

## Pathways / Safeguarding Unit at Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

### Webinar Questions and Responses

8 March 2023

#### **How successful is this program, and how many access it in Victoria?**

The feedback in this early stage has been largely positive, noting that Pathways is still within its early operations. As we navigate the framework from ground level, feedback is incredibly important in continuing to shape the model.

In addition, at the conclusion of Step 3F, victim-survivors are invited to participate in an evaluation survey.

In terms of how many access the program, since commencing operations in 2022 and as of 1 February 2023, Pathways has provided victim-survivor support, assistance, and/or case investigation to 47 enquiries.

We have listened to and explored feedback provided throughout our community consultation process. We have worked to understand better how the Pathways model applies and operates from the perspective of a person who has experienced abuse. We have tested criticisms and perceptions, identifying reforms in the second iteration of the model that addressed concerns and aims to improve victim-survivors experience in disclosing abuse through Pathways.

#### **Why are family members of the abused not eligible for counselling or compensation? They sometimes have PTSD-like symptoms.**

Pathways acknowledges that secondary victims- survivors of institutionalised abuse can be significantly impacted. An immediate family member of a victim-survivor participating in the model is eligible for therapeutic support through Pathways.

However, unfortunately, at this stage, the Pathways model is directed to 'primary' victim-survivors only. This is not meant to minimise the experience of secondary victim-survivors, but we have to acknowledge that the model has some boundaries.

### **What if my parish is run by a religious order, are we still covered by Pathways?**

This is a complex question and mainly depends on the governing structure of the parish. For example, suppose the church authority that operates the parish is a religious order, and the organisational structure makes the religious order the 'head of entity'. In that case, the responsibility lies with the religious order, and at this stage, no religious orders have signed up to the Pathways model.

### **Who wears the cost of the investigation?**

Pathways is fully funded by the participating members.

For Reportable Conduct Scheme investigations referred to Pathways, the relevant church authority, so the Diocese, pays for the cost associated with these investigations.

### **I am a parishioner. Can I make a report directly to Pathways Victoria?**

Yes, you absolutely can. However, if the report involves criminal allegations, Pathways would strongly encourage you to report to the police in the first instance.

### **Does Pathways Victoria deal with NRS cases?**

At this stage, victim-survivors who have successful redress outcomes through the NRS are not eligible to participate in the Pathways program.

If the individual remains in the process of their NRS application and have not accepted an outcome yet, then they can, if they choose to, 'swap' to Pathways. Pathways would strongly encourage those considering this to obtain legal advice. [KnowMore](#) Legal Service are an independent, free legal advice service for survivors of child abuse.

### **Is Pathways a 9-5 pm contact? Who do we speak to outside of these hours?**

Pathways is not an emergency or crisis service, which are specialist organisations. Our operating hours are Monday – Friday, 9am till 5 pm. We are very responsive and aim to reply to any enquiry within 24 hours. However, if you need urgent assistance, Pathways recommends contacting emergency services like the Police, Child Protection or support services like [Mensline](#), or , which are 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

**After making a report to Pathways Victoria, what more is required of me? And what more can I do to support the victim/survivor? How do we find a way through all the related policies? I.e. What do we do now at our parish when a report comes in, or a disclosure is made?**

If you don't know where to turn, we recommend contacting the Safeguarding Unit or Pathways. Staff at both organisations are very familiar with the relevant policies and procedures and reporting requirements. So the safest option would be to contact us or the Safeguarding or Professional Standards unit at your relevant church authority.

**Are other CAM entities covered by Pathways?**

At this stage, Pathways does not cover other CAM entities such as Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools, Mannix College or Villa Maria.

**Is Pathways independent?**

Pathways is operationally independent. Pathways has an independent board of directors who are responsible for Pathways' operations and governance. The seven directors are comprised of laypeople. You can read about them [here](#). No bishops, clergy or diocesan employees act as directors on the Pathways Board. In addition, the decisions in Pathways matters are made by the various Panels and Committees who, are also made up of lay people and are independent. Therefore, decisions do not rest solely with one person.

You can read the committee/panel profile's [here](#).

**Does the Parish report allegations to the Safeguarding Unit or Pathways? Or do we have a choice?**

Both Pathways and the Safeguarding Unit operate under a 'no wrong door' policy so that you can report to either organisation.

**Could you please clarify the relationship between the Safeguarding Unit and Pathways?**

The Safeguarding Unit at the Archdiocese and Pathways are two separate organisations. However, where required, and whilst abiding by relevant privacy legislation, both organisations work together to ensure compliance with all mandatory reporting and reportable conduct obligations.

**Realising that Pathways is an independent organisation, are they accountable under regulatory or legislative requirements? Is there any particular organisation/government department to whom they are accountable?**

Pathways operates as a company limited by guarantee with fiduciary and governance responsibilities in accordance with the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth), the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (Cth) and the Pathways Victoria Constitution. It is not a government department. Pathways follows and complies with all relevant and applicable legislative and regulatory requirements, including Mandatory Reporting

**If someone has been abused in the past outside of the Diocese's covered by Pathways, but they now live within the Diocese's can Pathways support them?**

To ensure an accurate response to this question, Pathways would need some further information regarding this query. We would encourage the victim-survivor and/or their support person to contact us at [info@pathwaysvictoria.com](mailto:info@pathwaysvictoria.com) or 03 7064 3940, and we would be pleased to assist you.

**How many case coordinators are currently employed?**

At this early stage, we have one complex care coordinator employed by Pathways.

**In what essential ways is Pathways different to the former 'Melbourne response'?**

Whilst Pathways and the Melbourne Response are understandably compared as both offer an alternative dispute resolution process for Catholic abuse, the comparisons cease there. Pathways Response Victoria Ltd commenced operations in 2022 and is one of several publicly available ways to support victim-survivors to disclose catholic institutional abuse.

Pathways Victoria's development considered several reviews of the previous models, along with public consultation and direct engagement with advocacy groups.

The Pathways model is a three-step approach of Engagement, Response and Resolution, underpinned by trauma-informed care and practice principles. A copy of the model can be found [here](#).

As a trauma-informed service, Pathways aims to implement an understanding of trauma in all aspects of service delivery and prioritise the individual's safety, choice and control while establishing connectedness through a relationship built on trust.

The provision of Care Coordination services is integrated into the Pathways model. The Response and Resolution Director of Pathways also guides the person through the Resolution Process.

Under Pathways Victoria, a person can seek resolution of their claims against a participating diocese or religious institute or a number of them. It is a process that offers the opportunity to engage in without prejudice discussions to achieve an agreed settlement or an adjudicated offer of Pathways resolution.

The Pathways Model Framework has been made publicly available. In addition, other materials are being developed for publication on the Pathways website to provide more information about the way the Resolution Process will operate.

The Pathways Model Framework adopts the recommendations of the Royal Commission by using a publicly available matrix as its framework for determining the monetary payment.

A Resolution Panel will now have the function of determining the monetary payment where the person does not otherwise wish to participate in a mediation.

The Resolution Panel is comprised of members with experience in a range of areas such as civil disputes, mediation, mental health and other relevant expertise. So far as is reasonably practicable, the panel will have equal numbers of men and women.

The level and range of monetary payment which can be offered by the Resolution Panel far exceeds what was recommended by the Royal Commission. The level of payments is also indexed to CPI to keep up with inflation.

### **Can participants appeal decisions?**

There is a review option at the conclusion of Step 2. An independent review of the process and/or determination is available to all parties. Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited will conduct this review.

### **Is counselling through Pathways limited to only during the time the matter is under investigation?**

No, therapeutic supports are available throughout Steps 1, 2 and 3 of the Pathways model, not simply at the investigation stage.

**If it is admitted that sexual abuse has lifelong effects, why are the counselling services from Pathways Victoria withdrawn and not a lifelong service? How does Pathways then account for and deal with the lifelong effects of PTSD experienced by the abused as being trauma informed in their care?**

The impact of abuse can be profound and long-lasting. The model is responsive to individualised needs whilst seeking to work equally for all victim-survivors engaging in each Step. Pathways recognises that each individual and each case will be different, with some victim-survivors requiring more long-term therapeutic support and others who may not require this.

No amount of money can fully compensate victim-survivors for what they have suffered or lost. A monetary payment is, along with access to psychological and practical support, one way to recognise the harm victim-survivors have experienced and support them in their recovery. The Resolution Panel can offer:

1. access to counselling and psychological services provided under Pathways Victoria; or, if the Resolution Panel so determined,
2. a payment to enable the person to access counselling and psychological services provided outside Pathways Victoria

**When the transition to other counselling occurs, does Pathways pay for this?**

As part of the Care coordination aspect of the Pathways model, Pathways will support victim-survivors upon their finalisation with the model and transition to external agencies and support organisations.

**Are there time limits for how long the investigation and adjudication of matters raised can/will take?**

Pathways appreciate timeliness is important to victim-survivors and will endeavour to progress matters as expeditiously as possible whilst keeping in mind that each experience is unique. As a result, our response is individualised to the victim-survivor.

**How have you / will you 'promote' Pathways so that the victim / survivors are appropriately aware of it?**

Pathways has a public website and has been circulated to government agencies, including Victoria Police, Commission for Children and Young People, the Victorian Attorney General, legal representatives, police advocates and community legal centres who provide advice in this area.

Media statements have been released as updates have arisen.

**Is there a plan to proactively respond with increased staff if the numbers seeking support increase?**

Pathways is responsive to demand and reviews along with the Board our operational needs, including staffing requirements.

Pathways is subject to formal review in December 2024.

**Are the resources available from the Safeguarding Unit's website going to be updated to include contact details for Pathways, for broad promotion?**

Yes. Work on updates is in progress at the time of writing this information sheet.

