

Professional Development Program 2025

DIOCESAN LEADERSHIP MID YEAR-UPDATE 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

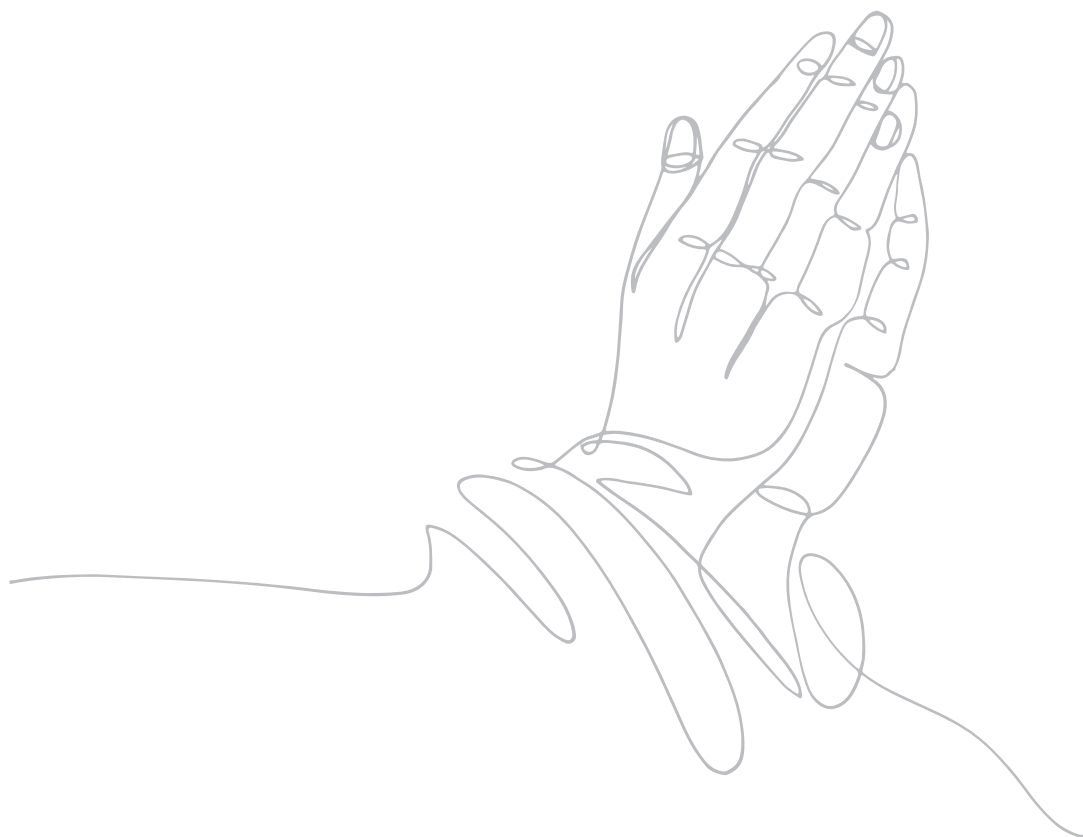
We begin by acknowledging the Country upon which we call the home of the Diocese of Wollongong. We honour the Traditional Custodians of this land—the Dharawal, Gundungurra and Yuin nations—who have, over millennia, cared for and worked in harmony with our common home. We pay our respects to Elders past,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

As we pray and discern what the future holds for the local Church of the Diocese of Wollongong, may we walk gently and thoughtfully on this Country, extending respect to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers whose connection with this land, and each other, can teach us so much.

We reiterate what St John Paul II said to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

“You are part of Australia and Australia is part of you. And the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.”

We recommit ourselves to this mission of listening, inclusion, and unity.



Program Information

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the 2025 Professional Development Program for Diocesan Leadership. We are currently at the halfway mark for the year, and understand how busy everyone's calendars can be, therefore we have summarised the remaining courses for 2025 in the calendar below. We hope you will find the courses 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 every calendar year. There are a range of workshops available, some repeated due to popular demand and some new topics. 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 workshop specific information, such as changes to the method of delivery or location of the session. For the remote modules you will also receive an email with the Zoom link. Once you receive the Zoom link, we respectfully ask that you do not provide the link to anyone else.

To register, go to the **Diocesan Leadership Professional Development Program Registration** page and fill out the online form: dow.sh/OPSS_LPDP. Registration will close one week before the start of each program, or when a workshop reaches capacity, whichever comes first. If you are unable to attend a workshop, please inform the Office of Professional Standards and Safeguarding (OPSS) at training@dow.org.au since there is a limited capacity for each session and your registration can be transferred to another person if you are unable to attend.

If you have any difficulties in filling out the form, please contact the OPSS at training@dow.org.au, or telephone us on (02) 4222 2431.

HOW TO APPLY FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

The professional development opportunities in this program are opportunities provided by the Diocese to help you in fulfilling the professional development requirement linked with your role's leadership position. However, it should be noted that there are several external professional development courses available that will also fulfill the criteria for recognition for prior professional development. As a result, if you attend a workshop delivered by an external provider that addresses subjects related to safeguarding and professional standards, you may be eligible for credit points for your participation in the external course.

You will need to go to the website dow.sh/OPSS_LPDP and click on the appropriate link to access the online application form for **recognition and credit for prior professional development**. Recognition for prior learning is assessed based on relevance of professional development to the Child Safe Standards and National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

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 28 November 2025.

If you need help applying for credit, please contact the OPSS at training@dow.org.au.

WHO IS A DIOCESAN LEADER?

The following roles have been deemed to be Diocesan leaders for the purpose of the Diocesan Leadership Professional Development Program:

PASTORAL SECTOR
Bishop, Vicar General, All diocesan and religious clergy ministering in the diocese as a parish priest, administrator, as-sistant priest, deacon, chaplain, or in carrying out regular supply work and all religious appointed to carry out work in in-stitutions of the Diocese of Wollongong.
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
Chief Operations Manager, Directors, Coordinators and all staff.
CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENT FUND
General Manager and team
CATHOLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF WOLLONGONG
Director of schools, leadership team, heads of departments, child protection team, team leaders, principals and assis-tant principals. In addition, any staff who are selected by the leadership team are required to attend.
CATHOLICCARE WOLLONGONG
Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer and leadership team. In addition, any staff who are selected by the leadership team are required to attend.
PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:
The Bishop and/or Vicar General can also elect to require other persons to attend.
Managers of the Office of the Bishop can elect to require any casuals that they manage to attend.
Principals can also select persons that are required to attend or members of their leadership.
Heads of service can also select persons that are required to attend or members of their leadership team.

2025 Workshop Calendar

F2F = face to face

DATE	TIME	WORKSHOP	PRESENTER	LOCATION	UNITS
Wednesday 23 July 2025	10:30am–2:00pm	BOOKED OUT Working with vulnerable people - Disability	Cassandra Hayden	Zoom	5 units
Wednesday 13 August 2025	10:30am–2:00pm	NEW SESSION Privacy & Confidentiality	Alex Kohn	Zoom	5 units
Wednesday 27 August 2025	10:30am–2:00pm	BOOKED OUT Keeping Yourself Safe - Professional Boundaries with Children and Colleagues	Halloran & Morriessey	Zoom	5 Units
Thursday 11 September 2025	10:30am–2:00pm	BOOKED OUT Conflict Resolution	Anna Tydd	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	5 units
Wednesday 24 September 2025	9:30am–4:30pm	BOOKED OUT Mental Health First Aid	Rebecca John	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	10 units
Tuesday 14 October 2025	1:00pm–4:30pm	NEW SESSION Hazard Management & Risk Assessment	Cassandra Hayden	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	5 units
Tuesday 21 October 2025	1:00pm–4:30pm	Hearing the Voice of the Child when there are issues of safety	Rita Maher & Hannah Watters	F2F Xavier Centre Conference Rooms	5 units
Thursday 6 November 2025	1:00pm–4:30pm	BOOKED OUT Creating Child Safe Organisations - NAPCAN	Merrin Sulovski	Zoom	5 units
Thursday 13 November 2025	9:30am–4:30pm	BOOKED OUT Trauma Responsive Leadership - Self as a Leader	Rose Mackey		10 units

COURSES THAT ARE BOOKED OUT

As you can see, there are a number of professional development courses which are at capacity. In order to accommodate those who may have missed out, we are offering two additional repeat workshops: **Hazard Management & Risk Assessment (F2F)** and **Privacy & Confidentiality (Zoom)**, from earlier in the year.

To register for any of the remaining workshops, go to the “Diocesan Leadership Professional Development Program Registration” page and fill out the online form: dow.sh/OPSS_LPDP.

WAITLIST

Should you wish to be placed on the cancellation list for any of the listed courses, please email the OPSS team at training@dow.org.au.

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

Working With Vulnerable People—Disability

Date: Wednesday, 23rd 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.

Privacy & Confidentiality

Date: Wednesday, 13th August 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 inform participants about the various confidentiality requirements and the importance of adhering to these requirements. This workshop will further develop an understanding of the risks associated with a failure to maintain privacy and confidentiality across numerous platforms which may threaten vulnerable members of our community.

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, 11th 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, 24th 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.

Hazard Management and Risk Assessment

Date: Tuesday, 14th October 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.

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

Date: Tuesday, 21st October 2025
Time: 1:00pm–4:30pm
Mode: F2F
Presenter: Rita Maher & Hannah Watters

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, 6th 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, 13th November 2025
Time: 9:30am–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

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

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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.

Halloran Morrissey Group

Halloran Morrissey Group

Safeguarding Specialists

Halloran Morrissey Group provides professional learning to organisations that have responsibilities for children and young people.

Their team has extensive experience providing specialist child protection and safeguarding advice to organisations. They are particularly interested in assisting organisations in strengthening their safeguarding culture and developing the capacity to confidently prevent and manage all aspects of safeguarding within the organisation.

They are experienced presenters and facilitators who develop and deliver a range of professional learning courses, including child protection, risk management, professional boundaries and investigations.

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.

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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.

Rita Maher

CatholicCare Wollongong

Senior Practitioner

Rita is a Senior Practitioner with the Student, School, and Family Program at CatholicCare Wollongong. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Counselling and a Graduate Certificate in Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

Rita has played a key role in the development of several flagship initiatives, including Kindy Kids Connect, Keeping Kids Connected, and Building Up Resilience. She is a strong advocate for early, proactive interventions that centre the voice of the child and promote a balanced, strengths-based approach to mental health and wellbeing in school communities.

Hannah Watters

CatholicCare Wollongong

Counsellor

Hannah is a dedicated school counsellor in the Macarthur region, holding qualifications in Social Work and a Graduate Diploma in Pastoral Counselling. She brings extensive experience supporting children, adolescents, and families through her roles as a Child and Family Counsellor,

Paediatric Counsellor at Greenacre Area Community Centre and Vision Australia, and currently as a school counsellor with CatholicCare Wollongong.

Hannah's therapeutic approach is grounded in neurodiversity-affirming practice and a deep commitment to amplifying the voices of children. Guided by a strong pastoral framework, she upholds dignity, empathy, and inclusion as the foundation of her work.

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.





CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
WOLLONGONG

**OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL
STANDARDS AND SAFEGUARDING**

02 4222 2431
training@dow.org.au