



Summary of NATIONAL COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

OCTOBER 2023



National Council met on 7 October 2023 via videoconference. Below is a summary of matters discussed.

CONGRESS 2023+

National Council was provided with an update which included production of Work Book Two. The National Council supports the proposed outcomes of Congress 2023+. The Work Book will be forwarded to Congress delegates and those involved in the Listening Forums.

SAFEGUARDING

National Council has conducted self-assessment against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). The National Council Secretariate (NCS) is working through elements to be addressed before National Council could put itself forward for an audit. Based on this audit, it is likely an amount of work will be required by jurisdictions, and their corporate bodies, to reference the NCSS in relevant existing organisational policies and procedures.

National Council discussed the concept of a Professional Standards Office (PSO) including how it interacts with the integration of civil requirements, of The Rule and the NCSS. An important role of a Society PSO will be to act as a conduit between Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd and the Society.

Members, including all Council Presidents, agreed there was a preference to move to a single Code of Conduct across the Society in Australia. However, it was noted an attempt in 2019-20 to move to a single Code was not successful due to a lack of support to implement across the jurisdictions.

ADVOCACY AND THE CHAIN OF COMMUNICATION

The Society's participation at the table of Commonwealth Departmental Secretaries to address entrenched, locational intergenerational disadvantage is a sign the Society has a presence at Australia's highest public policy forum. The information relayed by Society Members about the living conditions of Companions highlights the power local voices bring to the Society's advocacy work.

The National President highlighted National Council's media performance and recent editorial articles.

NATIONAL COUNCIL WEBSITE – TRACKING INITIATIVE

National Council was briefed on a proposal to engage an external supplier to 'track' user journeys across the new website. This initiative is one element of a continuous improvement approach to ensure the website delivers the required outcomes for all internal parties.

National Council requested the NCS manage the introduction of the external computer coding required to be inserted into the website software and to monitor potential threats to the website's integrity. NCS will manage the website tracking project on behalf of, and in consultation with, the entities that have been allocated a Spoke on the website. The NCS will develop an Expression of Interest (EOI) to appoint a company to conduct the tracking work.

BRAND & COPYRIGHT PROJECT - INTERIM DELEGATIONS

This project is concerned only with those brands (marks) that sit under the auspice of National Council as the stewards of the Society brand.; i.e. 'national marks'. There is no intention of including marks State or Territory Councils have in place where these do not include any component of the national mark.

National Council seeks to hand these State/Territory Council marks to the respective State/Territory Councils via a sub-licence approach.

As this project is not likely to be complete in the short term, Council Presidents determined that National Council give an interim delegation around the use of national marks to State and Territory Council Presidents with an option for Council Presidents to inform National Council to delegate an authority to Council/company CEOs to use national marks with any conditions identified by Councils.

NATIONAL COUNCIL STYLE GUIDE

The current Style Guide outlines the various dynamics and criteria surrounding each of the Society's marks and how these must be reproduced. National Council agrees its 2017 Style Guide, and the more recent Digital Style Guide, are in need of review and updating.

Other related matters include National Council agreement to change the title from 'Style Guide' to 'Society Style Manual' to reinforce at operational levels that the styles contained in the Manual are to be adhered to; that as the steward of the Society brand in Australia it is responsible for the Manual; and, the revised Manual is to be adopted at a joint meeting with Society CEOs.

The style review will work closely with the Brand Stewardship Standing Committee and National Council will establish a consultative project panel, supported by NCS.

The NCS will consult with stakeholders and prepare an EOI before going to market. There was support for a suggestion that brand operational guidelines for Society employees be prepared by Society CEOs.

OVERSEAS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM & TRAVEL RISK MANAGEMENT

National Council was briefed on the Overseas Partnership Advisory Committee and the Overseas Partnerships Program. National Council endorsed the governance framework for the Society of St Vincent de Paul Oceania Program and will seek the endorsement of the National Council of New Zealand before approaching Oceania National Councils for approval of the governance arrangements.

National Council agreed to re-establish the transfer of funds to Myanmar. It endorsed the transfer of the National Council of Sri Lanka's seven Twins projects, and Assist a Student, to the National Council of New Zealand. It endorsed the establishing of Working Groups for PNG and Timor Leste.

National Council agreed to an additional package of insurance offerings to support Society Members and employees who undertake travel in the Society of St Vincent de Paul Oceania Program.