



Brigidine Southern Cross Community Australia

Complaint Framework

1. PURPOSE:

- Assist the management of claims of abuse committed by members of the Brigidine Congregation or by personnel engaged by the Brigidine Congregation to provide services/ministry
- Outline the framework for the Brigidine Safeguarding Resources Group Australia (BSRGA) to operate within when supporting the Brigidine Congregation in responding to claims of abuse
- Outline the authority and responsibilities of the Brigidine Congregational Leadership Team (CLT), Brigidine Southern Cross Community Leadership Team (BSCCLT), and the BSRGA members within this framework

Note: For the purpose of this document, the word “claim” refers to a complaint, allegation or a request for information, about a relevant abuse incident within a legal or non-legal process.

Abuse refers to conduct that was physical, sexual, emotional/psychological abuse, or neglect (including a failure to report to authorities).

2. NATURE OF CLAIMS

Claims that the Brigidine Congregation may refer to the BSRGA may be received in different ways, and there are varying procedures and frameworks in which the Congregation is required to respond to a claim.

Some of the more common frameworks/processes are: Towards Healing; REDRESS; Civil Litigation; request for information by government authority; direct contact by a person affected by abuse.

3. PRINCIPLES/VALUES

The management of all matters are reflective of the Safeguarding Commitment Statement of the Brigidine Southern Cross Community and are to be aligned with the following principles:

- Paramount interests of a child or other adults at risk are upheld

- Support, compassion, and respect is afforded to the alleged victim of abuse – including the opportunity to be heard and acknowledgement of abuse
- Dignity of the individual complainant by recognising that each claim is an individual matter on its own merits
- Fair procedures and support afforded to a person subject of a claim – including responding without reasonable delay
- Compliance to civil and canon laws
- Pastoral and compensation responses consistent with contemporary expectations and civil laws
- Pastoral responsiveness, where requested.

4. AUTHORITY

The Brigidine CLT retain full responsibility and authority for the decisions and outcomes for every claim, which includes ensuring provision of pastoral responses to victims and support for the accused as required.

The Leader of the Brigidine Southern Cross Community has delegated authority from the CLT to manage financial and legal matters for the community, to provide information as required and to put in place pastoral responses as needed.

Members of the BSRGA support the Congregation by providing guidance, advice and support in managing the relevant procedures for a claim and may present the Congregation with relevant information so that the Congregation may make an informed decision in response to a claim. This may include tasks such as arranging searches for records, gathering information, meeting or liaising with stakeholders, and/or preparing a briefing or report for the Congregation.

This protocol guides BSRGA members on managing this process within the functions under its Terms of Reference. Nothing within this protocol authorises a member to act outside the BSRGA Terms of Reference. BSRGA members have no delegated authority to act in legal or financial matters for the Congregation (within their role as BSRGA members).

NOTE: A BSRGA religious member who identifies a potential conflict of interest in a matter referred to the Group, due to their other responsibilities within the religious Congregation, will remove themselves from BSRGA involvement in that matter.

5. REVIEW

This protocol to be reviewed by the CLT.
Review date: October 2026.