



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE  
OF MELBOURNE

# Safeguarding Information Session

## St Kevin's Parish – Hampton Park

Presented by:  
Tamara Cugnetto  
Safeguarding Unit





# Prayer

*to the safety, wellbeing and human dignity of children, young people and adults.*



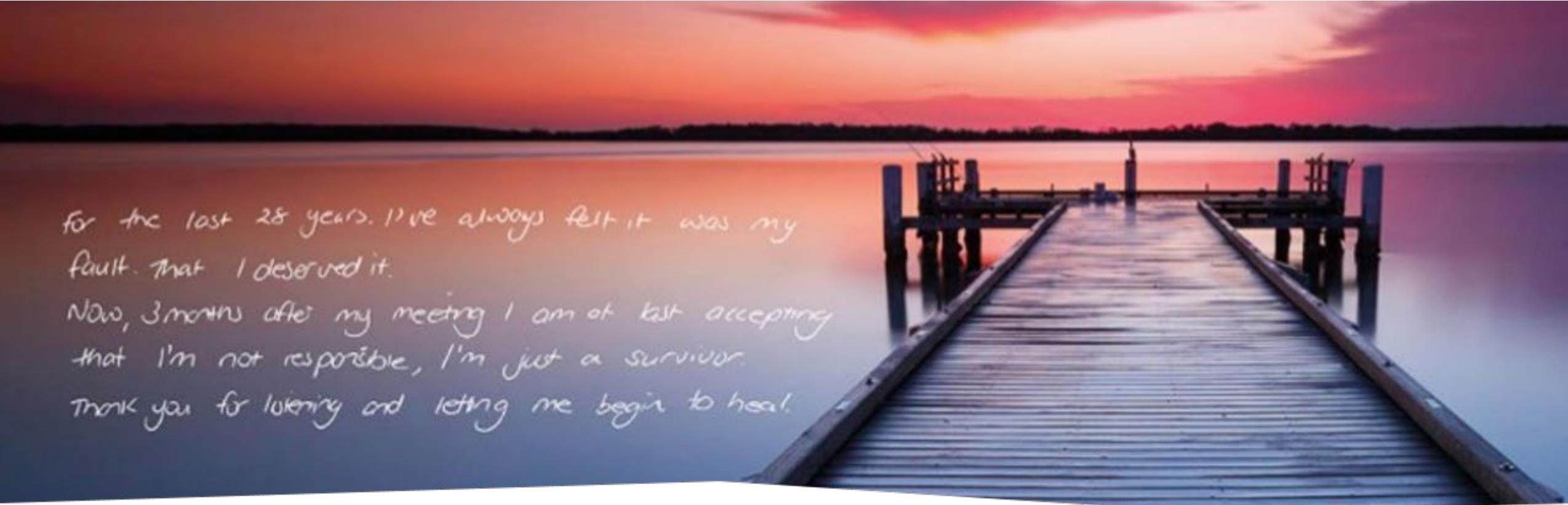
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# Acknowledgement of Country

*The Archdiocese is committed to the safety, wellbeing and human dignity of children, young people and adults.*



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For the last 28 years, I've always felt it was my fault. That I deserved it.

Now, 3 months after my meeting I am at last accepting that I'm not responsible, I'm just a survivor.

Thank you for listening and letting me begin to heal.



## Acknowledgement of survivors and victims

*No words of apology – while always needed – will ever be enough to right the evil done to those who have been abused, and those who were not listened to and believed. Efforts to repair the harm done – while entirely necessary – cannot overcome the evil perpetrated upon innocent children and vulnerable adults, and the harm experienced by families and communities.*

Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli

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# Self Care

**Employee Assistance Program**

1800 81 87 28

**Parish priest**

**Family and friends**

**GP for referral to counselling**

**Centre Against Sexual Assault**

9635 3610

**Lifeline 13 11 14**



# The role of the Safeguarding Unit

Safeguarding Unit  
(Previously known  
as the Professional  
Standards Unit)  
was established in  
2018.



## Preventative

- Provides advice
- Supports the parishes
- Policy development and review
- Develop resources and provides training

## Reporting

- Liaises with Pathways Victoria
- Ensure that the appropriate statutory authorities are reported to and informed
- Record and monitor reports, complaints and allegations.



*“We all have the duty to do everything possible to ensure that children grow up in a healthy environment.*

*Safeguarding children is an act of love and mercy, a moral obligation that falls upon everyone, particularly those responsible for the welfare and protection of minors.”*

Pope Francis, Address to the International Catholic Child Bureau,  
April 11, 2019



Image source: Melbourne Catholic, 26 July 2023



# Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

*Our young people are our present and our future.*

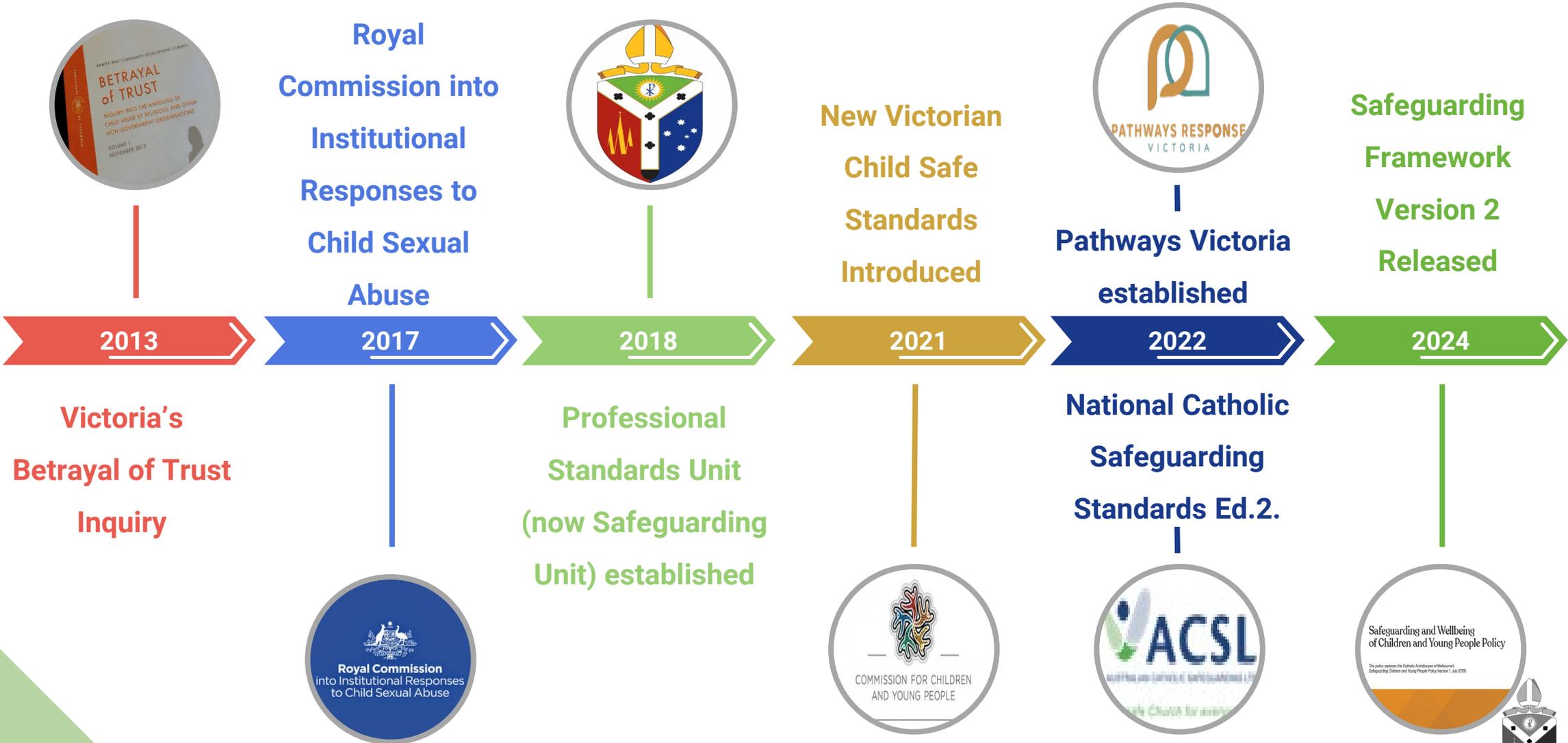
*How we value them today will nurture a generation confident in the knowledge that each individual person matters and is cared for, and will prepare them to carry this legacy forward for their own children and beyond.*

*May our commitment today, as followers of Christ, be the shared responsibility that celebrates, empowers and protects our young people always.*

**Most Rev Peter A Comensoli**  
Archbishop of Melbourne



# History of Safeguarding



The Archdiocese is committed to the safety, wellbeing and human dignity of children, young people and adults.



**What makes someone  
vulnerable?**

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# Factors that may increase vulnerability

- Socially isolated
- Physically weak
- Cultural differences
- Survivor of abuse
- Dependency
- Gender
- Religious beliefs
- Age
- Disability
- Gender diversity
- Power imbalances
- Living in out of home care
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background
- A culturally diverse and/or linguistically diverse background e.g. being a refugee or newly arrived in Australia
- Physical or mental health conditions
- Poverty or financial hardship
- Drug or alcohol dependency
- Disasters



## Children and Young People

Definition of '*a child*' and 'a young person':

- Under the Victorian, *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, a child or young person is defined as anyone who is under the age of 18 years.
- Within the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework, a child or young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.
- Children are inherently vulnerable to abuse, and some face increased risks due to personal, cultural, or situational factors.

## Adults at risk

Vulnerable adults are persons over the age of 18 years who may also be susceptible to abuse or exploitation. Adults at risk include, but are not limited to those who are:

- Elderly
- Have a disability
- Suffer from mental illness
- Have diminished mental capacity
- Have a cognitive impairment
- Are experiencing difficulties such as bereavement or relationship breakdown (or other adversity such as disasters)
- Have any other impairment that makes it difficult for that person to protect themselves from abuse or exploitation



# Defining Child Abuse

**Abuse is an act(s) or failure to act which endangers a child's health, well being and/or development.**

- It can be a single event or a series of traumatic events.
- Child abuse can have immediate and life-long impacts.



# Types of abuse

## Emotional/ Psychological Abuse

- e.g. Bullying, shaming, threatening language, intentional ignoring and isolating

## Physical Abuse

- e.g. Physical punishment, pushing, hitting, shoving, slapping etc.

## Grooming

- e.g. Predatory behaviour with the intention of engaging a child in sexual activity. May occur in person, or virtually via mobile phones or social media

## Sexual Abuse

- e.g. When a person uses their power or authority to involve or expose a child to sexual activity. Can occur in person or online, and be perpetrated in a family, organisational or community context

## Neglect

- e.g. Failure to provide a child or young person with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, education, shelter or supervision

## Spiritual Abuse

- e.g. The use of spiritual or religious beliefs and practices to control and dominate a person

## Bullying

- e.g. A person or a group of people, repeatedly use words or actions to harass someone in person or online (cyber bullying)

## Family Violence

- e.g. A pattern of abusive behaviour which may involve physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect within a family context.





## Some signs and indicators of abuse in children

Withdrawn, avoidant, anxious, fearful when previously happy

Inappropriate displays of sexualised behaviour

Change in behaviour

Lack of food/shelter medication/lack of parental care

Bruises, burns, inappropriate clothing for weather



# Where does abuse occur?



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# The Australian Childhood Maltreatment Study (2023)

*Before they turn 18*

More than

**1 in 3**

girls experienced  
child sexual abuse

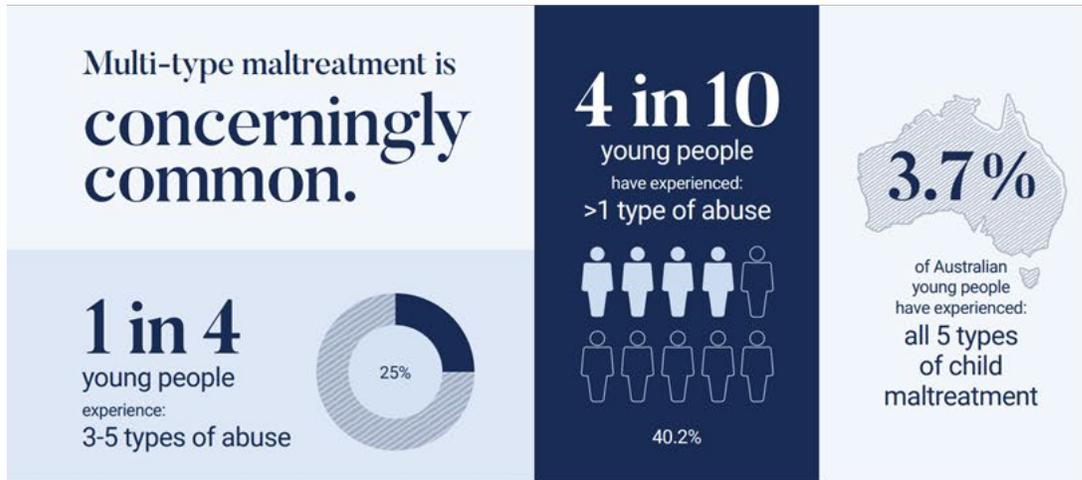


**1 in 7**

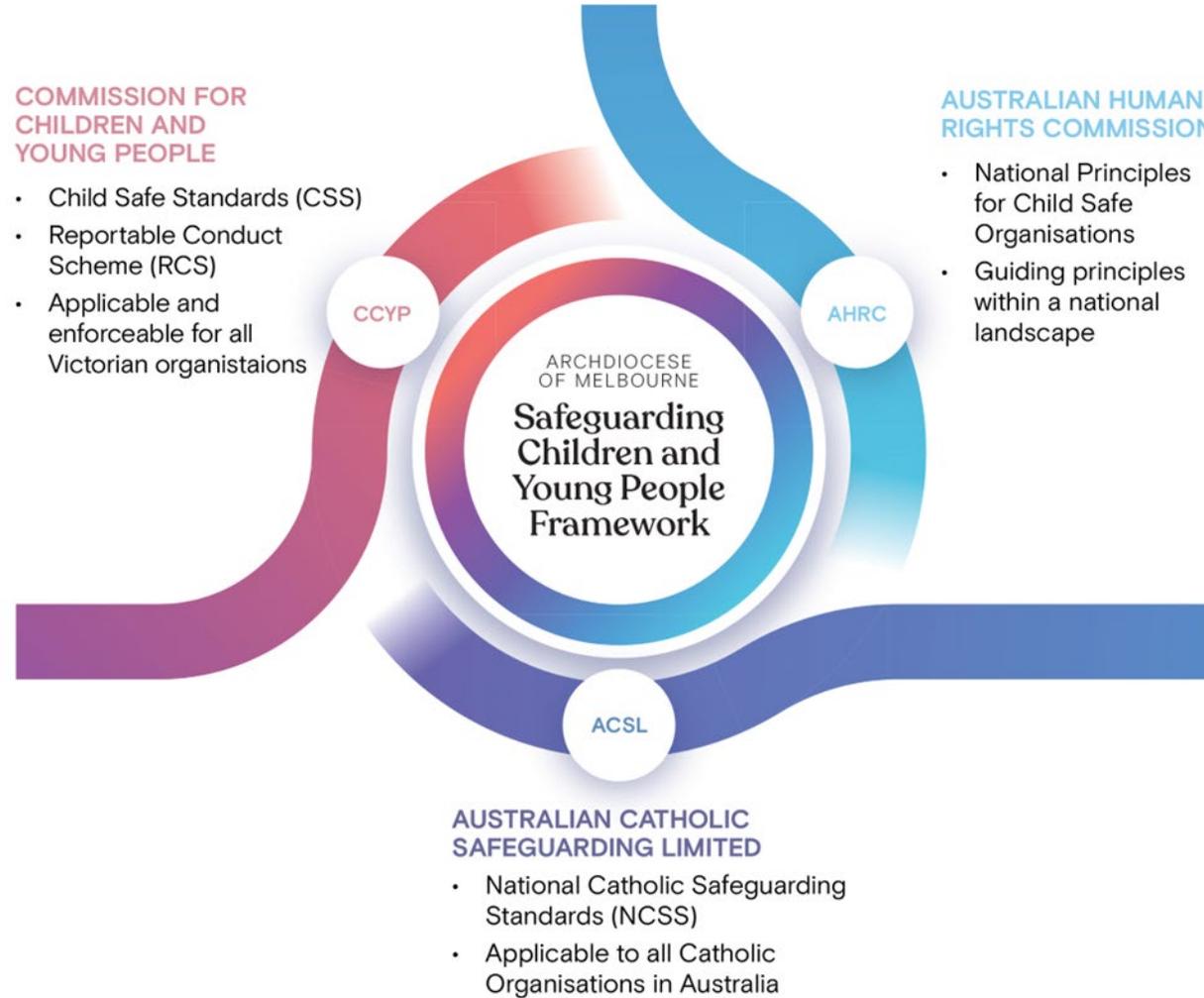
boys experienced  
child sexual abuse



# The Australian Childhood Maltreatment Study (2023)



# Organisational Safeguarding Frameworks



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Capability area	NCSS standard
<p><b>1</b> Leadership, monitoring and improvement </p>	<p><b>Standard 1</b> Committed leadership, governance and culture</p> <p><b>Standard 9</b> Continuous improvement</p>
<p><b>2</b> Engaging with children, adults, families and communities </p>	<p><b>Standard 2</b> Children and adults are safe, informed and participate</p> <p><b>Standard 3</b> Partnering with families, carers and communities</p> <p><b>Standard 4</b> Equity is promoted and diversity is respected</p>
<p><b>3</b> Right people, right role, right knowledge </p>	<p><b>Standard 5</b> Robust human resource management</p> <p><b>Standard 7</b> Ongoing education and training</p>
<p><b>4</b> Systems, policies and procedures </p>	<p><b>Standard 6</b> Effective complaints management</p> <p><b>Standard 8</b> Safe physical and online environments</p> <p><b>Standard 10</b> Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults</p>

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Sports Clubs  
CATECHESIS



Sacramental Programs



Youth Ministries

Altar Servers

Events



Choir

Children's Liturgy



Family Groups

# What does this mean for me?

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# Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## Antidiscrimination and Racism Policy

This document should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy (SWCYP Policy).

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## Reporting Procedure

This document should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy (SWCYP Policy).  
This document replaces the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and 'Reporting child safety related misconduct and/or abuse child abuse' information sheet (version 1, July 2019)

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## Record Keeping Policy

This document should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy (SWCYP Policy).

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## Code of Conduct

This document should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy (SWCYP Policy).  
This document replaces the *May Our Children Flourish Child Safety Code of Conduct for Caring for Children, and the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* (version 2, November 2021).

## Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy

This policy replaces the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (version 1, July 2019)

OPTION ONE

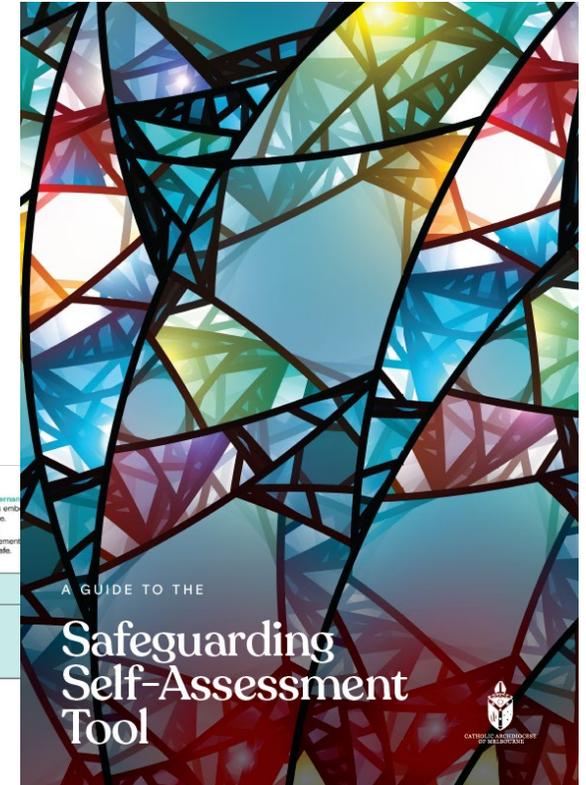


### CAPABILITY AREA 1 Leadership, monitoring and improvement

Standard 1 – Committed leadership, governance  
The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the leadership, governance and culture.  
Standard 9 – Continuous improvement  
Entities regularly review and improve implementation systems for keeping children and adults safe.

#### COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT SCALE

Self-Assessment Tool Indicator	Developmental Stages				Evidence What is already in place?
	Yet to develop	Developing	Developed	Developed and embedded	
11 The parish, agency or entity have endorsed the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy and Framework, which is publicly available and reflects an understanding and identification of diverse circumstances and experiences that increase a child or young person's vulnerability to abuse. (VCIS 21, NCIS 11)					
12 The parish, agency or entity have endorsed the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's Commitment to the Safety of Children and Young People which is publicly available and displayed. (VCIS 21, NCIS 11)					

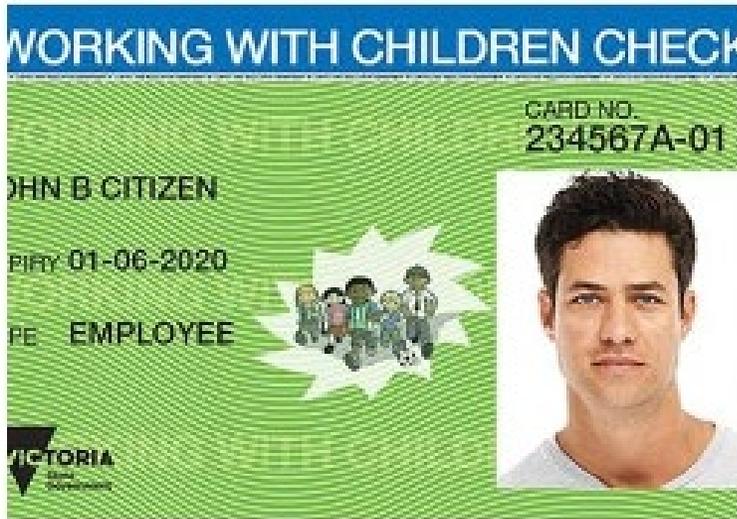


# What do I need?

- ✓ Working with Children (WWC) check
- ✓ Safeguarding Children and Young People (SCYP) Code of Conduct
- ✓ Safeguarding Essentials training
- ✓ Police check



# Importance of a WWC check



- Legislative requirement for those engaging with children and young people in their roles
- Archdiocesan requirement of **all** volunteers
- Cost is free for volunteers
- Position of trust
- Parish is available to assist to complete



# National Police Checks

- Roles which work directly with children (understanding that some offences do not prohibit obtaining a WWC check)
- Roles involving management and oversight of people and/or the entity's resources
- Roles which represent the entity with external bodies and groups even when there are no child related activities occurring. For example:
  - home visits
  - visits to community support agencies (e.g. disability support centres)
  - visiting special care facilities (e.g. refuges, hospitals, aged care facilities)
- Roles which have access to facilities after hours or without formal supervision.
- Roles which have financial responsibility and handle money e.g. records and/or financial management with access to personal information about families, children and young people (e.g. name, address, date of birth, family circumstances)
- A member of a board, council or committee e.g. parish finance council, pastoral council
- Roles involving the transportation/driving of adults and children
- Roles involving overnight stays (e.g. camps, interstate or overseas trips)



# Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct

- Helps to create a positive, respectful and safe environment by setting expectations in relation to the appropriate behaviour of all Church personnel in their interactions with children and young people
- All volunteers must read, understand and agree to abide by the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct
- Signed every 3 years
- Can be completed online or hard copy

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## Code of Conduct

This document should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy (SWCYP Policy).

This document replaces the *May Our Children Flourish Child Safety Code of Conduct for Caring for Children*, and the *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* (version 2, November 2021).



# Safeguarding Essentials training

- Can be completed online
- Completion records to be shared by the individual to the parish
- Parish may choose to conduct offline training sessions
- Code of Conduct can be signed online in the same training portal
- To be renewed by volunteers every 3 years



# So, what does this mean in practice?

Requirements for **ALL** volunteers regardless of position

- Working with Children's Check clearance
- Signed Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Essentials Training

## Parish requirements

- Risk assessments for programs
- Registration forms
- Hire agreements
- Screening volunteers
- Self-Assessment Tool etc.



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# Safeguarding Committee Roles

- Promote the importance of child safety
- Communicate information in relation to child safety within the parish
- Monitor ongoing compliance
- Support the parish in adhering requirements
- Coordinate the parishes Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool
- Engage in and/or review risk management process



# Safeguarding in children and youth in our parish



- Your parish is planning a pilgrimage to ACYF
- During children's liturgy a child who needs to go to the toilet is escorted by a volunteer.
- The Sacramental Program volunteer is taking photos of a First Holy Communion celebration.
- Altar Servers are being dropped off for Mass unaccompanied by a parent.
- After a youth group session, a younger member is driven home by an older leader.
- A young person confides that they are experiencing unwanted contact online from a fellow youth group participant.
- During recent catechist lessons, you have observed behavioural changes in a participant that is leading you to believe, that she may be the victim of family violence.
- An adult choir member has discussions with a youth participant that is of a sexual nature.



# When to make a report

Reporting child abuse requires a person to make a report if they have formed a reasonable belief that a child or young person has suffered or likely to suffer significant harm and is in need of protection.

- A child or young person refers to a person under the age of 18.
- A reasonable belief means holding a belief that is likely be held by an ordinary person in the same circumstances.
- You are **not** required to have “evidence” or “proof”.



# Forming reasonable belief

A reasonable belief may be formed by one or more of the following:

- child or young person (or other person) discloses abuse
- observing one or more physical and/or behavioural indicators of abuse e.g. bruises, fear, distress
- witnessing behaviour that suggests that a child or young person is being harmed or at risk of abuse
- a complaint or allegation is made about behaviour that compromises the safety, health and wellbeing of a child or young person
- a perpetrator discloses that they are harming a child
- if a child demonstrates inappropriate sexualised behaviour.



## Myths about reporting

*They are a respected person in the Parish*

*What if I'm wrong?*

**They will know it was me**

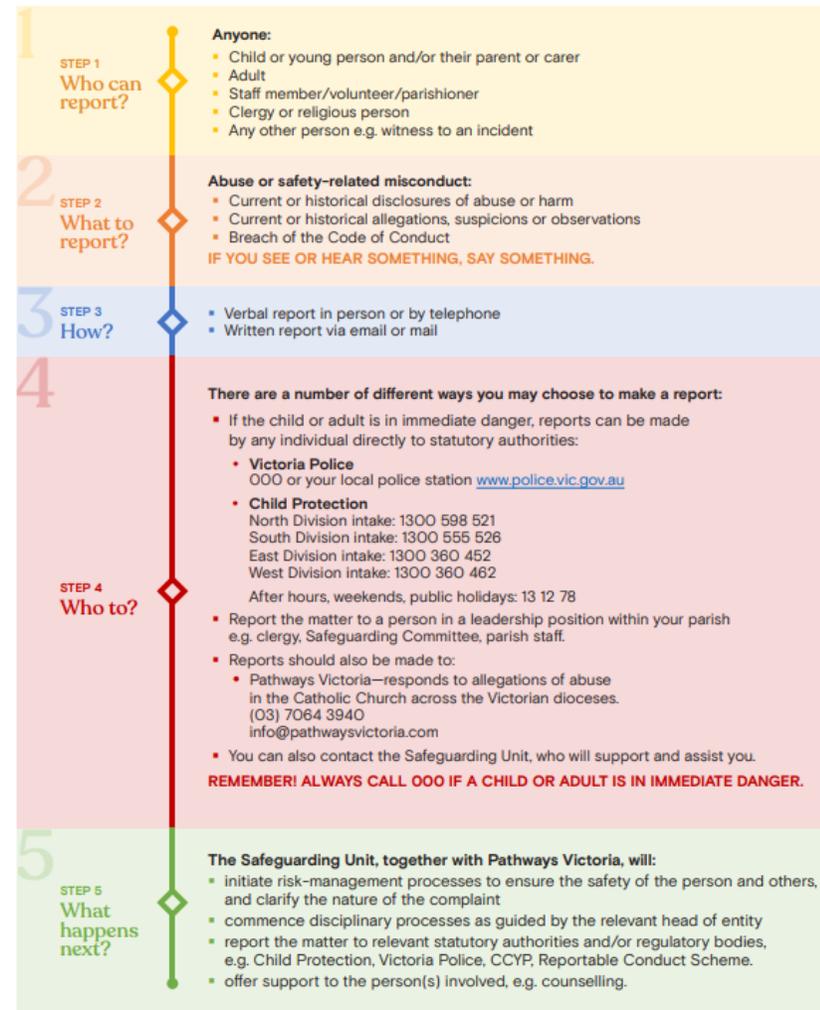
*It's none of my business*

Child protection will take their children away if I make a report



# Reporting abuse or misconduct

## REPORTING ABUSE OR SAFETY-RELATED MISCONDUCT



This flowchart is adapted from the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Victoria, Flowchart: Child Safety Reporting Process & from the National Office for Child Safety, Australian Government, Flowchart: Child Safety Reporting Process Within an Organisation.

**SAFEGUARDING UNIT**  
9926 5621  
[safeguardingunit@cam.org.au](mailto:safeguardingunit@cam.org.au)



**Resource: Safeguarding Children and Young People Reporting Procedure**  
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# Reporting abuse or misconduct

## REPORTING ABUSE OR SAFETY-RELATED MISCONDUCT

**1**

**STEP 1**  
**Who can report?**

**Anyone:**

- Child or young person and/or their parent or carer
- Adult
- Staff member/volunteer/parishioner
- Clergy or religious person
- Any other person e.g. witness to an incident

Resource: Safeguarding Children and Young People Reporting Procedure

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# Reporting abuse or misconduct

2

STEP 2

What to report?

## Abuse or safety-related misconduct:

- Current or historical disclosures of abuse or harm
- Current or historical allegations, suspicions or observations
- Breach of the Code of Conduct

**IF YOU SEE OR HEAR SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.**

Resource: Safeguarding Children and Young People Reporting Procedure

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# Reporting abuse or misconduct

## 3 STEP 3 How?



- Verbal report in person or by telephone
- Written report via email or mail

Resource: Safeguarding Children and Young People Reporting Procedure

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# Reporting abuse or misconduct

4

STEP 4  
Who to?

There are a number of different ways you may choose to make a report:

- If the child or adult is in immediate danger, reports can be made by any individual directly to statutory authorities:
  - **Victoria Police**  
000 or your local police station [www.police.vic.gov.au](http://www.police.vic.gov.au)
  - **Child Protection**  
North Division intake: 1300 598 521  
South Division intake: 1300 555 526  
East Division intake: 1300 360 452  
West Division intake: 1300 360 462  
  
After hours, weekends, public holidays: 13 12 78
- Report the matter to a person in a leadership position within your parish e.g. clergy, Safeguarding Committee, parish staff.
- Reports should also be made to:
  - Pathways Victoria—responds to allegations of abuse in the Catholic Church across the Victorian dioceses.  
(03) 7064 3940  
[info@pathwaysvictoria.com](mailto:info@pathwaysvictoria.com)
- You can also contact the Safeguarding Unit, who will support and assist you.

**REMEMBER! ALWAYS CALL 000 IF A CHILD OR ADULT IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER.**

Resource: Safeguarding Children and Young People Reporting Procedure

Child safety related misconduct and/or child abuse report form

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# Reporting abuse or misconduct

5

STEP 5  
What happens next?

**The Safeguarding Unit, together with Pathways Victoria, will:**

- initiate risk-management processes to ensure the safety of the person and others, and clarify the nature of the complaint
- commence disciplinary processes as guided by the relevant head of entity
- report the matter to relevant statutory authorities and/or regulatory bodies, e.g. Child Protection, Victoria Police, CCYP, Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- offer support to the person(s) involved, e.g. counselling.

Resource: Safeguarding Children and Young People Reporting Procedure

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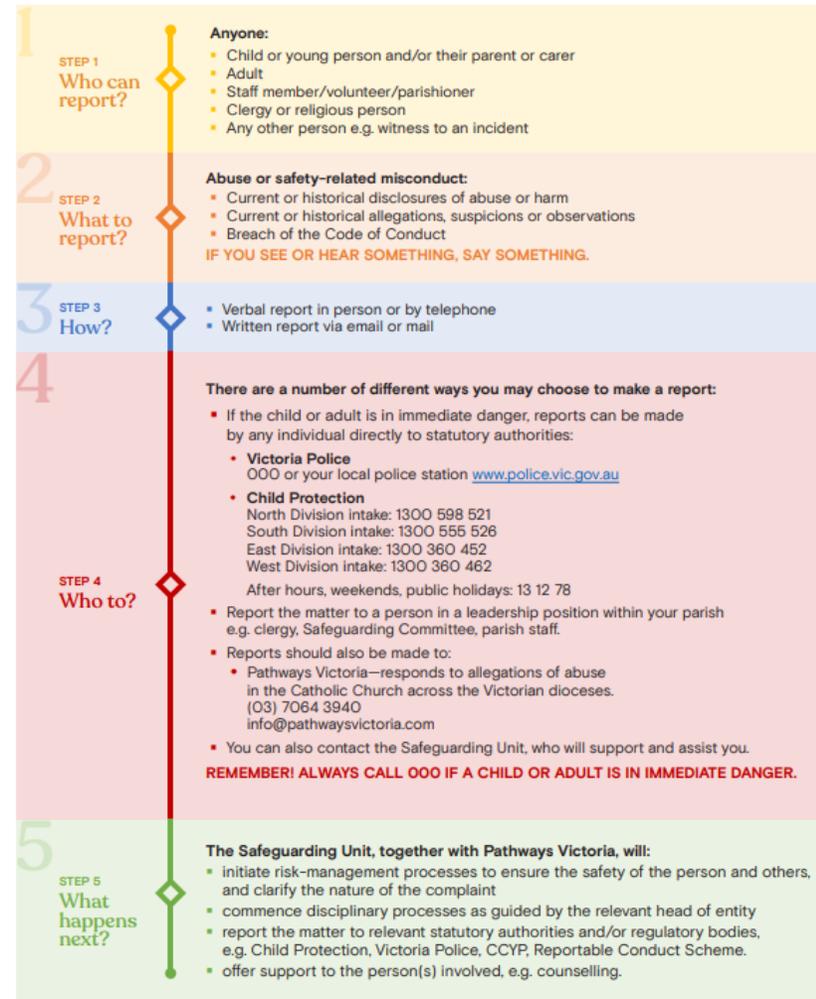
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# Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility



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# Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

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# The Safeguarding Unit



Safeguarding Unit  
Email: [safeguardingunit@cam.org.au](mailto:safeguardingunit@cam.org.au)  
Phone: 9926 5621

[Melbournecatholic.org/safeguarding](https://Melbournecatholic.org/safeguarding)

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## Safeguarding Director

Rachel Averbukh

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