Discalced Carmelite Nuns Launceston

Safeguarding Audit Report October 2024

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:

ACSL

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.

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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 Edition 2. 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 religious entity is committed to safeguarding.
- Fosters a culture of quality and continuous improvement.
- Reduces and mitigates safeguarding risks.
- Provides the 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 Discalced Carmelite Nuns Launceston's performance against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. 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 Carmelite Nuns and its representatives at the time of the assessment and where applicable any further subsequent information the community 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 NCSS give effect to the National Principles and are the way that the Catholic Church is responding to the recommendation of the Royal Commission, that religious organisations adopt and implement the Child Safe Standards. 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..

This audit report includes the results of the assessment against the NCSS for the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Launceston.

1.2 Background

The Discalced Carmelite Nuns Launceston (hereafter referred to as the Carmelite Nuns) is an enclosed community of prayer and contemplation, located on the outskirts of Launceston, Tasmania. The current community numbers less than 10 Sisters, including 2 in formation and 2 aspirants; they are within the younger age demographic for Australian religious communities.

In 1948, the Carmelite Monastery was founded in Tasmania, from the Monastery in South Australia. The existing Monastery commenced construction in 1974 after purchase of the land in 1972, with the community moving into the premises, and the enclosure was canonically established, in 1975.

The Carmelite Nuns lead a life seeking union with God in friendship with Christ. They live a life of solitude, silence, prayer and work in sisterly communion as a family within the enclosure. The Carmelite Nuns are members of the St Joseph's Association, an Association of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of both the 1990 and 1991 Constitutions in a common endeavour to be true daughters of the Church and of St Teresa of Jesus.

The Carmelite Nuns has been assessed by ACSL as a Church entity needing to undertake a limited NCSS Audit. There are 5 NCSS Standards, 29 NCSS Criteria and 76 NCSS Indicators that apply to limited audit entities. For further details of the risk-based audit framework, refer to the ACSL website.

Our assessment of the Carmelite Nuns' compliance with the NCSS indicators is detailed in Section 2 of this report. Our recommendations for improvement, including the Carmelite Nuns' management responses, are included in Section 5 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 NCSS 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.

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 Carmelite Nuns and the extent to which they meet the requirements of the NCSS.

1.4   In scope assessment

The Carmelite Nuns Launceston was assessed against Edition 2 of the NCSS, covering both children and adults at risk. In July 2024, ACSL completed a review audit of the Carmelite Nuns' NCSS Self-Assessment, which provided the Carmelite Nuns with an opportunity to present their evidence of their congruency with the NCSS.

Fieldwork was conducted in July 2024. Four Sisters (50%) were chosen for interviews by ACSL as part of the audit process. This report was completed in August 2024.

The audit scope included:

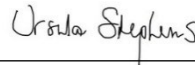- Interviews, and enquiry with the Carmelite Nuns leadership, including their safeguarding representatives.
- A review of key safeguarding documents, policies, and procedures.
- Assessment of the design and testing of the operation of safeguarding controls implemented by the community.
- Interviews with Sisters who are within the community and with one Sister who is in the final stages of formation.

1.5   Disclaimer

The information contained in this report is based on evidence provided by the Carmelite Nuns and its representatives at the time of the assessment and, where applicable, any subsequent information the Carmelite Nuns 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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2.   Overall Audit Findings

The NCSS assessment indicates that the Carmelite Nuns Launceston is successfully implementing and embedding a culture of safeguarding throughout its organisation.

ACSL assessment of the implementation of NCSS indicators by a Church entity has been determined using a four-point maturity scale[1].

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

- 89% indicators are developed and embedded.
- 2% indicators are developed.
- 9% indicators are developing.

Of the 76 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church entities, 6 of these are not relevant to the Carmelite Nuns' operations.

The key findings from the audit are summarised below.

NCSS Standard 1 – Committed leadership, governance and culture

The Carmelite Nuns are committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk with zero tolerance for abuse and have a detailed Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Complaints Handling Policy. The first two of these are available on their website and reviewed regularly. All personnel interviewed indicated a strong commitment to the values and behaviours encouraged within the policies and are conscious of the importance of safeguarding for their community's well-being.

The Carmelite Nuns have a strong safeguarding mindset, with comprehensive policies, procedures and training materials, which are a combination of their own development and ones provided by the Safe Communities team within the Archdiocese of Hobart. ACSL acknowledges the support provided by the Archdiocese to the Sisters. The Sisters responsible for safeguarding communicate regularly with the community about safeguarding matters.

The Sisters lead a life of prayer and contemplation, a life of simplicity and poverty – there are few activities on an annual basis involving people outside their community. As an enclosed order, there are no unsupervised interactions with children, and limited interactions with adults at risk. Risk assessments of activities are completed prior to the activity and the Sisters have recently adopted a broader risk register as part of their risk management plan. Most interactions with in-person visitors occur through a traditional screen grate or through a turn in the sacristy.

NCSS Standard 5 – Robust human resource management

Formation within the community has many stages and is a minimum of eight years duration. During this process, candidates are assessed psychologically and undergo many years of instruction and reflection. Safeguarding topics are an essential component of the formation. The Carmelite Nuns do not employ personnel. Volunteers assist in the chapel and the piety shop and undergo safeguarding screening, including the legislative checks required. Given the nature of their order with no contact with children and no funding under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the Sisters are not eligible for the Tasmanian Working with Vulnerable People Checks.

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[1] Refer Appendix A for definitions of the maturity scale used for the Compliance Assessment.

Sisters and volunteers have been provided with the Safeguarding Policy and all staff have signed the Code of Conduct (a register of staff and date of signature is maintained).

The Sisters have a growth mindset and as such are continually reflecting and seeking ways to improve how they can mutually support each other in their vocation. Professional supervision and mentoring are an essential part of life within the community, and safeguarding information is discussed and distributed during regular community meetings.

NCSS Standard 6 – Effective complaints management

ACSL's audit process does not re-assess the outcomes of individual complaints. The audit focuses on reviewing current complaint management practices, including 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.

Leading a contemplative life, the Carmelite Nuns lead a life of prayer and sacrifice. Many people send them personal or community prayer requests to the Sisters and they have a particular dedication to offering prayers for survivors of abuse within the Church.

The Carmelite Nuns' complaints handling procedures are based on information provided by Safe Communities from the Archdiocese of Hobart. They have also developed their own guided response process for any complaints that arrive at their door. The Sisters are aware of complaint protocols; there are external complaint options if an internal complainant prefers.

NCSS Standard 7 – Ongoing education and training

The community have a genuine desire to seek God's will and determine what is best for the person and the community. As part of this desire, the Carmelite Nuns provide ongoing formation programs for all Sisters which include various safeguarding training topics. A recent professional development program on the topic of boundaries received significant applaud within the community. The community welcome a number of visitors every year who provide training in safeguarding related matters and spiritual support.

The Sisters belong to St Joseph's Association and find this network both a great source of support and ongoing training resources.

Volunteers are scheduled to attend safeguarding training through the Archdiocese of Hobart. Leaders are scheduled to complete the ACSL Introductory Session for Leaders training program.

NCSS Standard 8 – Safe physical and online environments

As an enclosed order, the environment is contained and consistent. The physical environment limits access to visitors from outside the community. Visitors meet the Sisters through a grill and when the Sisters access the local community for services (e.g. medical) they can be accompanied by another Sister. During formation this accompaniment assists with feedback and mentoring. Online access is limited to the Sisters in leadership, and the Archdiocese of Hobart has provided the community with a dedicated domain name email address.

Phone use is normally restricted to calls from parents and siblings for events and special occasions. However, Sisters are free to contact their Regional Vicar (or other higher superiors) at any time as part of ensuring an external avenue for complaints or other concerns, if the Sister prefers that avenue. Letters are restricted to immediate family on a monthly basis, and some close friends less frequently than that.

A risk register has been adopted and needs refinement over time; risk assessments of activities are being completed.

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

Table 1: Summary of NCSS Assessment

National Catholic Safeguarding Standard	# NCSS indicators	Not Relevant to the Carmelite Nuns	Assessment of Compliance			
			Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to develop
1: Committed leadership, governance & culture	17	1	13	-	3	-
5: Robust human resource management	22	3	18	1		-
6: Effective complaints management	19	-	19	-	-	-
7: Ongoing training & education	11	1	10	-	-	-
8: Safe physical and online environments	7	1	2	1	3	-
TOTAL	76	6	**62**	**2**	**6**	**-**
			(91%)		9%	

Audit recommendations are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation.[2]

- There is one Priority 2 (medium rated) recommendation for the Carmelite Nuns.
- There is one Priority 3 (low rated) recommendation.

There are detailed in Section 5 of this report. Each recommendation also contains the response of the Carmelite Nuns to the audit finding, including management actions.

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

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[2] Refer Appendix B for definitions of the Priority ratings used for audit recommendations.

3.   Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1	Community adopts a risk register and overall risk management plan; the existing risk assessments of activities become a component of this plan and ensure online risks are addressed within the plan.
Agreed Action	The community will refine their risk register and overall risk management plan; ensure online risks are addressed within the plan.
Responsibility	Mother Prioress.
Due date	1 April 2025.

Recommendation 2	Newly developed safeguarding training material for the formation program is trialled, reviewed and modified
Agreed Action	The community will trial their formation material based on testing and feedback, and report back on progress.
Responsibility	Mother Prioress.
Due date	1 October 2025.

These recommendations are described in detail in Section 5 (Detailed Findings). The colours of the Recommendations refer to the priority of implementation, as described in Appendix B.

4. Assessment of compliance with NCSS indicators

Standard 1	Committed leadership, governance and culture

The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture				
Criterion 1.1 – There is a public commitment to safeguarding that takes a zero tolerance approach to abuse.	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.	✓			

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

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: • promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone. • emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and • actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management.	✓			
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.	✓			

Observations:
Requirements of the indicators are in place. The Safeguarding Committee reflects the small size of the community.

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 safeguarding standards are applied wherever possible, taking into account cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.	Not applicable			

Observations:
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: • First Nations people. • individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are considered to be at risk of abuse'; • individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. • children in out of home care, or are homeless; and, • children and adults of diverse sexuality.	✓			
1.4.4	The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.	✓			

Observations:

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

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.			✓	

Observations:

As an enclosed order, the community has no interaction with children, and limited interactions with adults at risk. A risk management plan is in the early stages of adoption and requires time and refinement. Refer to Recommendation #1.

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.	✓			

Observations:

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

Standard 5	Robust human resource management

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

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.	✓			

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

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	✓			

Observations:
Volunteers and visiting clergy have the required background checks and clearances. No recommendations.

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 Australian leadership team undertake the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders.		✓		

Observations:
Leadership team have undertaken safeguarding training and are scheduled to join the NCSS Introductory Session for Leaders in August 2024.

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. | ✓ | | | |

Observations:
Requirements of the indicators are in place.

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.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
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.	✓			
5.5.2	Seminary and initial formation programs have robust screening processes for candidates for religious ministry, including external psychological and psychosexual assessments.	✓			
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.	✓			

Observations:
Requirements of the indicators are in place.

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.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.6.1	Seminary and initial formation programs build candidates' knowledge and skills in a range of areas to support safeguarding children and adults.		✓		
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.		✓		
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.		✓		

Observations:
New safeguarding material has been included in the formation program. Refer to Recommendation #2.

Criterion 5.7 – The movement and credentialling 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.	✓			

Observations:

Requirements of the indicators 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.	Not applicable			
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.	Not applicable			
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.	Not applicable			

Observations:

Not applicable.

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.

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: • breaches of Code of Conduct. • disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child. • an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and • an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult.	✓			
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	✓			

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
	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.	✓			

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

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.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.2.1	The Complaint Handling Policy and procedures demonstrate how the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk are prioritised.	✓			

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

Criterion 6.3 - Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
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	✓			

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
	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.				

Observations:

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

Criterion 6.4 - The Complaints Handling Policy includes the process of reporting complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, requiring cooperation with ay statutory or contractual processes.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.4.1	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that: • concerns and complaints of child abuse occurring within the entity be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities, in accordance with regulations. • any concerns and/or complaints of a criminal against adults be reported to statutory authorities; and • personnel cooperate with law enforcement procedures and directives.	✓			

Observations:

Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement 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.	✓			

Observations:

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

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.	✓			

Observations:

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

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.

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: • Code of Conduct. • safeguarding risk management. • Safeguarding Policy and procedures. • Complaints Handling Policy and procedures. • reporting obligations; and • e-safety training.	✓			
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.	✓			

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

Criterion 7.2 - Personnel are supported to recognise the nature and indicators of child abuse, including harmful behaviours by a child towards another child.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.2.1	Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place children at risk of abuse, building knowledge to: • understand the nature and impact of child abuse. • understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse. • identify risk factors, such as grooming behaviours; and • understand, identify, and respond to abusive behaviours by a child towards another child.	✓			

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

Criterion 7.3 – Personnel are supported to recognise the factors that contribute to adult abuse, with a focus on adults at risk.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.3.1	Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, building knowledge to: • understand the nature and impact of adult abuse. • understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse. • identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation.	✓			

	• recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including power imbalances can be exploited; and • understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse.				

Observations:

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

Criterion 7.4 - Personnel have the information and skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
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 Commonwealth/State/Territory legislative and canon law, which includes: • reporting suspected criminal behaviour to police. • mandatory reporting to child protection authorities. • Reportable Conduct Scheme. • reporting to other regulatory authorities or government departments; and • Canonical reporting requirements.	✓			

Observations:

Volunteers are scheduled to attend local training sessions. Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.

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.	Not applicable			
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:

Volunteers are scheduled to attend local training sessions. Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.

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	Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services including risks arising from: • one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child; • ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction and mentoring; • potential physical contact between the penitent and the confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated; • one-to-one interaction with adults at risk; • child-to-child interactions. • adult-to-child interactions; • adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); and • the nature of physical spaces. Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.			✓	
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.			✓	

Observations:
Given the nature of the community, risk management plans are being adopted and need to be refined. See Recommendation #1.

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.		✓		

Observations:
The community have limited access to the online environment, which is monitored through password protection. See Recommendation #1.

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.				

Observations:

Given the nature of the community, risk management is currently limited to activities. See Recommendation #1.

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.	Not applicable			

Observations:

Community does not own any properties with facilities for use by third parties.

5.   Detailed findings

Standard 1: Committed leadership, governance and culture
Child safeguarding is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture

Standard 8: Safe physical and online environments
Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed.

Recommendation #1		
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.	
8.1.1	Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services including risks arising from: • one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child; • ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction and mentoring; • potential physical contact between the penitent and the confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated; • one-to-one interaction with adults at risk; • child-to-child interactions. • adult-to-child interactions; • adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); and • the nature of physical spaces. Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.	Priority #3
8.1.3	Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults.	
Details of finding	As an enclosed order, the community has no interaction with children, and limited interactions with adults at risk. Risk management assessments are completed for the infrequent activities. Sisters are in the initial stages of adopting a risk register and working on the creation of a risk management plan.	
Recommendation	Community refines their risk register and overall risk management plan; ensure online risks are addressed within the plan.	
Agreed Action	The community will refine their risk register and overall risk management plan; ensure online risks are addressed within the plan.	
Responsibility	Mother Prioress.	
Due date	1 April 2025.	

Standard 5: Robust human resource management

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

Recommendation #2		Priority #2
5.6.1	Seminary and initial formation programs build candidates' knowledge and skills in a range of areas to support safeguarding children and adults.	
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.	
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.	
Details of finding	New safeguarding material has been created for the formation program which covers these criteria. This new material needs to be piloted and reviewed.	
Recommendation	Newly developed safeguarding training material for the formation program is trialed, reviewed and modified.	
Agreed Action	The community will trial their formation material based on testing and feedback, and report back on progress.	
Responsibility	Mother Prioress.	
Due date	1 October 2025.	

Appendix A

COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT 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: • siloed; and/or • undocumented; and/or • inconsistent; and/or • lack clarity.	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
Gaps or control weaknesses have been identified resulting in non-compliance with the indicator. 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.	Progress has been made with respect to implementation of the required indicator, however full compliance is yet to be achieved. 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.	Issues have been identified which represent minor procedural weaknesses or improvement opportunities with respect to the operation of the indicator. Expected resolution is within 12 months or earlier from the issuance of this report.

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.

Abuse	when used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term covering both child and adult abuse
Abuse of Power	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.
Accessible language	means information is provided in multiple formats for individuals with different levels of English literacy and proficiency, modes of communication, languages, and cognitive abilities.
Adult	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.
Adult abuse	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. There are several categories of abuse of adults, such as: • Sexual abuse* • Physical abuse* • Emotional/psychological abuse* • Neglect* • Elder abuse* • Financial abuse* • Exploitation* 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.
Adult at risk	means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people:

	- who are elderly. - with a disability. - who suffer from mental illness. - who have diminished capacity. - who have cognitive impairmen.t - who have suffered previous abuse. - who are experiencing transient risks. - who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance. - who are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background/ - who are of diverse sexuality/ - who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse.
Allegation	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".
Audit	means a mechanism to assess how a Church Authority, ministry or entity governed by a Church Authority, is implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference	means the assembly of Bishops of Australia exercising together certain pastoral offices for the Catholics of Australia.
Bishop	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
Canon law	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.
Canonical Offence	means canonical crimes[1] of sexual abuse committed by clerics and religious are: - forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts. - performing sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person. - 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. [1] The canonical crimes/delicts/offences committed by clerics or religious as stated in Art. 1 §1 a) of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi.* [2] Definition of vulnerable person as stated in Art. 1 §2 b) of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*: "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.
Catholic Religious Australia	CRA is the conference of major superiors comprising leaders of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life within the Catholic Church in Australia.

Certification	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.
Child/ren	means individuals under 18 years of age.
Child abuse	There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Definition sourced from the Australian Institute of Family Studies: https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect 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. Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes: • physical abuse • emotional/psychological abuse • neglect • sexual abuse • exposure to family violence
Church Authority	means: • 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. • the competent authority, howsoever titled, exercising the ministry of governance for religious institutes in Australia in accordance with their Constitutions; or • for ministerial PJPS the competent authority in accordance with the statutes. • for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organization in accordance with its rules.
Church Protocols	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.
Civil Standard	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).
Clergy	includes bishops, priests and deacons.
Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia	means any cleric or member of a religious institute who is specifically recruited or welcomed from overseas by a Church Authority or entity.
Cleric	a member of the clergy.
Clericalist/ism	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".

Cognitive impairment	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. For further information see: https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment
Complainant	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.
Conflicts of interest	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.
Consecrated Life/Institute of Consecrated Life	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). 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.
Cultural safety	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.
Dicastery	means a department of the Roman Curia.
Dignity or Right to Risk	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: '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.' (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', Australasian Journal on Ageing 32, no. 3 (September 2013): 188–93)
Diminished capacity	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. There are three elements to making a decision:

	• understanding the nature and effect of the decision; • freely and voluntarily deciding; and • communicating the decision in some way.
Diocese	means a diocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelature of the Latin Church and an eparchy of an Eastern Church.
Disability (persons with)	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.)
Diversity	means a range of people who have various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests.
Diverse sexuality	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.
Elder abuse	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.
Emotional abuse (adults)	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.
Emotional abuse (children)	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.
Entity	means a diocese, religious institute, ministerial PJP (including their agencies) or association recognised as Catholic in accord with canon law.
Exploitation	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.
Exposure to family violence	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.
Financial abuse	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.
Formation/program	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.

Good Standing	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.
Grooming (child)	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.
Grooming (adult)	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.
Guardian	refers to the person(s) who has the legal authority to care for the personal and property interests of another person.
Institutional abuse	means abuse or poor care within an institution or specific care setting. Possible causes of institutional abuse include: • a "closed" culture within an organisation where transparency is discouraged. • lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service. • failure to properly check the backgrounds and interview staff. • inadequate training. • lack of safeguarding policies and procedures. • lack of support of staff by management. • poor supervision; and • poor standards of care.
Lay/lay person	means members of the Catholic Church and Church personnel other than bishops, priests, deacons and religious.
Leaders	means personnel who are responsible for important governance decisions within a Church entity and/or who lead and coordinate Church improvement initiatives.
Mentor	means an experienced and trusted advisor or a person who gives a younger or less experienced person help and advice over a period.
Ministerial PJP	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.
Ministry	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.
NDIS Worker Screening Check	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 https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/ndis-worker-screening-check
Neglect (adult)	is the failure of a carer to provide the necessities of life to a person for whom they are caring.
Neglect (child)	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.
Offender	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.
Organisation	means a ministry and/or service operating under the governance of a recognised authority (such as a legal entity) and/or a Church Authority.
Pastoral care	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.
Personnel (Church personnel)	means a cleric, religious or other person who is employed by the entity or engaged on a contract, subcontract, voluntary or unpaid basis.
Physical abuse	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.
Professional/pastoral supervision	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.
Protective behaviours program	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.
Reflective practice	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.
Religious institute	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.
Religious	means a member of an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life.
Respondent	means a person against whom a complaint is made.

Review	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.
Risk-based audit and Review Framework	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.
Risk Profile	means an assessment against key safeguarding risk factors.
Safeguarding	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.
Safeguarding Committee	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.
Safeguarding Culture	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.
Safeguarding Commitment Statement	means a Commitment Statement describing an entity's commitment to keep children and adults safe from harm. It informs the entity's safeguarding culture.
Safeguarding Co-ordinator	means an individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
Safeguarding Implementation Plan	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.
Safeguarding policies and procedures	means any policies or procedures of the entity that address elements of safeguarding children and adults. For example, but not limited to: • recruitment. • risk management. • complaint handling; and • acceptable use of online applications.
Seminarian	a student in a theological formation and education centre preparing for ordination as a priest.
Seminary	means a centre for the formation and education of students preparing for ordination.

Sexual abuse (adult)	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.
Sexual abuse (child)	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.
Spiritual abuse	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
Substantiated complaint	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.
Third parties	means any individual, group or legal entity outside the Church entity who contract services and facilities to or from the Church entity.
Transient Risk	means short-term risk, experienced by people at different stages in their life: e.g. when someone is vulnerable due to: • grief • bereavement • relationship breakdown • homelessness • unemployment • financial hardship
Trauma-informed and victim-centred support	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.
Validation	means an assessment by ACSL of any self-assessment, review or audit, undertaken to achieve ACSL Certification status.
Working With Children Check	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.
Working with Vulnerable People Check	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.