



CATHOLIC  
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O F S Y D N E Y

# Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney

Safeguarding Audit Report  
July 2024

National Catholic  
Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD

*A safe Church for everyone*

**Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd acknowledges the lifelong trauma of abuse victims, survivors and their families, the failure of the Catholic Church to protect, believe and respond justly to children and vulnerable adults, and the consequent breaches of community trust.**

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd is committed to fostering a culture of safety and care for children, and adults at risk.

This report is available on the [ACSL website](#).

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## Foreword

Safeguarding certification by ACSL is an independent recognition that a religious entity and its ministries meet the requirements of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. Certification achievement is measured against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards set by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference as the minimum benchmark for providing a safe Church for everyone. Compliance with the Standards is demonstrated through an independent assessment.

NCSS Certification:

- Provides independent recognition that the Church Authority is committed to safeguarding.
- Fosters a culture of quality and continuous improvement.
- Reduces and mitigates safeguarding risks.
- Provides the Australian community with confidence that the Church is taking action to address past abuse.
- Fosters a systematic approach to safeguarding quality and performance.
- Increases capability and safeguarding capacity.
- Complies with regulatory requirements, and, where relevant, established canonical requirements.

The following report is based on an independent assessment of the Archdiocese of Sydney's performance against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. The audit was undertaken and led by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited in association with two audit firms Michael Elphick & Associates and Woods Consulting. The report includes compliance level ratings for each standard, criteria, and indicator, and includes explanatory notes for key findings.

The information contained in this report is based on evidence provided by the Archdiocese and its representatives at the time of the assessment, the fieldwork observations of the auditors in the parishes and ministries visited and where applicable any further subsequent information the Archdiocese has supplied through the reporting process.

Certification issued by ACSL and/or its accredited auditors relates to safeguarding practices. It does not guarantee the safety, quality or acceptability of a participating organisation, its services or programs, or that legislative and funding requirements are being, or will be, met for other purposes.

# 1. Executive Summary

## 1.1 Context

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) was established in 2020, to bring together the work of Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards and the Australian Catholic Ministry Register. ACSL is a company limited by guarantee, whose membership is composed of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia, and the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons.

ACSL is committed to fostering a nationally consistent culture of safety and care throughout the Catholic Church in Australia. This includes providing a range of services to support the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS), a framework for the protection and care of children and adults at risk. ACSL maintains the NCSS, undertakes audits and reviews of Church entities, and publishes reports which demonstrate a Church entity's commitment to the NCSS.

ACSL's core values are leadership, integrity, and compassion. These values guide the way we work and inform cultural change within the Catholic Church and the wider community. We take our duty to care for and protect all children and adults at risk seriously and have zero tolerance for abuse of any kind.

The Australian Human Rights Commission released the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the National Principles). The National Principles are derived from the Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) which relate specifically to child safety. The Office of the Children's Guardian considers that organisations in NSW that are implementing the National Principles will be simultaneously implementing the Child Safe Standards.

The NCSS give effect to the National Principles and provide the framework used by the Catholic Church to respond to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. The NCSS are designed to contextualise the National Principles and Child Safe Standards to the Catholic Church in Australia. For more information about the NCSS please see: [National Catholic Safeguarding Standards - Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd \(acsltd.org.au\)](https://acsltd.org.au).

This audit report presents the results of the assessment against the NCSS for the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney (Archdiocese).

## 1.2 Background

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney serves the people of God in the city of Sydney, including Eastern, South-Western suburbs and the lower-North Shore. The Archdiocese of Sydney is the Archdiocese in the Metropolitan See for the suffragan dioceses of Armidale, Bathurst, Broken Bay, Lismore, Maitland-Newcastle, Parramatta, Wagga\_Wagga, Wilcannia-Forbes and Wollongong, the Military Ordinariate of Australia, the Melkite Catholic Eparchy of St Michael, Archangel and the Maronite Diocese of St Maroun; which collectively represents the NSW Province.

The Sydney Archdiocese has its beginnings with the arrival of the First Fleet in Botany Bay. The founding stone of St Mary's Chapel was laid in 1821 and became St Mary's Cathedral in 1835. Sydney was made a metropolitan and archiepiscopal see in 1842, with founding bishop, John Bede Polding appointed as the first Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan Australia.

As the first, and one of the largest, Archdioceses in Australia, the Archdiocese of Sydney plays a significant role in the leadership of the Australian Catholic Church. The Archdiocese is involved in many different agencies within Sydney to provide services, care and support to people in need, including aged and community care, education and health care. It fosters a range of ministries which extend beyond the Archdiocese, including a vibrant evangelisation ministry, the Catholic Women's network, liturgical music worship and liturgy, social justice, vocations and formation, and youth, migrant and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ministries.

Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP, Archbishop of Sydney, was installed as the ninth Archbishop of Sydney on 12 November 2014 at St Mary's Cathedral. The Archdiocese now covers an area of more than 1264 square kilometres extending from the city centre, where St Mary's Cathedral is located, north to Marsfield and Eastwood, west to Horsley Park and Austral and south to Engadine; and is bounded by Broken Bay Diocese, to the north, Parramatta Diocese to the west, and Wollongong Diocese to the south. It is divided into nine Deaneries each consisting of between 9 and 20 parishes.

The Archdiocese serves almost 600,000 Catholics (22.9% of the population), across 137 parishes, with 300 priests (source: Diocesan Social Profile, Archdiocese of Sydney, National Centre for Pastoral Research, July 2023).

The Archdiocese has played a vital role in the Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, developing and supporting safeguarding responses that have been adopted across the Province. The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office was established in 2015 to raise awareness of the overarching responsibility of the Church to protect children and vulnerable people from abuse. Since 2015, the Office has developed many safeguarding resources (training programs, protocols, and procedures) that are freely shared with agencies and ministries. The Province has also established a Safeguarding Community of Practice, facilitated by the Sydney Archdiocese, to support those working in safeguarding and professional standards roles in the suffragan dioceses.

The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office supports the Archdiocesan offices, agencies, and parishes to meet their legislative, pastoral, and canonical safeguarding responsibilities.

Deep awareness and knowledge of the history and nature of abuse that has occurred within the Church and the wider community has informed the resolve of the Archdiocese to embrace safeguarding principles and work to ensure that proper systems, policies, and procedures are in place and are being implemented appropriately. There is an annual internal auditing program that monitors safeguarding, which provides insights into emerging risks, and identifies where parishes and agencies may need additional support. The Archdiocese acknowledges that both the primary and secondary trauma relating to this history continue to impact many people.

Having been established for almost 10 years, this is a timely review of the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office's considerable progress, and as indicated during audit entry meeting on January 31, the Archdiocese of Sydney believes that these audit results will contribute towards their future strategic considerations.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney has been assessed by ACSL as a Church entity subject to a full NCSS audit. There are 10 NCSS Standards, 48 NCSS Criteria and 104 NCSS Indicators that apply to full audit entities – 1 criterion and 7 indicators were not applicable to the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. For further details of the risk-based audit framework, refer to the [ACSL website](#).

Our assessment of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney's compliance with the NCSS indicators is detailed in Section 2 of this report. Our recommendations for improvement, including the Archdiocese's management responses, are included in Section 3 of this report.

The full audit report is also publicly available on the Publications and Reports page of the [ACSL website](#).

## 1.3 Audit Approach

The purpose of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards is to build a culture of shared responsibility for safeguarding and to ensure that policies, practices, and codes of behaviour work together to prevent, detect, and respond appropriately to potential or actual incidents of abuse of children and adults at risk.

The audit processes we have undertaken are intended to provide reasonable assurance that safeguarding controls have been designed appropriately and are operating effectively. Therefore, this report provides a point-in-time assessment of the safeguarding practices implemented by the Archdiocese and the extent to which they meet the requirements of the NCSS.

The desktop review was completed by ACSL. The audit fieldwork was conducted by ACSL staff and by two members of the ACSL External Auditors Panel – Mr Michael Elphick, Michael Elphick & Associates and Ms. Joy Woods, Woods Consulting.

The International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (IIA Standards) are developed by the Global IIA and followed by all IIA members in Australia. The Standards include principles and requirements for undertaking professional and internal auditing and for evaluating internal audit performance.

ACSL utilises an efficient risk assessment mechanism that permits its auditors to focus their efforts on risks that are proportionate to the purpose, size, complexity, and structure of a Church Authority. This approach to planning audits ensures optimum use of the Church Authority's limited resources, has maximum impact on the activities, ministries, and parishes, and ensures constant stakeholder engagement. It is also congruent with the IIA Standards.

ACSL assesses the risk management safeguarding practices of a Church Authority through a multilayered system keeping in mind IIA Standard 2010.A1 which states: "The internal audit (here meaning the Church Authority) activity's plan of engagements must be based on a documented risk assessment, undertaken at least annually. The input of senior management and the board must be considered in this process." ACSL can thus provide objective assurance that the Church Authority is complying with the risk management components of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS).

Prior to the field work stage, ACSL and the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney confirmed which parishes and ministries were to be visited. This is normative practice. These sample parishes and ministries represent the depth and breadth of the Archdiocese activities and thus offer a fair and reasonable insight into how safeguarding practices are embedded in Archdiocese. Importantly, since all Church Authorities across Australia have only recently engaged formally to address the safeguarding needs of adults at risk there is currently a general audit trend identifying a need to further develop and refine processes for this vulnerable group.

## 1.4 In scope assessment

The Archdiocese was assessed against Edition 2 of the NCSS, covering both children and adults at risk. In January 2024, ACSL completed a review audit of the Archdiocese's NCSS Self-Assessment report of evidence of their congruency with the NCSS. Fieldwork was conducted from 31 January to 16 February 2024. Thirty-four parishes (25% of the total parishes) and two cultural chaplaincies were chosen for visits by ACSL as part of the audit process. This report was completed in July 2024.

As part of the safeguarding audit, ACSL also engaged with key personnel at the Chancery, Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office, Anti-Slavery Taskforce, Aboriginal Catholic Community, Catholic Immigration Office, and the Sydney Tribunal Office. Under the ACSL audit framework, representatives from these parishes and ministries were interviewed and the implementation of their safeguarding practices was assessed.

Not included in the scope of this audit was: Sydney Catholic Schools, Sydney Catholic Early Childhood Services (SCECS), the Vocation Centre, CatholicCare, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD), Charitable Works Fund, Evangelisation Office and the Catholic Development Fund, and the Seminary of the Good Shepherd.

The audit scope included:

- Audit activities at the Archdiocesan administrative centre.
- Interviews, observations, and enquiry with the Archdiocesan leadership, including their Safeguarding Committee and relevant ministerial personnel.
- The list of ministries visited and interviewed included the Anti-Slavery Taskforce, Catholic Immigration Office, Catholic Aboriginal Ministry, and the Sydney Tribunal Office.
- Of the community chaplaincies, the Tongan and Italian Chaplaincy communities were visited and interviewed.
- A review of key safeguarding documents, policies, and procedures.
- Assessment of the design and testing of the operation of safeguarding controls implemented by the Archdiocese.
- Site visits to and interviews with:
  - Deanery 1, Western Deanery, consists of 10 parishes
    - audit team visited Liverpool, Mt Pritchard, Hoxton Park and Bossley Park parishes,
  - Deanery 2, Southwest Deanery, consists of 11 parishes
    - audit team visited Moorebank, Smithfield, Revesby, Fairfield parishes,
  - Deanery 3, Central Deanery, consists of 16 parishes
    - audit team visited Bankstown, Bankstown Central, Belmore, Lakemba, Greenacre parishes,
  - Deanery 4, Concord Deanery, consists of 16 parishes
    - audit team visited Dulwich Hill, Ashbury parishes, Haberfield parishes,
  - Deanery, Northern Deanery, consists of 14 parishes
    - audit team visited North Sydney, Ryde/Gladesville, Lane Cove parishes,
  - Deanery 6, City Deanery, consists of 20 parishes
    - audit team visited St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney City South, Marrickville parishes,
  - Deanery 7, Eastern Deanery, consists of 16 parishes
    - audit team visited Mascot, Matraville, Malabar, Coogee parishes,
  - Deanery 8, St George Deanery, consists of 16 parishes
    - audit team visited Brighton Le Sands, Penshurst, Engadine, Beverley Hills parishes, and
  - Deanery 9, Sutherland Deanery, consists of 9 parishes
    - audit team visited Cronulla, Menai, Como/Oyster Bay parishes.
- Interviews with over 100 personnel – inclusive of clergy, people in paid roles, survivors, volunteers, and parishioners.




## 1.5 Disclaimer

The information contained in this report is based on evidence provided by the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney and its representatives at the time of the assessment and, where applicable, any subsequent information the Archdiocese has supplied through the reporting process.

Certification issued by ACSL and/or its accredited auditors does not guarantee the safety, quality or acceptability of a participating organisations, its services, or programs, or that legislative and funding requirements are being, or will be, met.

Signed:



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Dr Ursula Stephens  
Chief Executive Officer  
Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd



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Mr. Michael Elphick  
Director  
Michael Elphick & Associates



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Ms. Joy Woods  
Managing Director  
Woods Consulting Ltd

## 2. Overall Audit Findings

***The NCSS assessment of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney indicates that the Archdiocese is successfully implementing and embedding a culture of safeguarding throughout its large and diverse organisation.***

ACSL's audit methodology, developed for the Church by KPMG, uses a four-point maturity scale to assess of the implementation of NCSS by a Church Authority<sup>1</sup>. This maturity scale provides a more granular analysis than mere compliance and provides for a program of continuous improvement.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney provided ACSL with copies of their policies and procedures through the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal. The chaplaincies, parishes and ministries that were included in the audit scope (see page 8) also provided a self-assessment of the safeguarding practices in the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal. ACSL reviewed these self-assessments, in addition to the Archdiocese, agency, chaplaincy and parish websites. The audit teams visited the Archdiocese's office, agencies, ministries, parishes and chaplaincies where they were provided additional evidence and essential clarification of information supplied for each NCSS indicator. Subsequently, the Archdiocese provided further evidence to the audit team, after the fieldwork, to clarify statements and questions.

ACSL uses standard sampling processes that are normative practices of all audit methodologies. The findings, recommendations and management actions in this report should be interpreted in this manner – specific findings relate to the ministries and activities of the Archdiocese which were included in the audit scope and as such may not be generalised throughout the Archdiocese. The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office have annual reporting processes in place for ministries and activities and may choose to include some of the audit recommendations into their reporting process.

The Archdiocese of Sydney is a complex governance environment with multi-faceted operational arrangements and challenges. It is to be applauded for its safeguarding efforts, particularly its significant investment in safeguarding resources. The activities of Sydney Catholic Schools, Sydney Catholic Early Childhood Services (SCECS), the Vocation Centre, CatholicCare, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD), Charitable Works Fund, Evangelisation Office, the Catholic Development Fund, and the Seminary of the Good Shepherd were all outside of the audit scope.

In general, safeguarding systems can be implemented by three different models – centralised, devolved and hybrid. In a centralised model, safeguarding decisions and risk management are controlled and managed by a centrally coordinated function, which provides a more comprehensive, lower risk approach. In a devolved model, responsibility for governance and risk management is maintained at a local level by multiple agencies, requiring significant communication and collaboration across the entity. A hybrid is a mixture of both centralised and devolved models.

The safeguarding system adopted by the Archdiocese follows the hybrid model. Standards, policies, procedures and documents are created by the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office; advice and best practices are provided and promoted from this central function. The culture between central function and local entities is often reactive; facilitation rather than regulation. The parishes, ministries and agencies are supported in their implementation and adoption of safeguarding but are ultimately responsible for their own governance, and particularly for risk management.

The safeguarding operating model is not formally defined within the Archdiocese and is a shared responsibility between the component entities. This complicated the audit reporting process while ACSL sought to identify and clarify the boundaries of each individual component's responsibilities. This report evaluates the adoption and implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards across the entire Archdiocese including the central function, the agencies, ministries, and parishes. In Section 5, the overall assessment of each indicator is a collated evaluation of all Archdiocese component entities against the Compliance Assessment Scale described in Appendix A. For example, there are instances where an

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<sup>1</sup> Refer Appendix A for definitions of the maturity scale used for the Compliance Assessment.

indicator is assessed as “Developed and Embedded” at the central function (the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office) but “Developing” at a ministry and parish level – within this report, the indicator will be marked as “Developed”, the mid-point between the two, and the related opportunities for improvement are identified in Section 4.

It is to be noted that while the Archdiocese central function has significantly integrated the NCSS standards at a strategic and system level, there is less clarity and integration at the operational level of the parishes, ministries and agencies.

Our assessment indicates that the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney has fully implemented or has progressed in the implementation of 91% of the relevant indicators to their operations. Assessment for each maturity scale is as follows:

- 55 indicators are developed and embedded.
- 33 indicators are substantially progressed.
- 8 indicators are progressing.

Of the 104 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church Authorities, 7 of these are not relevant to the Archdiocese’s operations. These non-relevant indicators relate to operations in countries outside of Australia, and the seminary recruitment and formation processes, which were excluded from the scope of this audit.

## Table 1 Summary of NCSS Assessment

Table 1 below shows the overall assessment for each of the Standards.

Audit recommendations, contained in Section 3, are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation.<sup>2</sup>

- There is one Priority 1 (high rated) audit recommendations for the Archdiocese.
- There are 3 Priority 2 (medium rated) recommendations.
- There are 2 Priority 3 (low rated) recommendations.

National Catholic Safeguarding Standard	# NCSS indicators	Not Relevant	Assessment of Implementation			
			Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1: Committed leadership, governance & culture	17	1	7	6	3	-
2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate	6	-	3	3	-	-
3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6	-	3	1	2	-
4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected	4	-	1	3	-	-
5: Robust human resource management	22	5	11	6	-	-
6: Effective complaints management	19	-	14	5	-	-
7: Ongoing training & education	11	-	8	3	-	-
8: Safe physical and online environments	7	-		3	3	1
9: Continuous improvement	6	1	4	1	-	-
10: Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults	6	-	4	2	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>
			<b>91%</b>		<b>9%</b>	

The key audit observations are summarised in Section 4.

The Assessment of Compliance with NCSS indicators is detailed in Section 5 of this report.

We would like to thank the leadership team of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney and all personnel who were involved in the audit for their cooperation and assistance.

<sup>2</sup> Refer Appendix B for definitions of the Priority ratings used for audit recommendations.

### 3. Summary of Recommendations

Based on these detailed observations, the ACSL audit team makes the following strategic recommendations to the Archdiocese safeguarding leadership team.

These recommendations are grouped by NCSS Capability Area; the specific audit findings are listed by NCSS Standard in Section 4.

#### Capability Area: Leadership, monitoring and improvement

(Standards 1 and 9)

NCSS Standards 1 and 9 are focused leadership, monitoring and improvement; the recommendations below are designed to further assist the Archdiocese's safeguarding functions through continuous improvement, moving specific systems and processes from satisfactory to excellent.

<p><i>Planning &amp; Monitoring:</i> The Archdiocese safeguarding leadership team will continue to promote the use of Continuous Improvement Plans for parishes and ministries. The Archdiocese's safeguarding leadership team will encourage stronger compliance with Child Activity Registers and related monitoring processes in parishes and ministries.</p> <p><i>Agreed Action:</i> The Archdiocese's safeguarding leadership team will continue to promote the use of Continuous Improvement Plans for parishes and ministries. The Archdiocese's safeguarding leadership team will ensure compliance with Child Activity Registers and related monitoring processes in parishes and ministries.</p> <p><i>Date:</i> 28 February 2025</p>	<b>Priority 2</b>
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#### Capability Area: Engaging with children, adults, families and communities

(Standards 2, 3 and 4)

NCSS Standards 2, 3 & 4 are focused on empowering children and adults to have a say in decisions that affect them as this is an integral element of a safe church for everyone. The recommendations below are designed to further assist the Archdiocese in connecting with families, carers and communities, articulating decision-making process, recognising people's diverse needs and circumstances and building a safeguarding culture where ministries and activities are provided in culturally safe and inclusive ways that facilitate self-determination.

<p><i>Engagement:</i> The Archdiocese will review how safeguarding and abuse awareness information is being received and shared within different cultural contexts and continue to provide resources and training to enhance safeguarding adults at risk.</p> <p><i>Agreed Action:</i> The Archdiocese will review how safeguarding and abuse awareness information is being received and shared within different cultural contexts and continue to provide resources and training to enhance safeguarding adults at risk.</p> <p><i>Date:</i> 31 July 2025</p>	<b>Priority 3</b>
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### Capability Area: Right people, right role, right knowledge

(Standards 5 and 7)

NCSS Standards 5 and 7 are focused on people; the recommendations below are designed to ensure the Archdiocese continues to have the right people in the right roles with the right knowledge.

<p><i>Recruitment, Training and Development:</i> The Archdiocese team will continue to ensure that all personnel are provided with resources to support the needs of adults at risk, including training for managing problematic behaviours for volunteers.</p> <p><i>Agreed Action:</i> The Archdiocese team will ensure all personnel are provided with resources to support the needs of adults at risk, including training for managing problematic behaviours for volunteers.</p> <p><i>Date:</i> 31 July 2025</p>	<b>Priority 3</b>
<p>The Archdiocese will encourage parishes and agencies to ensure their safeguarding recruitment documents and processes comply with regulation and best practices.</p> <p><i>Agreed Action:</i> The Archdiocese will encourage parishes and agencies to ensure their safeguarding recruitment documents and processes comply with regulation and best practices.</p> <p><i>Date:</i> 28 February 2025</p>	<b>Priority 2</b>

### Capability Area: Systems, Policies and Procedures

(Standards 6, 8 and 10)

NCSS Standards 6, 8 and 10 are focused on how the Archdiocese ensures its safeguarding processes are cohesive; the recommendations below are designed to ensure the systems, policies and procedures are effectively working in practice.

<p><i>Risk Management:</i> The Archdiocese will continue to monitor the effectiveness of its organisational risk policy and safeguarding risk management oversight framework. Delegated responsibilities will be fully explained to all personnel for adoption of effective risk management.</p> <p><i>Agreed Action:</i> The Archdiocese will continue to monitor the effectiveness of its organisational risk policy and safeguarding risk management oversight framework. Delegated responsibilities will be fully explained to all personnel for adoption of effective risk management.</p> <p><i>Date:</i> 28 February 2025</p>	<b>Priority 2</b>
<p><i>ICT and online safety:</i> ACSL recommends that the Archdiocese undertake a comprehensive ICT management and oversight review of policies and protocols to address high level safeguarding vulnerabilities of existing cyber-security systems and the use of CCTV.</p> <p><i>Agreed Action:</i> The Archdiocese will create a plan that addresses their ICT management and review policies and procedures which address their high-level safeguarding vulnerabilities of existing cyber-security systems and the use of CCTV.</p> <p><i>Date:</i> 31 October 2024</p>	<b>Priority 1</b>

## 4. Audit Observations

### **NCSS Standard 1 – Committed leadership, governance, and culture.**

The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture.

Based on the audit findings the Archdiocese of Sydney has met 13 of the 16 indicators for this standard.

This Standard focuses on how leadership influences a positive safeguarding culture. Strong leadership includes an accountable and transparent governance structure and acknowledges that specific groups of people are at increased risk of experiencing abuse and require heightened awareness of the situations that make them more vulnerable.

**Assessment of the requirements of this Standard 1 indicate that there is committed leadership in the governance and culture of the Archdiocese to embed a safeguarding culture across parishes, entities, and ministries.**

#### **OBSERVATIONS**

- The Archdiocese of Sydney is clear in its intent to take a zero-tolerance to abuse.
- The Archdiocese has invested in a Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office to provide centralised safeguarding resources, safeguarding support and advice to parishes and ministries.
- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office oversees and continually supports the implementation of safeguarding standards and monitors compliance with legal responsibilities including Working with Children Checks (WWCC), Workplace Health and Safety and Australian Privacy legislation.
- The Archdiocese has an approved Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Commitment Statement which is publicly available.
- The Archdiocese has a Code of Conduct which is designed for employees, religious and volunteers. This Code sets clear behavioural standards towards children and adults at risk and is available in multiple languages.  
The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has updated the Code of Conduct for working with Children and Adults at Risk to include the ACSL suggestions for clarification and reference to supplementary Codes. The Safeguarding Office's March 2024 newsletter provides details of this change.
- There are transparent and accountable governance arrangements in place to facilitate the implementation of the safeguarding framework across the Archdiocese.
- The personnel interviewed, and ministries and parishes visited, demonstrate a culture of safeguarding children and adults, by championing and modelling sound practices, procedures, and language.
- The fieldwork investigation revealed that safeguarding practices are developed and embedded in some parishes and ministries, while in others that work is still developing.
- Most parishes and ministries have a focus on safeguarding in their leadership structures.
- Personnel have a good understanding of record-keeping processes for safeguarding and know to contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office for support.
- The position of Parish Safeguarding Support Officer (PSSO) is valuable in continuing to embed safeguarding practices across all Diocesan operations.

- In some parishes, the PSSO is a member of clergy and acting as a point of contact for safeguarding concerns. In such cases, the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office addresses potential conflicts of interests in complaint management by creating a “direct to Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office” complaint option.
- Personnel in parishes and ministries provided positive feedback about the support they receive from the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- Given the diverse and dispersed nature of the Archdiocese, it will continue to strengthen safeguarding practices and support parishes by providing regional training and networking opportunities to complement ‘whole of Archdiocese’ opportunities offered (e.g. Safeguarding Network meetings).
- Guidelines to build consistent local safeguarding structures, such as safeguarding meeting frequency, template agendas and membership will assist smaller parishes to meet their safeguarding obligations. The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office have addressed this in their March 2024 Safeguarding newsletter by promoting the creation of parish and chaplaincy level Safeguarding Committees.
- To further strengthen the adoption of risk management plans and assessments, the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office will continue to remind parishes and chaplaincies that risk assessments must be completed before any event or activity involving children. The Safeguarding newsletter directs readers to the support resources available on the Archdiocese website.
- The Safeguarding Office has advised that the risk management suite of documents, across all ministries, have been updated, and a Safeguarding Risk Register created. Risk assessments will be addressed in training courses including those created by the People and Culture office. In 2024 the annual self-assessment will focus on risk assessment completion, and the Safeguarding Office will ask parishes to provide samples.
- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office will formally document visits to parishes each year and focus on parishes in which self-assessments are limited or show concerning information gaps.

### **GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE OF INTEGRATING AND RESPONDING TO THE NCSS**

One of the inner-city-based parishes receives a high volume of visitors every day. These visitors are from diverse backgrounds and include visitors of faith and non-faith from across Australia and the world; these visitors access the church premises and facilities. The parish is used by numerous children from schools and there are many diverse groups of parishioners who are adults at risk. There are also members of the public who visit the parish who could be considered adults at risk.

The parish have responded to these risks in their Risk Management Plan by: (a) providing vestment areas that are separated for children and adults and (b) including separate entrances and exits to these areas that are clearly marked and monitored through CCTV. The process for accessing parish premises is made explicit to children and their families when they join ministries, and this is reinforced in the written induction materials. There are different toilet facilities for children, adults and the public. These toilets are monitored and cleaned every 10 to 15 minutes; the cleaners have telephone communication with parish personnel. The parish engages several wardens who patrol the parish facilities to support and advise any adult at risk who may be on the parish grounds. Their safeguarding is supported by strong communication with their community. The Risk Management Plan is formally reviewed annually, and any incidents discussed by the leadership team.



## **NCSS Standard 2 – Children and adults are safe, informed and participate.**

Children and adults are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Based on the audit findings the Archdiocese of Sydney has met 6 of the 6 indicators for this standard.

Standard 2 embeds the rights of children and adults through empowerment and participation. It outlines the importance of providing them with information and opportunities to participate and emphasises the responsibility of the Archdiocese of Sydney to provide access to this information.

The Archdiocese has demonstrated significant efforts to be inclusive and engage children and adults at risk. The audit team made the following key observations.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

- The Archdiocese has produced a range of materials to help make children, and adults at risk, their families, and carers aware of their rights to be safe from abuse and who to contact if they are concerned about their safety. This information is usually displayed in public areas in the parishes and ministries.
- There is a feedback survey for users of the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office and a Complaints and Feedback tab on the public website. Some parishes also have a feedback link on their website.
  - One parish audited has QR codes on every pew within the church: scanning these QR codes direct users to the parish’s safeguarding information which includes links to the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office’s website.
- Adult at Risk materials will continue to be provided in hard copies.
- Materials on the availability of abuse support programs are provided locally in parishes and ministries.
- The Anti-Slavery Taskforce is an excellent example of Catholic Social Teaching in action to a group of people who may not traditionally be identified as adults at risk.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has created initial safeguarding resources to support parishes to understand the concepts of vulnerability and risk and it intends to continue to provide support for parishes and ministries to increase awareness of issues relating to safeguarding adults.
- ACSL recommends that material for support programs targeted for adults at risk be more widely displayed (e.g. Elder Abuse hotline, family violence support).

### **GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE**

“Children and Young People’s Participation in Catholic Communities” produced in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Sydney, the Diocese of Broken Bay and the Diocese of Parramatta provides a guide to supporting and engaging, listening, and communicating with children and young people; encouraging children and young people to participate in the Catholic Church.

### **NCSS Standard 3 – Partnering with families, carers, and communities.**

Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults.

Based on the audit findings, the Archdiocese of Sydney has met 4 of the 6 indicators for this standard.

Standard 3 is aimed at understanding how well safeguarding is embedded across all Archdiocesan activities and operations. Safeguarding is most effective when an inclusive approach is taken that actively encourages the participation and involvement of families and carers.

#### **OBSERVATIONS**

- The Archdiocese of Sydney has strong partner arrangements with many different chaplaincies, ministries, and services – all focused on the community’s requirements. Some of these arrangements are numerous and longstanding, with new ones being established as needs arise. These partnerships have been created to foster closer relationships with communities, and to meet a need within each community; each partner obtains safeguarding resources and support from the Archdiocese’s Office of Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity.
- The Archdiocese of Sydney has a long history of participating in community awareness programs including National Child Protection Week, Safeguarding Sunday and NAIDOC week.
- Most parishes encourage parents and carers to accompany their children in parish activities and events.
- The parishes within the Archdiocese of Sydney use Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office recommended statements to engage with families, carers and community about safeguarding.
- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has consulted with families, carers and communities to develop safeguarding promotional materials and should create opportunities to seek feedback from users to analyse and refine these materials.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office will continue to increase their engagement with the community by developing new “safeguarding bites” for parish newsletters.

#### **GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE**

The Archdiocese has a new partnership with Sydney Catholic Early Childhood Services (SCECS) which operates Outside School Hours Care and Early Childhood services at several Catholic schools and parishes within the Sydney Archdiocese. Many of the parishes audited commented on the valuable addition that SCECS makes to their community.

## **NCSS Standard 4 – Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected.**

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

Based on the audit findings the Archdiocese of Sydney has met 4 of the 4 indicators for this standard.

Every human person has inherent human dignity regardless of their personal attributes or characteristics. The purpose of Standard 4 is to acknowledge the diversity of people’s needs and circumstances by building a safeguarding culture where ministries and services are provided in culturally safe ways that facilitate self-determination.

The audit team made the following key observations.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

- The Archdiocese of Sydney encourages cultural diversity. The creation of cultural chaplaincies across the Archdiocese included two chaplaincies captured in the audit: the Tongan and the Italian Catholic Communities. Others not audited include the Australian Catholic Chinese Community, Croatian Catholic Community, Filipino Catholic Community, German Catholic Community, Hungarian Catholic Community, Indonesian Catholic Community, Korean Catholic Community, Maltese Catholic Community, Polish Catholic Community, Samoan Catholic Community, Slovak Catholic Community, Spanish Catholic Community, Syriac Catholic Community and the Vietnamese Catholic Community. The Office of Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity offers training, support and resources to these communities.
- The multicultural chaplaincies associated with the Archdiocese of Sydney are valued by parishioners and support well-attended, diverse, and inclusive events.
- The Catholic Immigration Office provides support to the African ministry involving social support and outreach services.
- The Archdiocese of Sydney has translated safeguarding materials into several community languages for parishioners and mass is celebrated in different languages in parishes across the Archdiocese.
  - In one parish an LGBTQIA+ mass is celebrated and in another there is an annual celebration of the lives of homeless people who have died within the Archdiocese.
- The Catholic Aboriginal Ministry is inclusive and provides outreach services.
- ACSL suggests that parishes and ministries use other themed weeks or celebrations (e.g. carers week, senior's week, Harmony Day, International Day of Disability) to focus on the safeguarding needs of these groups. The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has agreed to include this information in the calendar by June 2024.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- The Archdiocese is encouraged to continue to promote its complaints management pathways so that complaints are managed in ways that are both culturally safe and easily accessible.
- The Archdiocese will continue to foster understanding of how and when a person may become an adult at risk and effective safeguarding strategies that can be applied in these circumstances.
- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office intends to review its current cultural awareness and cultural competence training to assess how safeguarding and abuse awareness information is received and shared within different cultural contexts.

## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

The Office of Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity also supports The Catholic Immigration Office within the Archdiocese. This office works for the welfare and settlement in Australia of refugees and migrants; 43 Priest Chaplains to Ethnic Communities provide spiritual and pastoral care for 26 language groups. The Catholic Immigration Office itself provides help, advice, information, referral etc. as well as liaison with other agencies; a pastoral worker aids the Spanish speaking community. They also support an African outreach ministry within the Archdiocese.

### NCSS Standard 5 – Robust human resource management.

People working with children and adults are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice.

Based on the audit findings the Archdiocese of Sydney has met 17 of the 17 indicators for this standard.

Standard 5 is focused on the personnel (clergy, staff, and volunteers) who are part of the Archdiocese of Sydney. The Standard expects human resource management to demonstrate a commitment to implementing a zero-tolerance culture of abuse. The audit process examines how best practice standards are applied to how personnel are recruited, inducted, and supported in ministry.

#### OBSERVATIONS:

- A zero-tolerance to abuse approach is explicit in advertising, screening, and recruitment practices for personnel.
- Recruitment practices follow strong human resource management practices.
- The Archdiocese has comprehensive recruitment policies and procedures that outline safeguarding requirements in its advertising, vetting, and screening of personnel; these are available to all parishes and ministries.
- All personnel who engage with children have current WWCC checks which are monitored through several systems including a centralised and non-centralised system. There was some poor administrative work noted, with some names not being archived. The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office informs ACSL that this information has now been rectified and additional training provided to involved persons.
- Ministries and parishes are encouraged to access and use centralised recruitment policies and procedures, including position descriptions and position risk assessments.
- Most personnel undertake safeguarding induction prior to commencing in their roles.
- Volunteer training (induction and refresher) is the responsibility of the Archdiocese safeguarding team.

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Some inconsistencies in the data reported to the Archdiocese by some parishes was noted. The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office will remind entities to ensure all documentation regarding the Child Activity Register is completed and returned.
- Parishes are encouraged to undertake a safeguarding risk assessment of roles and include this information in all position descriptions including for volunteers.
- Parishes and ministries are reminded to complete annual reviews with personnel.
- Personnel working in trauma-facing counselling roles should be provided with independent external supervision.

## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has a clear guidance document on its website about position assessments for expected level of contact with children and young people (available under Employment Matters). This document is designed to help assess positions for the expected level of contact with children and young people and to help determine the appropriate safeguarding recruitment process to follow.

### NCSS Standard 6 – Effective complaints management

Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities, and personnel.

Based on the audit findings the Archdiocese of Sydney has met 19 of the 19 indicators for this standard.

NCSS Standard 6 requires the Church Authority's complaint management processes to be clear, transparent, and easy to understand. An audit assesses both the effectiveness of the complaint management process and that the roles and responsibilities of those involved in managing the process are clear. Further, it should specify what supports will be offered to all parties to a complaint. The audit also assesses whether all personnel interviewed in the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney are aware of the complaint processes.

The audit focuses on reviewing current complaint management practices. This includes policies and procedures in place to prevent, detect, report, and respond to all incidents and complaints, and the associated training, awareness, and education available for all personnel. The ACSL audit does not re-assess the outcomes of individual complaints.

## OBSERVATIONS

- The Diocesan Complaints Handling Policy is comprehensive. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of individuals, describes approaches to dealing with categories of complaints, and outlines reporting obligations and record keeping requirements. The processes are linked with the Code of Conduct and other policies.
- The Complaint management process meets legislative guidelines and OCG requirements.
- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has protocols for sharing information between agencies and ministries within the Archdiocese, which includes details of notification to statutory authorities.
- Safeguarding records are kept for a minimum of 50 years as documented in the Privacy Policy and implemented as a minimum standard in parishes.
- Complaint Management policies empower personnel and others to make safeguarding complaints in good faith.
- The Archdiocesan policies offer all parties involved with appropriate supports if they bring forward a safeguarding complaint.
- Personnel interviewed advised that complaints are taken seriously and investigated promptly and thoroughly.
- Personnel commended the Office of Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity on their practical and supportive approach when complaints are brought to their attention.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ACSL recommends that the plain simple language fact sheets and flowcharts are more socialised across parishes and ministries.

## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

In parishes where the priest also acts as the PSSO, the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office addresses potential conflict of interests in complaint management by creating a “direct to Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office” complaint option.

### NCSS Standard 7 – Ongoing education and training

Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and adults safe through information, ongoing education and training.

Based on the audit findings the Archdiocese of Sydney has met 11 of the 11 indicators for this standard.

NCSS Standard 7 requires the Archdiocese to provide ongoing education and training to equip personnel with knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and adults safe. The audit team made the following key observations.

## OBSERVATIONS

- The Archdiocese recognises that specific roles within parishes and ministries require differing safeguarding training and differing support needs.
- The Archdiocese has a safeguarding training program (induction and refresher), which is documented, structured and comprehensive.
- Regular training focuses on safeguarding, including dimensions of the NCSS and other recognised safeguarding standards.
- The Office of Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity is to be commended for the effectiveness of their training programs – interviews with Diocesan staff, clergy, ministry, and parish personnel indicate a sound understanding of the requirements for child safeguarding, including knowledge of the appropriate responses should a complaint or concern be raised, as well as indicators of child sexual abuse, including harmful behaviours of child towards another child.
- Safeguarding training is subject to review to ensure it maintains its currency, relevance, and meets the needs of changing safeguarding environments, post pandemic. The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has regular reviews scheduled for training materials in 2024.
- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office includes safeguarding guidance for managing problematic behaviours by individuals in their volunteer training program and within the Youth Ministry Handbook.
- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has updated and highlighted the Parish Intranet access on their website.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has advised that they will survey PSSOs in March 2024 to determine additional training needs.
- Awareness of the needs and vulnerabilities of adults at risk and how to manage these will be the focus of future training programs.

- All volunteers should receive safeguarding induction training when they commence their ministry.

### GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has created a protocol surrounding Mandatory Safeguarding and Child Protection Training. This document, available on their website, outlines different roles and responsibilities within each ministry and parish, and the required minimum training requirements. It includes where the training can be sourced, and the topics to be covered.

#### NCSS Standard 8 – Safe physical and online environments

Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed.

Based on the audit findings the Archdiocese of Sydney has met 3 of the 7 indicators for this standard.

ACSL assessed how the Archdiocese addresses its responsibility to minimise opportunities for abuse to occur in both physical and online environments. Standard 8 requires the Archdiocese and its personnel to be proactive in recognising and mitigating safeguarding risks.

The core aspects of this responsibility are the Code of Conduct, the Safeguarding Policy, and the Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy, which outline appropriate supervision, oversight of, and behaviour towards children and adults at risk. The movement of ministry, and managing risks associated with third parties or contractors and the use of facilities by others are considered.

Safeguarding in the digital environment supports requirements of the Privacy Act (1998) and cyber security obligations for individuals and organisations.

The audit team made the following key observations.

### OBSERVATIONS

- The Archdiocese has many safeguarding tools in place to minimise opportunities for abuse to occur. Examples include clergy movement forms and Child Activity registers. Templates, protocols and instructions are available on the Archdiocese intranet for ministries and parishes to access and implement.
- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office requires regular submission (twice yearly) of the clergy movement forms and the Child Activity Registers for review and monitoring.
- The Archdiocese has an effective manual registration system for clergy when they celebrate mass or travel between mass centres. All parishes were aware of this system and comply with the Archdiocese's requirements.
- Policies around management of social media, photography and communicating appropriately to children and families are well established and understood.
- All parishes conduct the Sacrament of Reconciliation for children on the altar or in a public area.
- Most parishes visited have modified confessionals to meet safeguarding requirements; others that are unable to make such modifications have abandoned their use.

- A support template and safety plan for managing Persons of Concern within the community is available from the Office of Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity – this plan is modified to suit individual circumstances and could be applied to other high-risk individuals.
- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has updated and highlighted Parish Intranet access on their website; the Office has also stated that Parish Support will provide parishes and agencies with intranet access support.
- Where SCECS use parish facilities to provide out of school hour care (OOSHC) and an early learning (ELC) service, OOSHC is governed by a pro forma licence agreement between parish and SCECS. The ELC is governed by a bespoke lease agreement drawn up by external solicitors.
- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office provides a third-party agreement template on their website.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Any IT monitoring systems in place are managed at the parish level, with limited oversight, exposing the whole network to cyber incursions, malware, phishing and identity theft. The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office recognise the high risk of this current situation and the Office has delegated responsibility for improvements to the Archdiocese ICT office. ACSL recommends that improvements include the development of an ICT framework and standards for all ministries and parishes which highlight safeguarding risks.
- To increase visibility and safeguarding, CCTV has been installed in many premises. Most parish personnel are not aware of the privacy and data protection requirements of their use.
- Pastoral activities in premises outside church grounds should be risk assessed and documented for environmental factors that may also impact psychological safety and wellbeing of personnel.
- Where parishes audited have third-party agreements in place, there is inconsistency between parishes regarding to whom “third party agreements” applied.

### GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

The Archdiocese has a regular Workplace Health and Safety inspection program in place for parishes which includes an inspector visiting the premises, undertaking a full inspection and recommending improvements. Every parish audited was aware of this requirement and appreciative of this independent advice.

### NCSS Standard 9 – Continuous improvement

Entities regularly review and improve implementation of their systems for keeping children and adults safe.

Based on the audit findings the Archdiocese of Sydney has met 5 of the 5 indicators for this standard.

Standard 9 is focused on assessing how the Archdiocese is preparing to meet emerging safeguarding risks and the continuous review and improvement approaches that are in place, across its ministries and services. This Standard requires the Archdiocese to regularly review policies and procedures, testing how they are understood and implemented by personnel. It also requires the Archdiocese to review incidents and complaints to identify systemic safeguarding issues that may arise. External review mechanisms strengthen the organisation’s safeguarding capabilities, support continuous improvement, and allow the learnings and good practice to be shared.



The audit team made the following key observations:

### **OBSERVATIONS**

- The Archdiocese has developed a series of safeguarding policies, procedures and processes that address children and adults at risk and implemented them across parishes and ministries.
- The Archdiocese reviews these materials regularly and provides parishes with updated information.
- The Archdiocesan safeguarding policies, procedures and processes are reviewed on a three-year cyclical basis. The Office of Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity notes that they will revise their version control of documents to include a statement of review date on policies.
- There are some local processes in place to review safeguarding materials, as distributed by the Archdiocese.
- The Office provides comprehensive information about volunteer ratios, general supervision, toilet supervision and first aid requirements for parish activities.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- The Archdiocese will continue to support parishes to develop and revise their Continuous Improvement Plans.
- In the parishes audited, few parishes have recently assessed whether there are still sufficient volunteers for ministries to remain viable and safe. The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has agreed to remind parishes to conduct this viability assessment.
- The Archdiocese will encourage risk assessments to include potential impacts on the psychological safety and wellbeing of personnel.

### **GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE**

St Mary's Cathedral is an iconic tourist attraction that demonstrates that the complexities of risk management and safeguarding go beyond mere regulation to having a compassionate and trauma-informed approach to managing the range of daily visitors and their motivations. The preservation of historical, liturgical and cultural treasures and artifacts in Australia's mother church is a unique responsibility overseen by the Dean of the Cathedral and his highly skilled team, who manage and support the comprehensive liturgical and visitor program through an impressive and comprehensive risk management framework.

### **NCSS Standard – 10 Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults**

Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.

Based on the audit findings the Archdiocese of Sydney has met 6 of the 6 indicators for this standard.

Standard 10 determines that the safeguarding policies and procedures are well documented and managed. This ensures consistent application of safeguarding practices across the Archdiocese. The audit expects that safeguarding policies and procedures are publicly available, in formats that are easily understood. They should be developed and reviewed in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders. Safeguarding policies and procedures should be 'living' documents.

The audit team made the following key observations:

### **OBSERVATIONS**

- Key safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and operating effectively. The policies and procedures address legislation and the requirements of the NCSS. They are accessible to the public and are presented in child-friendly formats.
- The leaders champion and model best practices in safeguarding.
- Policies and documentation developed by the Archdiocese's Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office are distributed to ministries and parishes.
- The safeguarding materials developed for children are attractive, informative and easily understood.
- There are processes in place to monitor and review the safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Personnel interviewed understand and appear to implement safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has a feedback tab on their home page to invite parishioners and other stakeholders to consult and provide feedback on safeguarding.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has agreed to focus their schedule of physical visits on parishes in which self-assessments are limited or show concerning gaps in information.
- Developing a network of PSSOs is encouraged to support local safeguarding issues and initiatives.

### **GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE**

Findings from annual parish internal audits are assessed against high, medium and low priorities with improvements planned and implemented. In audit observation discussions, The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office has committed to more formally document the intent to audit a minimum of 10% of parishes each year with a focus on those parishes in which self-assessments are limited or show concerning gaps in information.

## 5. Assessment of Compliance with NCSS indicators

Standard 1 Committed leadership, governance and culture					
<i>Child safeguarding is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture</i>					
Criterion 1.1 – The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.1.1	The Safeguarding Policy is approved and endorsed by the Church Authority and/or relevant leadership body and is publicly available.	✓			
1.1.2	The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, widely displayed, and made publicly available.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. Zero tolerance for abuse is highlighted within the Commitment Poster and could be further highlighted in the commitment statement.					
Criterion 1.2 - A culture of safeguarding children and adults is championed and modelled at all levels of the Church Authority from the top down and bottom up.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.2.1	A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority and leaders by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone.</li> <li>• emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and</li> <li>• actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management.</li> </ul>		✓		
1.2.2	A Safeguarding Committee is appointed at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices, policies, and procedures.	✓			
1.2.3	A Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) is appointed with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.		✓		
1.2.4	Personnel understand that good safeguarding practices are everyone's responsibility and are empowered to contribute to the organisation's safeguarding practices.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> The fieldwork investigation revealed that the Archdiocese has developed and embedded an overarching safeguarding culture while some parishes and ministries are still working to embed strong practices.					
Criterion 1.3 - Governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy across the entity's activities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.3.1	Governance arrangements are transparent and include safeguarding roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability for the safeguarding of children and adults is clear.	✓			
1.3.2	Where the Church Authority's governance includes countries other than Australia, the NCSS are applied wherever possible, considering cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.	Not relevant to current activities			

<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.4 – The entity’s Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural standards towards children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.4.1	The Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour.		✓		
1.4.2	The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, families, and carers.		✓		
1.4.3	The Code of Conduct considers the needs of all children and adults at risk, paying particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Nations people.</li> <li>• individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are considered to be at risk of abuse’;</li> <li>• individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</li> <li>• children in out of home care, or are homeless; and,</li> <li>• children and adults of diverse sexuality.</li> </ul>	✓			
1.4.4	The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. ACSL recommends that the Archdiocese communicates with parishes about the importance and content of the Code of Conduct, including accessibility to copies in other languages, updates, and contextual information about such updates.					
Criterion 1.5 - The entity’s risk management plan focuses on preventing, identifying, and mitigating safeguarding risks to children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.5.1	The Risk Management Plan considers the needs of children and adults with diminished capacity, and how and when adults at risk make informed choices (dignity of risk).			✓	
1.5.2	The Risk Management Plan incorporates procedures to assess, evaluate, review, and oversee safeguarding of children and adults at risk within its ministry and/or service.			✓	
1.5.3	There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report, and review risks.			✓	
<b>Observations:</b> 1.5- The Archdiocese has developed a template for parishes to complete parish risk assessments. Parishes are in the process of developing and implementing these risk assessments across their ministries.					
Criterion 1.6 - Personnel understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping for safeguarding and professional standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.6.1	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures are documented and communicated to personnel.		✓		
1.6.2	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures align with best practice.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> 1.6.1 The Archdiocese has strong record keeping policies and procedures and more attention should be paid to ensuring all parishes follow such policies and procedures.					

Standard 2 Children and adults are safe, informed and participate					
<i>Children and adults are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously</i>					
Criterion 2.1 – Children and adults at risk engaged in an entity’s ministry and/or services are informed about their rights, including safety, decision making, participation and how a complaint will be managed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.1.1	Age-appropriate strategies are used to engaged children, seek their views about what makes them feel safe, and enable them to participate in decisions that affect them.		✓		
2.1.2	Adults at risk (or carers where appropriate) are engaged to provide their views about decisions which affect them, what makes them feel safe and to contribute to safeguarding approaches.		✓		
2.1.3	The organisation makes children and adults at risk aware of their rights, including their right to be safe from abuse, and who to contact if they are concerned about their safety or the safety of others.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> 2.1.1/2.1.2 - The Archdiocese has limited forms of engagement with children and adults at risk to provide their views about decisions that affect them. Some parishes and ministries may need support from the Archdiocese to implement engagement strategies.					
Criterion 2.2 - The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, helping children feel safe and less isolated.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.2.1	Children are provided with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful peer relationships.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 2.3 - The importance of friendships and social connections for adults at risk is recognised and encouraged, helping them feel safe and less isolated.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.3.1	Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> 2.3.1 - Parishes have been provided with some resources for adults at risk by the Archdiocese and these have yet to be fully integrated into all parishes and ministries.					
Criterion 2.4 – Where relevant to the setting or context, children and families are offered access to abuse prevention programs and related information that is age appropriate.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.4.1	Children and families are provided with information, access and/or referral to abuse prevention programs, appropriate to the child’s age, development, ability, and level of understanding.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> 2.4.1 – This information is supplied to all parishes by the Archdiocese.					

<b>Standard 3 Partnering with families, carers and communities</b>					
<b><i>Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults.</i></b>					
Criterion 3.1 – Parents, carers and/or guardians participate in decisions affecting their child, or adults with diminished capacity.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.1.1	The entity encourages parents, carers and/or guardians to take an active role in monitoring the safety of those engaged in the ministry and/or service.	✓			
<b>Observations</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 3.2 – Families, carers and communities are engaged with and are provided information about the Church Authority’s approach to safeguarding.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.		✓		
3.2.2	Safeguarding information is provided and widely available, including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinators.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Parish engagement strategies with parishioners is reactive rather than proactive.					
Criterion 3.3 - Families, carers and communities are informed about the Church Authority’s operations and governance; and have an opportunity to have a say in the safeguarding policies and practices.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.3.1	Processes are in place to engage families, carers and communities about their views on safeguarding policies and practices.			✓	
3.3.2	Families, carers and communities are aware of the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services directly to children and adults at risk.			✓	
<b>Observations:</b> 3.3.1 The Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office consulted with children, families, and cultural groups to create safeguarding promotional materials. However, parishes tend to be reactive rather than proactive when seeking parishioner’s views. It would benefit the Archdiocese to find further opportunities to seek feedback, analyse and refine these materials as new issues and risk emerge. 3.3.2 Parishes should be encouraged to use position descriptions for volunteer roles and provided up to date information to their communities about roles and responsibilities of personnel to the Archdiocese.					
Criterion 3.4 – The entity raises community awareness of the dignity and rights of all children and adults		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.4.1	The entity promotes and/or participates in activities which raise awareness of abuse prevention and the rights and dignity of children and adults at risk.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 4 Equity is promoted and diversity is respected					
<i>Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice</i>					
Criterion 4.1 - The diverse circumstances and backgrounds of children and adults at risk are acknowledged and accommodated by providing appropriate support.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.1.1	The Safeguarding Policy and procedures demonstrate an understanding, and awareness of the diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse.		✓		
4.1.2	The Complaints Handling Policy and practices address barriers that may prevent a disclosure of abuse being made and that hinders personnel from recognising and responding appropriately.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> The Archdiocese has created policies and procedures for safeguarding and complaint handling; however, these are not yet embedded at a parish level.					
Criterion 4.2 – Children and adults have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that promote inclusion, are culturally safe, and accessible.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.2.1	Information about complaints processes and supports are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 4.3 - The diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those living with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and adults who are unable to live at home, and those of diverse sexuality, are acknowledged.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.3.1	The Safeguarding Policy and procedures empower children and adults by reflecting attitudes and behaviours that respect their inherent dignity, are inclusive and are responsive to diverse needs.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> The Archdiocese has created policies and procedures for safeguarding and complaint handling; however, these are not yet embedded at a parish level, and a lack of intranet access hampers adoption of policies. There is also an opportunity to provide greater inclusivity by creating more accessible versions of these policies and procedures.					

Standard 5 Robust human resource management					
<i>People working with children and adults at risk are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice</i>					
Criterion 5.1 – A strong commitment to safeguarding underpins an entity’s recruitment.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.1.1	The commitment to safeguarding and a zero-tolerance approach to abuse are explicit in advertising, screening, and recruitment for personnel.	✓			
5.1.2	Recruitment and screening procedures and processes are fully documented.		✓		
5.1.3	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children/adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> Recruitment and screening procedures and processes are fully documented at the Archdiocese level. At the parish level, recruitment and screening procedures are not always fully documented and positions are not usually risk assessed.					
Criterion 5.2 – Personnel have current clearances (for example, working with children checks) and/or equivalent background checks relevant to their role.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.2.1	All personnel are required to have a background check or clearance (as relevant to their role).	✓			
5.2.2	As required by legislation, personnel must have a current working with children check (or working with vulnerable people check) and/or NDIS Worker Screening Check prior to working with children and adults at risk.	✓			
5.2.3	Records of all checks are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation, for all personnel		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> Personnel have the required background checks or clearances. Records are inconsistently maintained at the parish level.					
Criterion 5.3 - Personnel complete appropriate induction and are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities including reporting obligations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.3.1	All personnel participate in a safeguarding induction program, which occurs as soon as possible after commencement.	✓			
5.3.2	All Church Authorities and their leadership team undertake the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.4 - Ongoing supervision and people management includes an emphasis on safeguarding responsibilities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.		✓		



<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are mostly in place; not all parishes visited conduct performance reviews or supervision. Some personnel who are working in trauma-facing counselling roles need independent external supervision as per the new OH&S regulations surrounding psychological safety and wellbeing.					
<b>Criterion 5.5 – Before and during seminary and religious formation, candidates are appropriately screened and supported, including processes for ongoing formation, support and supervision of clergy and religious.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
5.5.1	The Church Authority seeks professional support in screening candidates for seminary/formation programs and before ordination/profession of vows. This includes a responsibility to enquire if an applicant or candidate has previously withdrawn or been exited from another seminary or formation program.	Not applicable			
5.5.2	Seminary and initial formation programs have robust screening processes for candidates for religious ministry, including external psychological and psychosexual assessments.	Not applicable			
5.5.3	Ongoing integrated formation for clergy and religious addresses both the canonical and civil safeguarding requirements. For priests, this would include supporting their fidelity to the Church’s teaching regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the inviolability of the Sacramental Seal.	✓			
5.5.4	All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.		✓		
5.5.5	All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals		✓		
5.5.6	All newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least five years post ordination or final profession.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> The Archdiocese’s policies require all clergy and religious to participate in supervision and appraisals per the Standard. Requirements of the indicator are in place for most clergy and religious; professional/pastoral supervision and ongoing professional development and appraisals are not fully developed and embedded.					
<b>Criterion 5.6 - The curriculum for seminary and formation programs for clergy and religious includes safeguarding knowledge and skills development of candidates to understand and lead initiatives for safeguarding children and adults.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
5.6.1	Seminary and initial formation programs build candidates’ knowledge and skills in a range of areas to support safeguarding children and adults.	Not applicable			
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.	Not applicable			
5.6.3	Seminary and initial formation programs identify how to avoid abuse of power and the development and/or reinforcement of clericalist attitudes and behaviours.	Not applicable			
<b>Observations:</b> N/A.					

Criterion 5.7 – The movement and credentialing of those in active ministry is appropriately managed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.7.1	A system to assess the safeguarding credentials and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy, religious and lay ministries between different seminaries, formation programs and other Church entities is in place.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.8 – Where clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are recruited to ministry, programs are in place to support their cultural awareness, screening, induction, professional supervision and development.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.8.1	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia recruited to ministry, are screened and verification information is sought from the international Church Authority.	✓			
5.8.2	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia participate in a safeguarding induction program which is documented and occurs as soon as possible after commencement of ministry.	✓			
5.8.3	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are supported with a suitable mentor for at least the first two years of their time in Australia.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

<b>Standard 6 Effective complaints management</b>					
<i>Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities and personnel.</i>					
Criterion 6.1 - The entity's Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.1.1	Policies and procedures address mandatory reporting obligations.	✓			
6.1.2	There are clear procedures that provide step-by-step responses and action to be taken for different types of complaints, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>breaches of Code of Conduct.</li> <li>disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child.</li> <li>an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and</li> <li>an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult.</li> </ul>	✓			
6.1.3	The Complaint Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflict of interests are managed.	✓			
6.1.4	The Complaint Handling Policy acknowledges that power imbalances exist between the complainant and respondent and has strategies in place to address this.	✓			

6.1.5	The Complaint Handling Policy spells out who has responsibilities in relation to handling complaints and when procedures are enacted.	✓			
6.1.6	All abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referral are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. ACSL notes the framework is in place and annual refresher training for clergy and employees is in place.					
<b>Criterion 6.2 - The Complaint Handling Policy is understood by children, adults, families, carers, and personnel, and focuses on the rights of children and adults at risk.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
6.2.1	The Complaint Handling Policy and procedures demonstrate how the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk are prioritised.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 6.3 - Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
6.3.1	The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned, and operates in conjunction, with the Code of Conduct, HR and other policies.	✓			
6.3.2	The Complaints Handling Policy commits to an initial risk assessment if a complaint of abuse is received, to identify and minimise any risk to children or adults. Ongoing risk assessments are conducted throughout investigation processes.	✓			
6.3.3	Complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.		✓		
6.3.4	Trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced abuse.	✓			
6.3.5	Sharing information relating to complaints adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant legislation.	✓			
6.3.6	The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures empower and support personnel to raise, in good faith, concerns and allegations about unacceptable behaviour towards children and adults by other personnel.		✓		
6.3.7	Where a complaint related to the sexual abuse of a child or adult against clergy or religious is substantiated under a civil standard, the Church Authority undertakes a risk management process to determine the appropriate action, in keeping with Church protocols.	✓			
6.3.8	Where a clergy or religious is convicted of a canonical offence relating to child sexual abuse, the respondent is to be prohibited from the exercise of ministry until such times as the process for imposing a penalty is completed by the relevant dicastery.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
The Archdiocese has policies in place for these indicators and very few parishes have direct safeguarding complaints in their ministerial activities. It was brought to the auditor's attention that a safeguarding issue was made against a parishioner at an					

external event and the communication process between the Archdiocese Office and the parish could have been clearer and more timely.					
Criterion 6.4 - The Complaints Handling Policy includes the process of reporting complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, requiring cooperation with any statutory or contractual processes.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.4.1	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concerns and complaints of child abuse occurring within the entity be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities, in accordance with regulations.</li> <li>any concerns and/or complaints of a criminal against adults be reported to statutory authorities; and</li> <li>personnel cooperate with law enforcement procedures and directives.</li> </ul>	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 6.5 – The Church Authority ensures mechanisms are in place to support complainants of child and adult sexual abuse.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.5.1	Appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place in the Archdiocese’s policies. Few parishes audited could demonstrate this.					
Criterion 6.6 - The Church Authority ensures respondents facing allegations are supported and monitored.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.6.1	Appropriately trained personnel engaged in consultation with the respondents to counsel and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent.		✓		
6.6.2	Arrangements are in place to monitor, supervise and support a respondent, where there is a complaint, until (and if) the Church Authority no longer has this responsibility.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place in the Archdiocese’s policies. Few parishes audited could demonstrate this.					

<b>Standard 7 Ongoing education and training</b>					
<i>Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and adults safe through information, ongoing education and training.</i>					
Criterion 7.1 - Personnel are trained and supported to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.1.1	Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.	✓			
7.1.2	The entity’s induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must as a minimum cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code of Conduct.</li> <li>safeguarding risk management.</li> <li>Safeguarding Policy and procedures.</li> </ul>	✓			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.</li> <li>reporting obligations; and</li> <li>e-safety training.</li> </ul>				
7.1.3	Records are maintained to ensure all personnel attend induction training and participate in refresher safeguarding training at least every three years.	✓			
7.1.4	All personnel with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive ongoing support and professional development to their role.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 7.2 - Personnel are supported to recognise the nature and indicators of child abuse, including harmful behaviours by a child towards another child.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
7.2.1	<p>Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place children at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understand the nature and impact of child abuse.</li> <li>understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse.</li> <li>identify risk factors, such as grooming behaviours; and</li> <li>understand, identify, and respond to abusive behaviours by a child towards another child.</li> </ul>	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 7.3 – Personnel are supported to recognise the factors that contribute to adult abuse, with a focus on adults at risk.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
7.3.1	<p>Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understand the nature and impact of adult abuse.</li> <li>understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse.</li> <li>identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation.</li> <li>recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including power imbalances can be exploited; and</li> <li>understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse.</li> </ul>		✓		
<b>Observations:</b>					
The Archdiocese intends to continue to focus on who is understood to be an adult at risk and how such people can be recognised in their parishes and ministers.					
<b>Criterion 7.4 - Personnel have the information and skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
7.4.1	Education and training programs equip relevant personnel to appropriately respond to and support anyone bringing forward concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.	✓			
7.4.2	Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.	✓			
7.4.3	Personnel receive training on reporting obligations under		✓		

	<p>Commonwealth/State/Territory legislative and canon law, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reporting suspected criminal behaviour to police.</li> <li>• mandatory reporting to child protection authorities.</li> <li>• Reportable Conduct Scheme.</li> <li>• reporting to other regulatory authorities or government departments; and</li> <li>• Canonical reporting requirements.</li> </ul>				
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**Observations:**  
The Archdiocese provides training to parishes and ministries. Personnel interviewed as part of the audit believe they need further support to fully develop their skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns and disclosures of allegations and abuse. Therefore, the Archdiocese will need to continue to focus ongoing training on reporting obligations, appropriate responses to concerns, information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.

Criterion 7.5 - Personnel receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.5.1	Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create, culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	✓			
7.5.2	Training is provided to relevant personnel to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds and how to create safe environments for people from these groups.		✓		

**Observations:**  
The Archdiocese could continue to provide cultural competence training to personnel as many people expressed this would be useful to their roles.

## Standard 8 Safe physical and online environments

*Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed.*

Criterion 8.1 – The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy addresses both physical and online risks, without compromising the individual’s right to privacy or wellbeing.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.1.1	<p>Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services including risks arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child;</li> <li>ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction and mentoring;</li> <li>potential physical contact between the penitent and the confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated;</li> <li>one-to-one interaction with adults at risk;</li> <li>child-to-child interactions.</li> <li>adult-to-child interactions;</li> <li>adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); and</li> <li>the nature of physical spaces.</li> </ul> <p>Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.</p>			✓	
8.1.2	The entity’s policies require the safe use of online applications for children and adults to learn, communicate and seek help.		✓		
8.1.3	Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults.			✓	
<p><b>Observations:</b></p> <p>As mentioned in Std 1.5, the auditors noted the need for parishes to exercise greater vigilance with their risk assessments. The field work findings noted that risk assessments are lacking at the parish level, and this limits the effectiveness of their safeguarding efforts. The auditors note that the Archdiocese is working with parishes to remediate their risk assessments.</p>					
Criterion 8.2 - The online environment is used in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policy.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.2.1	Personnel access and use online environments in line with the entity’s Code of Conduct, Privacy Act and relevant communication protocols.		✓		
8.2.2	The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary, or other relevant policies and reported to the leadership.				✓
<p><b>Observations:</b></p> <p>The IT monitoring system is ad hoc; inconsistent between parishes and not monitored or directed at the Archdiocese level.</p>					
Criterion 8.3 - Risk management plans address the range of settings, activities, and physical environments in which ministry and/or service occur.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.3.1	A process is in place to assess and manage risk if the organisation becomes aware of the presence of		✓		

	someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their ministry and/or service.				
<b>Observations:</b>					
With no risk management plans in places, parishes with high-risk individuals were nevertheless very aware of the processes in place to assess and manage their individual risks. Parishes with no experience of these situations had no knowledge.					
Criterion 8.4 – Where facilities and services are contracted to and from third parties, contractual arrangements specify safeguarding considerations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.4.1	If a third party provides services or uses the organisations facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.			✓	
<b>Observations:</b>					
The Archdiocese has a policy in place for “third party” agreements. Auditor interviews with personnel noted that there is a lack of clarity at the parish level about who constitutes a “third party” and, if an agreement is created, there is inconsistency about safeguarding considerations within those agreements.					

## Standard 9 Continuous improvement

### Entities regularly review and improve implementation of their systems for keeping children and adults safe.

Criterion 9.1 - The safeguarding practices for the protection of children and adults at risk are regularly reviewed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.1.1	The Safeguarding Implementation Plan outlines how safeguarding practices are monitored and reviewed, and how this information is reported.	✓			
9.1.2	The Church Authority monitors the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and co-ordinates annual local self-assessment checks.	✓			
9.1.3	The Safeguarding Policy is subject to review at least every three years and outcomes of this review are documented.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 9.2 – Concerns and complaints are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures in safeguarding practices.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.2.1	All individual incidents or complaints relating to safeguarding practices and/or failures are considered by the leadership to identify systemic patterns and support continuous improvement.	✓			
<b>Observations</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 9.3 - The Church Authority reports on the findings of its safeguarding reviews.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.3.1	The findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to are reported to stakeholders.		✓		
9.3.2	The findings of audits or reviews undertaken or validated by ACSL are made public.	Not applicable – this is the first audit by ACSL			



**Observations:**  
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.

**Standard 10 Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults**

*Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.*

Criterion 10.1 - Policies and procedures address the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.1.1	All relevant policies and procedures reference appropriate safeguarding approaches, requirements and responsibilities.	✓			

**Observations:**  
Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.

Criterion 10.2 - Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.2.1	The policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding are readily available and accessible to all personnel.	✓			

**Observations:**  
Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.

Criterion 10.3 - Best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development and review of policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.3.1	There are processes in place to monitor how safeguarding policies and procedures are being implemented.	✓			
10.3.2	There is a process in place to develop and review safeguarding policies and procedures.		✓		

**Observations:**  
The Archdiocese Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office monitors the implementation of safeguarding at the parish level. Interviews with PSSOs revealed that they have provided suggestions about reviewing safeguarding policies and procedures which are yet to be developed and embedded into the Ministerial Office's processes.

Criterion 10.4 - Church leaders champion and model best practice implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.4.1	The Church Authority and leaders promote the NCSS and enact all policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding.	✓			

**Observations:**  
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.

Criterion 10.5 - Personnel understand and implement the policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.5.1	Personnel are encouraged to reflect on their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback.		✓		

**Observations:**  
Personnel could be provided with more opportunities to share ideas for continuous improvement.

## Appendix A

### COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT SCALE

Rate your entity's compliance against each indicator using this four-point scale:

	General	Processes & Systems	People & Resources
Yet to Develop	As an entity we are unable to demonstrate that the requirements of the indicator are in place and will implement the necessary strategies developed through the Standards Action Plan.	Processes may be in place however the specific requirements of the indicator have not been addressed. The actions generated through the Standards Action Plan will be implemented.	At an entity level resources have yet to be assigned. The people and resources will be determined and allocated in the Standards Action Plan.
Developing	Our entity has begun to address the requirements of the indicator, however processes are developing and not universally applied.	Some relevant processes have been implemented which align with the requirements of the indicator, however they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• siloed; and/or</li> <li>• undocumented; and/or</li> <li>• inconsistent; and/or</li> <li>• lack clarity.</li> </ul>	Personnel capabilities vary across the entity and resources and responsibility are not formally assigned. This will be addressed in the Standards Action Plan.
Developed	Our entity is addressing the indicator and is in the process of implementing its requirements. The gaps will be highlighted and addressed through the Standards Action Plan.	Relevant processes and systems have been defined and developed but are yet to be implemented across the full operations of the entity. A plan is being developed to fully implement processes and systems.	Resources have been assigned and responsibilities defined, however there is no formal training or communication of standard procedures, and it is unlikely that deviations will be detected. This will be remediated through the Standards Action Plan.
Developed and embedded	The entity can demonstrate that indicator requirements are formally embedded. Processes are operating effectively, and opportunities provided for continuous improvement.	Relevant processes are integrated and coordinated, including remote operations and reviews/audits of activities.	Personnel are trained to detect and report on deviations or break downs in processes. Resources have been assigned to monitor and address requirements.

# Appendix B

## AUDIT FINDING PRIORITIES

The following priority ratings have been used to assess findings arising from this audit:

Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
<p>Gaps or control weaknesses have been identified resulting in non-compliance with the indicator.</p> <p>Mitigation actions are required to be developed and initiated as soon as practicable but no later than 30 days from the issuance of this report, with expected resolution within 3 months.</p>	<p>Progress has been made with respect to implementation of the required indicator, however full compliance is yet to be achieved.</p> <p>Mitigation actions are required to be developed and initiated within 3 months or earlier from the issuance of this report, with expected resolution within 6-9 months.</p>	<p>Issues have been identified which represent minor procedural weaknesses or improvement opportunities with respect to the operation of the indicator.</p> <p>Expected resolution is within 12 months or earlier from the issuance of this report.</p>

## Appendix C

### GLOSSARY

The definitions of terms used in the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards take into account Australian State, Territory and federal laws and relevant regulations, canon law, information from the Holy See, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse published by the United Nations in 2017.

The glossary does not have any legal force and is meant only to serve as a reference tool for the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. All terms and definitions are to be read in the context of these Standards alone.

<b>Abuse</b>	when used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term covering both child and adult abuse
<b>Abuse of Power</b>	means the abuse of position, function, or duty to take advantage of another. This can take many forms and include situations where a person has power over another person by virtue of their relationship (e.g., employer and employee, teacher and student, coach and athlete, parent or guardian and child, clergy/religious and parishioner) and uses that power to their advantage.
<b>Accessible language</b>	means information is provided in multiple formats for individuals with different levels of English literacy and proficiency, modes of communication, languages, and cognitive abilities.
<b>Adult</b>	means any person 18 years or older. When used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term referring to all adults, including adults at risk.
<b>Adult abuse</b>	<p>means the improper treatment of a person that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm. Abuse can come in many forms, such as: physical or verbal maltreatment, neglect, injury, assault, violation, rape, unjust practices, crimes, exploitation, or other types of aggression.</p> <p>There are several categories of abuse of adults, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual abuse*</li> <li>• Physical abuse*</li> <li>• Emotional/psychological abuse*</li> <li>• Neglect*</li> <li>• Elder abuse*</li> <li>• Financial abuse*</li> <li>• Exploitation*</li> </ul> <p>Within the context of the Catholic church and faith-based entities, it is also important to recognise spiritual abuse* as an additional subtype of abuse.</p>
<b>Adult at risk</b>	means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who are elderly.</li> <li>• with a disability.</li> <li>• who suffer from mental illness.</li> <li>• who have diminished capacity.</li> <li>• who have cognitive impairment.</li> <li>• who have suffered previous abuse.</li> <li>• who are experiencing transient risks.</li> <li>• who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance.</li> <li>• who are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background/</li> <li>• who are of diverse sexuality/</li> <li>• who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse.</li> </ul>
<b>Allegation</b>	means a complaint, still to be verified, claiming, or asserting that someone has committed an act of abuse against a child or adult. The term is used interchangeably and in combination with “complaint”.
<b>Audit</b>	means a mechanism to assess how a Church Authority, ministry or entity governed by a Church Authority, is implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.
<b>Australian Catholic Bishops Conference</b>	means the assembly of Bishops of Australia exercising together certain pastoral offices for the Catholics of Australia.
<b>Bishop</b>	means a diocesan bishop or archbishop, the ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of the Eastern Churches
<b>Canon law</b>	means the revised code of canon law promulgated by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in 1983 and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches as promulgated in 1990 and any other universal or legislation promulgated by the competent ecclesiastical authority.
<b>Canonical Offence</b>	<p>means canonical crimes<sup>1</sup> of sexual abuse committed by clerics and religious are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts.</li> <li>• performing sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person.</li> <li>• the production, exhibition, possession, or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions.</li> </ul> <p><sup>1</sup> The canonical crimes/delicts/offences committed by clerics or religious as stated in Art. 1 §1 a) of <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i>.  <sup>2</sup> Definition of vulnerable person as stated in Art. 1 §2 b) of <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i>: “means: any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence”. This definition is captured by the term ‘Adult at risk’ within the NCSS.</p>
<b>Catholic Religious Australia</b>	CRA is the conference of major superiors comprising leaders of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life within the Catholic Church in Australia.

<b>Certification</b>	means the act of giving official authority or approval and certification of the implementation of the NCSS and permission to use the ACSL Certification symbol.
<b>Child/ren</b>	means individuals under 18 years of age.
<b>Child abuse</b>	<p>There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Definition sourced from the Australian Institute of Family Studies: <a href="https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect">https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect</a></p> <p>Child abuse refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission.</p> <p>Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical abuse</li> <li>• emotional/psychological abuse</li> <li>• neglect</li> <li>• sexual abuse</li> <li>• exposure to family violence</li> </ul>
<b>Church Authority</b>	<p>means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a diocesan bishop or archbishop, an ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of an eparchy of an Eastern Church.</li> <li>• the competent authority, howsoever titled, exercising the ministry of governance for religious institutes in Australia in accordance with their Constitutions; or</li> <li>• for ministerial PJPS the competent authority in accordance with the statutes.</li> <li>• for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organization in accordance with its rules.</li> </ul>
<b>Church Protocols</b>	means official procedures or system of rules which govern the affairs of the Catholic Church in Australia, for example, Vos Estis Lux Mundi and the National Response Protocol.
<b>Civil Standard</b>	the most common standard of proof relates to civil proceedings, which is the balance of probabilities (incorporating the principles from Briginshaw v Briginshaw) – which means it is more probable than not that what the person says happened is true (in criminal cases, the standard is proof beyond reasonable doubt).
<b>Clergy</b>	includes bishops, priests and deacons.
<b>Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia</b>	means any cleric or member of a religious institute who is specifically recruited or welcomed from overseas by a Church Authority or entity.
<b>Cleric</b>	a member of the clergy.
<b>Clericalist/ism</b>	means an attitude toward clergy/religious characterised by an excessive deference and an assumption of their moral superiority. Pope Francis has said that it occurs when “clerics feel they are superior, [and when] they are far from the people.” It can be “fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons”.

<b>Cognitive impairment</b>	<p>means when a person has trouble remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions that affect their everyday life, because of their condition. Some causes of long-term or permanent cognitive impairment include dementia, stroke, or brain injury.</p> <p>For further information see:  <a href="https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment">https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment</a></p>
<b>Complainant</b>	<p>means any person who makes a complaint that may include any allegation, suspicion, concern, or report of a breach of the entity’s Code of Conduct. A complaint may also include disclosures made to an institution that may be about, or relate to, abuse in the entity’s context.</p>
<b>Conflicts of interest</b>	<p>means situations (perceived or actual) where a conflict arises between a person’s official duties and their private interests, which could influence the performance of those official duties. Such conflict generally involves opposing principles or incompatible wishes or needs and may occur when personnel function in multiple roles.</p>
<b>Consecrated Life/Institute of Consecrated Life</b>	<p>is an association of faithful in the Catholic Church erected by canon law whose members profess the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience by vows or other sacred bonds (as defined in the Code of Canon Law under canons 573–730).</p> <p>Apart from being a member of an institute, consecrated life may also be lived individually; the Catholic Church recognises, as forms of individual consecrated life that are not members of institutes, namely that of hermits and consecrated virgins.</p>
<b>Cultural safety</b>	<p>means an environment that is safe for people of all ethnicities and cultural identities: where there is no assault, challenge, or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.</p>
<b>Dicastery</b>	<p>means a department of the Roman Curia.</p>
<b>Dignity or Right to Risk</b>	<p>refers to enabling individuals the right (or dignity) to take reasonable risks. It recognises that restricting this right can stifle the individual’s growth, self-esteem and the overall quality of life:</p> <p>‘Given that an individual's personal dignity is manifested, in part, by their ability to remain autonomous, and being autonomous engenders risk-taking. Inhibiting an individual's ability to take risks erodes their dignity. Dignity of risk is therefore the principle of allowing an individual the dignity afforded by risk-taking, subsequently enhancing their personal growth and quality of life.’</p> <p>(Joseph E Ibrahim and Marie-Claire Davis, ‘Impediments to Applying the “Dignity of Risk” Principle in Residential Aged Care Services: “Dignity of Risk” in Residential Aged Care’, <i>Australasian Journal on Ageing</i> 32, no. 3 (September 2013): 188–93)</p>
<b>Diminished capacity</b>	<p>means if an adult needs to make a decision and is unable to carry out any part of this process (as listed below), they have impaired decision-making capacity.</p> <p>There are three elements to making a decision:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding the nature and effect of the decision;</li> <li>• freely and voluntarily deciding; and</li> <li>• communicating the decision in some way.</li> </ul>
<b>Archdiocese</b>	means a Archdiocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelatore of the Latin Church and an eparchy of an Eastern Church.
<b>Disability (persons with)</b>	means those who have physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (Article 2, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.)
<b>Diversity</b>	means a range of people who have various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests.
<b>Diverse sexuality</b>	refers to all the diversities of sex characteristics, sexual orientations, and gender identities, without the need to specify each of the identities, behaviours, or characteristics that form this plurality.
<b>Elder abuse</b>	means a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.
<b>Emotional abuse (adults)</b>	is a common form of abuse that occurs in close relationships. Emotional abuse is defined as abuse that occurs when a person is subjected to behaviours or actions aimed at preventing or controlling their behaviour, with the intent to cause them emotional harm or fear, through manipulation, isolation, or intimidation.
<b>Emotional abuse (children)</b>	Emotional abuse of children refers to a parent or caregiver's inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts towards a child and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurturing and emotional availability. Such acts of commission or omission are likely to damage a child's self-esteem or social competence.
<b>Entity</b>	means a Archdiocese, religious institute, ministerial PJP (including their agencies) or association recognised as Catholic in accord with canon law.
<b>Exploitation</b>	is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person. It is taking advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain.
<b>Exposure to family violence</b>	is generally considered to be a form of psychologically abusive behaviour, where a child is present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse, or psychological maltreatment, or is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member's violent behaviour.
<b>Financial abuse</b>	involves the illegal or improper use or mismanagement of a person's money, property or resources. Stealing, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, forced changes to a will, inappropriate removal of a resident's decision-making powers and misuse of power of attorney are all forms of financial abuse or exploitation.
<b>Formation/program</b>	means a program preparing individuals for ordination or profession of vows and a life-long journey to the invitation of Christ to proclaim and live the Gospel message, within the life of the Church.



<b>Good Standing</b>	A person in good standing is regarded as having complied with all their safeguarding obligations, and is not subject to any form of allegation, disciplinary process, sanction suspension.
<b>Grooming (child)</b>	refers to a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging a child as a precursor to sexual abuse. It includes establishing a 'special' friendship/relationship with the child. Grooming can include the conditioning of parents and other adults to think that the relationship with the child is 'normal' and positive.
<b>Grooming (adult)</b>	is the predatory act of manoeuvring another individual into a position that makes them more isolated, dependent, likely to trust, and more vulnerable to abusive behaviour.
<b>Guardian</b>	refers to the person(s) who has the legal authority to care for the personal and property interests of another person.
<b>Institutional abuse</b>	means abuse or poor care within an institution or specific care setting. Possible causes of institutional abuse include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a "closed" culture within an organisation where transparency is discouraged.</li> <li>• lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service.</li> <li>• failure to properly check the backgrounds and interview staff.</li> <li>• inadequate training.</li> <li>• lack of safeguarding policies and procedures.</li> <li>• lack of support of staff by management.</li> <li>• poor supervision; and</li> <li>• poor standards of care.</li> </ul>
<b>Lay/lay person</b>	means members of the Catholic Church and Church personnel other than bishops, priests, deacons and religious.
<b>Leaders</b>	means personnel who are responsible for important governance decisions within a Church entity and/or who lead and coordinate Church improvement initiatives.
<b>Mentor</b>	means an experienced and trusted advisor or a person who gives a younger or less experienced person help and advice over a period.
<b>Ministerial PJP</b>	means a legal entity which is constituted a public juridic person in canon law and carries on its mission in the name of the Church, in accordance with its statutes approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority.
<b>Ministry</b>	means any activity within, or conducted by, an entity, that is authorised by formal appointment and designed to carry out the apostolic and charitable works of the Catholic Church.
<b>NDIS Worker Screening Check</b>	The NDIS Worker Screening Check is an assessment of whether a person who works, or seeks to work, with people with disability poses a risk to them. The assessment determines whether a person is cleared or excluded from working in certain roles with people with disability. For further information see <a href="https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/ndis-worker-screening-check">https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/ndis-worker-screening-check</a>
<b>Neglect (adult)</b>	is the failure of a carer to provide the necessities of life to a person for whom they are caring.
<b>Neglect (child)</b>	refers to a failure by a caregiver to provide the basic requirements for meeting the physical and emotional developmental needs of a child. Physically neglectful behaviours include a failure to provide

	adequate food, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene or medical attention.
<b>Offender</b>	means a person who has admitted abuse or whose responsibility for abuse has been determined by a court of law (criminal or civil), statutory or Church procedure.
<b>Organisation</b>	means a ministry and/or service operating under the governance of a recognised authority (such as a legal entity) and/or a Church Authority.
<b>Pastoral care</b>	means when one person has responsibility for the wellbeing of another or for a faith community. It includes the provision of spiritual advice and support, education, counselling, medical care, and assistance in times of need. All work involving the supervision or education of children and young people is a work of pastoral care.
<b>Personnel (Church personnel)</b>	means a cleric, religious or other person who is employed by the entity or engaged on a contract, subcontract, voluntary or unpaid basis.
<b>Physical abuse</b>	is a non-accidental physically aggressive act which results in physical pain or injury, and which may include physical coercion and physical restraint. Physical abuse may be intentional or may be the inadvertent result of physical punishment.
<b>Professional/pastoral supervision</b>	means a professional activity in which personnel are engaged in reflection and learning, under the guidance of a supervisor. Supervision assists personnel in their accountabilities for professional standards, defined competencies for their role and understanding and implementation of organisational policy and procedures. For clerics and religious, professional supervision assists in the maintenance of boundaries of the pastoral relationship and enhances the quality of their ministry.
<b>Protective behaviours program</b>	Is a type of abuse prevention program and means an age-appropriate structured education program to equip children and young people with the skills and knowledge to enhance their personal safety.
<b>Reflective practice</b>	is a professional development technique that involves thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice. It is expected to be a continuous process, whereby an individual explores an experience to identify what happened and what their role in this experience was, including behaviour, thinking, and related emotions. Reflective practice enables potential changes in approaches to similar future events to be identified, with the aim of improved performance.
<b>Religious institute</b>	means an entity within the Catholic Church whose members commit themselves through religious vows to lead a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. Societies of apostolic life resemble religious institutes in that their members also live a life in common. They do not take religious vows but live out the apostolic purpose of the group. In these Standards, the term 'religious institutes' is used to include religious institutes, societies of apostolic life and secular institutes.
<b>Religious</b>	means a member of an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life.
<b>Respondent</b>	means a person against whom a complaint is made.

<b>Review</b>	means an internal self-assessment of an entity's implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. A review can also be an assessment that forms part of the process of continuous improvement which occurs when following up recommendations made during an audit.
<b>Risk-based audit and Review Framework</b>	means a framework for assessing the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards that reflects a proportionate response based on the risk profile of the Church Authority.
<b>Risk Profile</b>	means an assessment against key safeguarding risk factors.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	refers to proactive measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals. These measures allow children, young people and adults to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. Within the life of the Church, safeguarding includes pastoral, liturgical and spiritual responses through engagement in the Sacraments and the life of the Church.
<b>Safeguarding Committee</b>	means a committee established to advise and support the Church Authority on all matters relating to safeguarding, including the development and implementation of a Safeguarding Implementation Plan and coordinating annual self-audits at a local level. Committee members need relevant and varied professional expertise in relation to safeguarding, child protection, organisational culture and structure, policy development, etc. and include lay women and men.
<b>Safeguarding Culture</b>	means embedding safeguarding into everything an organisation does. In promoting this culture, young people and adults at risk will understand they will be listened to, supported, and known action will be taken on their behalf.
<b>Safeguarding Commitment Statement</b>	means a Commitment Statement describing an entity's commitment to keep children and adults safe from harm. It informs the entity's safeguarding culture.
<b>Safeguarding Co-ordinator</b>	means an individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
<b>Safeguarding Implementation Plan</b>	means a documented plan which articulates actions to be taken across the entity to ensure safeguarding practices are in place. It includes actions, strategies, responsibilities, delegations, and accountabilities, and tracks review and progress. It is overseen by the Safeguarding Committee.
<b>Safeguarding policies and procedures</b>	means any policies or procedures of the entity that address elements of safeguarding children and adults. For example, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recruitment.</li> <li>• risk management.</li> <li>• complaint handling; and</li> <li>• acceptable use of online applications.</li> </ul>
<b>Seminarian</b>	a student in a theological formation and education centre preparing for ordination as a priest.
<b>Seminary</b>	means a centre for the formation and education of students preparing for ordination.

<b>Sexual abuse (adult)</b>	Sexual abuse is a form of sexual assault. Sexual abuse includes rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment, and sexual interference. Sexual activity with an adult who is incapacitated by a mental or physical condition (such as dementia) that impairs his or her ability to grant informed consent, is defined as sexual assault/abuse. Sexual assault/abuse includes where through force, threats or abuse of authority, an individual commits a canonical offence or forces someone to perform or submit to sexual acts. Sexual assault is a crime.
<b>Sexual abuse (child)</b>	refers to exposing a child to any form of sexual activity. This may or may not involve physical contact. This may take the form of taking sexually explicit photographs or videos of children, forcing children to watch or take part in sexual acts and forcing or coercing children to have sex or engage in sexual acts with other children or adults.
<b>Spiritual abuse</b>	means abuse of a person that invokes a person's religious beliefs and faith to perpetrate harm. Spiritual abuse can occur as a secondary experience of abuse when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of spiritual authority and trust within the Church a
<b>Substantiated complaint</b>	means under the civil standard of proof an allegation of abuse for which the investigator finds that sufficient evidence exists to believe that the alleged conduct more likely than not occurred.
<b>Third parties</b>	means any individual, group or legal entity outside the Church entity who contract services and facilities to or from the Church entity.
<b>Transient Risk</b>	means short-term risk, experienced by people at different stages in their life: e.g. when someone is vulnerable due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grief</li> <li>• bereavement</li> <li>• relationship breakdown</li> <li>• homelessness</li> <li>• unemployment</li> <li>• financial hardship</li> </ul>
<b>Trauma-informed and victim-centred support</b>	is a strengths-based framework which is founded on five core principles – safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Trauma-informed services do no harm: they do not re-traumatise or blame victims for their efforts to manage their traumatic reactions, and they embrace a message of hope and optimism that recovery is possible. In trauma-informed services, trauma survivors are seen as unique individuals who have managed their responses to the experiences as best that they could.
<b>Validation</b>	means an assessment by ACSL of any self-assessment, review or audit, undertaken to achieve ACSL Certification status.
<b>Working With Children Check</b>	means generic term used in the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards to denote the statutory screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. There is not yet a single national framework setting out requirements for 'working with children' checks. Each State/Territory in Australia has its own system. They are one part of a Church entity's recruitment, selection, and screening practices.
<b>Working with Vulnerable People Check</b>	means the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 in the Australian Capital Territory which requires those

working with children (and other vulnerable groups) to complete a Working with Vulnerable People Check and be registered before they can commence employment.

Tasmania has a 'Working with Vulnerable People Check' which requires all employees and volunteers aged 16 and over working in childcare services or other child-related services to apply for a WWVP check.

To date, only the ACT and Tasmania have this requirement.