



Summary of
NATIONAL COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS
FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT
JULY 2024

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Mr Danny Cloghan, the new State President SVdP-WA who took up the position on 1 July was welcomed to the National Council's July 2024 Meeting. Dame Beverley Kerr DSG in the role of Caretaker SVdP-NSW State Council Representative was again welcomed to the Meeting. The NSW State Council President election occurs in late August 2024.

National Council met in Canberra on 27-28 July 2024. Below is a summary of key matters discussed.

UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS OF CONGRESS 23+ PROJECTS

Dir Matt Nunan, National Council Vice President and Chair of the Membership, Mission and Spirituality Standing Committee, has responsibility to oversee the implementation of Congress Projects on behalf of National Council provided an update on the Congress Champions Network. A Champion has been appointed to most Congress Project Teams to drive each project forward and a network has been formed to bring all Congress Champions together every six weeks to share information, give updates on how projects are progressing, swap ideas and problem-solve any identified challenges.

A **Congress Project Tracker** has been designed to provide real-time, up to date information of the progress of each of the Congress Projects. The Tracker includes information on the scope, status, anticipated timeframes and budgetary implications of each Congress Project. National Council recognised the majority of Congress Projects will be complete by the end of 2024 and that the larger, more complex Projects that will require collaboration across State and Territory Councils will have a longer lifespan.

The Tracker gives Councils and their CEOs an indication of the outcomes being worked towards by each Congress Project and the potential relevance of the various outcomes being progressed within and across Congress Project Teams. It is designed to ensure all stakeholders within the Society have access to information so that there are no surprises with respect to the outcomes being advanced or how costs associated with larger Congress Projects can be factored into the Society's budgetary processes.

UPDATE ON THE SOCIETY AS A LAY CATHOLIC ORGANISATION

As I mentioned in the June Summary, National Council is reflecting on the meaning of the Society being a lay Catholic organisation in a modern context. This July update has particular relevance to Congress 23+ because it was within that forum that we began to explore the language that describes how we demonstrate Frederic Ozanam's visions to offer good works within our own communities. National Council has identified that Catholic Social Teaching principles underpin our work and rich history and provide all of us with a common language that can unite us in our thirst for a fairer Australia.

A series of key stakeholders have been identified, and the National Council Secretariat has begun to facilitate a series of workshops exploring this topic with the view to create a single unified Framework that all of us can use to move forward. For a number of our Congress Project Teams, their own explorations of language and inclusive practices thus far offer rich contributions to the discussion. Their work can assist us advance the initiative in ways that can articulate to all people the Society as a lay Catholic organisation .

So today, I want to reach out to our Members with special attention to our Congress+23 delegates and give them an update on how National Council is progressing with exploring how best we as Society leaders can bring Vincentian spirituality and the Catholic Social Teaching principles that so enthuse us to life in a modern world. Building on our rich conversations at Congress last year, I see two Congress Projects *Our Compelling Shared Story*, and *Belong, Believe, Become* in particular being well positioned to offer important input into how the Society might move forward in this space.

I am mindful that State and Territory Councils and our employee executive leaders play important stewardship-related roles in advancing this initiative because it is they whom are the heart of our Society today. Their understanding of the Society's rich heritage and values and the enthusiasm they bring to articulating the Society's mission drawing on Catholic Social Teaching principles will deliver our authenticity in a growing commercialised culture. We look towards our steward leaders, Members and executive employees, to demonstrate to our voluntary and paid workforces through their everyday speak the life blood that has kept the Society strong since it responded to poverty and injustice in 1830s Paris.

To be clear, National Council sees this work as a commitment from each State and Territory Councils in collaboration with National Council to explore a united Framework. I am keen to involve those of our Members who wish to assist us design this initiative to do so through the Congress Projects. Our immediate attention is on listening to our Mission, Spirituality and Membership subject matter experts involved in the various National networks as they put together a single agreed Framework that will include a 'curricula' which includes accessible materials and resources that can be shared across the Councils.

UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

National Council is committed to work towards making the Society in Australia a safe place for all people, especially children and adults at risk, and has adopted the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). As the superior council in Australia, National Council's civil entity has a duty to ensure that it has conducted Police Checks for all members of National Council's body corporate. It was unanimously agreed the National Council Secretariate conduct National Police Checks for all members of National Council and Standing Committees and to conduct these reviews every two years.

We reviewed the 6-monthly State and Territory Council progress reporting against the NCSS across all 22 of the Society's bodies corporate. The Society is making progress in some jurisdictions. Aware that every entity must be well on the way towards compliance and can demonstrate this by 30 June 2025, National Council is seeking all entities to continue to move forward with their self-assessment against the NCSS. Further, we noted the following:

1. a Safeguarding Standards Office reporting to National Council is being established;
2. the NCSS self-assessment audit tool has been established and is now available to every entity;
3. mandatory safeguarding training is about to commence for all members of National, State, Territory and Central/Diocesan Councils and all bodies corporate employees in executive leadership positions; (training is organised via existing jurisdictional arrangements that deliver induction or safeguarding training)
4. every body corporate is to nominate a person as its Safeguarding Officer, so the National Council Secretariate has a direct contact with each entity to assist achieve the required June 2025 goal; and
5. a Society safeguarding audit plan is to be progressed;

UPDATE ON REVIEW OF *THE RULE* PART III

Dir Warwick Fulton, Deputy President and Chair of *The Rule* Review Drafting Group, advised that to date there had been no requests of the Drafting Group to meet with a State or Territory Council to discuss the 2nd amendments. He was aware that a number of Councils are in the process of preparing feedback to the 2nd amendments. Feedback is due 30 September 2024.

2023-27 STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS

We agreed this comprehensive report, prepared every six months, be shared with Council CEOs. The detailed report demonstrates the number and variety of initiatives National Council is advancing through its Secretariate.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT FUND

In order to stay on top of potential risk and remain compliant with Australian Charities and Not-for Profits Commission "External Conduct Standards" and to retain "Deductible Gift Recipient" status, National Council's Overseas Partnerships Program has embarked on an initiative with Council CFOs to review the internal management of funds related to the Society's Overseas Partnership Program.

National Council recognised that this initiative sought to balance transactional procedures with ongoing relationship strengthening and so that positive results could continue to flourish in twinned overseas National Councils.