



Brigidine Southern Cross Community Australia

To act justly and to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8)

Terms of Reference

Brigidine Safeguarding Reference Group Australia (BSRGA)

1. INTRODUCTION

These Terms of Reference set out the scope, functions, and membership for the Brigidine Safeguarding Reference Group Australia (BSRGA). The care, safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk is a central and fundamental responsibility of all Brigidine Sisters and those who are employed by or volunteer with them. The BSRGA has been established to assist the Brigidine Southern Cross Community Leadership Team (BSCCLT) in addressing safeguarding matters, and to provide some stability over leadership changes, being a significant response to the *Invitation and Call* from the 2016 Congregational Forum that states:

“We are called in solidarity with others to extend and deepen our partnerships in a spirit of mutual respect and service fostering a sense of dignity and opportunity for all according to evolving needs”.

In addressing safeguarding matters, the Brigidine Sisters and the BSRGA acknowledge and respect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,¹ and in their decision making will ensure that the best interests of the child and/or the adult at risk shall be a primary consideration.² The Brigidine Sisters and the BSRGA also acknowledge and respect the Australian Governments’ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations³ and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related standards.⁴

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

² cf Article 3.1 United Nations Convention on

³ <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/national-principles-child-safe-organisations>

⁴ <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.htm>

The Congregational Leadership Team (CLT) has established the BSRGA with the objective of providing expert advice, direction, and recommendations on Safeguarding matters, for consideration and endorsement by the BSCCLT. These Safeguarding matters include:

- Policies
- Education
- Complaint Management

3. FUNCTIONS

The BSRGA will undertake the following functions within the above scope:

- Uphold the values expressed in the Congregation's Safeguarding Statement on Children and adults at risk
- Develop and support the implementation of consistent Congregational policies and procedures in Australia for the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.
- Provide advice in relation to these policies and procedures
- Provide guidance and support on complaints, when requested by the relevant Congregational Leader or Leader of the Brigidine Southern Cross Community Sisters Australia, as defined in the Complaints policy.
- Provide relevant information and updates for Leadership Teams and support ongoing education for sisters, employees and volunteers, as requested
- Remain informed about matters related to developments and requirements in all areas of Professional Standards and Safeguarding
- Inquire into, consider, and report on any proposal or matter concerned with Professional Standards or Safeguarding, as directed by the BSCCLT.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- Members of the BSRGA will be appointed by and are accountable to the Brigidine CLT
- The BSRGA will have no more than 5 members, with one additional ex officio Brigidine CLT member
- The term of appointment for a member will be 3 years, with a re-appointment of 2 or 3 years
- The BSRGA will consist of Brigidine sisters, lay and/or other religious members
- Members who are Brigidine sisters will hold the interests of the Brigidine Southern Cross Community
- BSCCLT will nominate a Chair from within the members of the BSGRA to facilitate the meetings

5. REMUNERATION

- All members of the BSRGA are volunteers and as such will receive no remuneration for their work, unless they are requested to undertake work in their professional private capacity for the Brigidine sisters
- Reasonable expenses to carry out the purpose of the group, such as travel and administration expenses, will be reimbursed by the Brigidine Sisters

6. MEETINGS AND ENGAGEMENT

- The BSGRA will meet for a minimum of two meetings per year and other meetings as needed
- All BSGRA members will endeavour to work in a collaborative manner with the aim of reaching a consensus on issues. Where genuine disagreement arises, members will make every effort to establish a consensus and collectively respect any outcome
- All discussions at meetings will be respectfully survivor-centred
- Members of the BSGRA will treat all information as confidential, consistent with the Brigidine Congregation's privacy considerations
- Members of the BSGRA are expected to be alert to a potential for real or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise in case matters, and respond to such in accordance with best practice

7. REVIEW

- These Terms of Reference will be monitored for compliance and effectiveness by the Brigidine CLT. A review will be conducted every two years. Interim reviews will occur at any time as required, in response to feedback or changes in legislation or policy

8. CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE BRIGIDINE SAFEGUARDING REFERENCE GROUP AUSTRALIA

- Ms Claire Pirola, Safeguarding Specialist, Brisbane, Catholic Education Office (Chair)
- Mr Michael Myers, Coordinator for Professional Standards
- Dr Frances M. Moran, Consultant and Clinical Psychologist
- Sr. Anne Hill csb
- Sr. Chanel Sugden csb

Version Control			
Version	Date	Changes / Acceptance	Author
1	30 March 2023	Changes were accepted	
2	26 April 2023	Changes were accepted	
3	18 April 2024	Changes were accepted	Stephenie Mastrocola
3	30 April 2024	Changes made	Stephenie Mastrocola
4	21 October 2024	Changes made to the Policy as reflected in the Notes dated 8 August 2024	Stephenie Mastrocola and Angela Ryan