social worker with CatholicCare Wollongong. Becc has experience in frontline child protection, and spent many years working in adolescent mental health with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). This included adolescent intensive home treatment and perinatal and infant mental health support. Becc has a passion for empowering people through a person centred care approach, underpinned by attachment theory and trauma informed care.

## **Merrin Sulovski**

NAPCAN

*Trainer*

Merrin brings over 15 years experience training and researching in the child safeguarding space. Merrin was a tutor and lecturer at Deakin University and taught a range of units on child safety at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She held senior capacity building roles at Victoria's Commission for Children and Young People and the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse.

Merrin has a secondary teaching/health science degree, completed a Graduate Diploma of Adolescent Health

and Wellbeing, and a Master of Education (Research), where she completed her thesis on child sexual abuse prevention programs in Victorian schools and early learning settings.

## Rose Mackey

BlueKnot

*Trainer*

Rose is an accredited Social Worker and member of the Australian Association of Social Workers, with over two decades of experience supporting vulnerable children and families within child protection, out-of-home care, and adoption settings. Rose has held positions in correctional settings, drug and alcohol fields and working with clients who have traumatic brain injuries. Her career reflects a strong commitment to leadership and relational practice with a therapeutic lens. Notably, she spearheaded the quality assurance program for a large out of home district, achieving and maintaining accreditation for six consecutive years. This demonstrates her ability to effectively guide teams and implement best practices that enhanced the service delivery experienced by clients.

Furthermore, Rose extends her expertise to practitioners through supervision and specialised training programs, enhancing their skills in all domains of social work. Recognising the importance of family connection, she provides restoration services to birth parents striving to rebuild relationships with their children. Rose's work consistently emphasises a relational approach, recognising the significance of connection and attachment in healing and growth. Her therapeutic lens informs all aspects of her practice, ensuring trauma-informed and child-centred care.





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