



**DIOCESE OF  
CAIRNS**

# Diocese of Cairns

## Safeguarding Audit Report October 2024

National Catholic  
Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:



*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](#).

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd  
GPO Box 5110  
Melbourne, Victoria, 3002

Phone: 1300 603 411

Email: [info@acsltd.org.au](mailto:info@acsltd.org.au)

Website: [www.acsltd.org.au](http://www.acsltd.org.au)

## Table of Contents

<b>FOREWORD .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 CONTEXT .....	8
1.2 BACKGROUND.....	8
1.3 AUDIT APPROACH.....	9
1.4 IN SCOPE ASSESSMENT .....	9
1.5 DISCLAIMER .....	9
<b>2. OVERALL AUDIT FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>4. ASSESSMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH NCSS INDICATORS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5. DETAILED FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>APPENDIX A.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>APPENDIX B .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>APPENDIX C .....</b>	<b>39</b>

## 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 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 Catholic Diocese of Cairns' 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 Diocese and its representatives at the time of the assessment and where applicable any further subsequent information the Diocese 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 \(acsltd.org.au\)](https://www.acsltd.org.au/national-catholic-safeguarding-standards).

This audit report includes the results of the assessment against the NCSS for the Catholic Diocese of Cairns (Diocese).

## 1.2 Background

The Diocese of Cairns was a Vicariate for 64 years before it was constituted a Diocese on July 8, 1941. A Vicariate is a form of territorial jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church established in missionary regions and countries where a Diocese has not yet been formed. The history of the Diocese includes a ministry focus on evangelising to the Aboriginal community and ministering to the large mining population. The first Church opened in Georgetown in 1872 with the Pro-Vicar appointed in 1877. However, it was not until 1884 that Fr. Hutchison OSA, took up the role as first Pro-Vicar and staff to the Vicariate.

In 2021, the Diocese has a Catholic population of 55,137 which comprises 19% of the overall population (290,875). The median age of the Catholic population was 44 years and there were 22,446 families in the Diocese at the time of the census. Furthermore, 5,784 Catholics live alone; 10,700 Catholics were born overseas; 709 Catholics do not speak English well 3,417 Catholics need assistance with core activities<sup>1</sup>. In

---

<sup>1</sup> [Cairns -2021-Diocesan-Social-Profile-1.pdf \(catholic.org.au\)](https://www.catholic.org.au/cairns-2021-diocesan-social-profile-1.pdf)

2024, there are 23 parishes in the Diocese and ministries include: Catholic Education, Centacare Far North Queensland (FNQ), Catholic Early Learning and Care, Genazzano Retreat, Indigenous and Youth ministries.

### 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 child 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 Diocese and the extent to which they meet the requirements of the NCSS. The audit was conducted by ACSL.

### 1.4 In scope assessment

The Catholic Diocese of Cairns was assessed against Edition 1 of the NCSS, focusing on safeguarding of children. In March 2024, ACSL completed a review audit of the Diocese's NCSS Self-Assessment, which provided the Diocese with an opportunity to present their evidence of their congruency with the NCSS. Fieldwork was conducted from May 6 until May 12, 2024. Seven parishes (30% of the Diocese's total parishes) were chosen for visits by ACSL as part of the audit process. This report was completed in July 2024.

As part of this audit, ACSL also engaged with key personnel at the Catholic Education Office and CentaCare. The child safety practices of these entities are subject to existing regulatory requirements and external accreditations.

The audit scope included:

- Audit activities at the Diocesan administrative centre.
- Interviews, observations, and enquiry with the Diocesan leadership, including their Safeguarding Committee and relevant ministerial personnel.
- A review of key safeguarding documents, policies, and procedures.
- Assessment of the design and testing of the operation of safeguarding controls implemented by the Diocese.
- Site visits to:
  - Edmonton Parish.
  - Atherton Parish.
  - Innisfail Parish.
  - Earlville Parish.
  - Cathedral Parish
  - North Cairns
  - Parramatta Park Parish
- Interviews with personnel – inclusive of clergy, people in paid roles, volunteers, and parishioners.

### 1.5 Disclaimer

The information contained in this report is based on evidence provided by the Catholic Diocese of Cairns and its representatives at the time of the assessment and, where applicable, any subsequent information the Diocese 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:



---

Dr Ursula Stephens  
Chief Executive Officer  
Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd



---

Dr David Treanor  
Director, Safeguarding & Compliance  
Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd

## 2. Overall Audit Findings

***The NCSS assessment of the Catholic Diocese of Cairns indicates that the Diocese is successfully implementing and embedding a culture of safeguarding throughout its organisation.***

ACSL's assessment of the implementation of NCSS indicators by a Church Authority has been determined using a four-point maturity scale<sup>2</sup>.

Of the 111 NCSS indicators, only 104 are relevant to the activities of the Catholic Diocese of Cairns. Our assessment indicates that the Catholic Diocese of Cairns has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 101 (96%) of the relevant indicators to their operations. Assessment for each maturity scale is as follows:

- 90 indicators (87%) are developed and embedded.
- 9 indicators (9%) indicators are developed.
- 4 indicators (4%) are developing.

Of the 111 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church Authorities, 7 of these are not relevant to the operations of the Catholic Diocese of Cairns'.

The key findings from the audit are summarised below.

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

The focus in Standard 1 is the priority accorded by the Catholic Diocese of Cairns to safeguarding through their culture, leadership, and governance. The safeguarding audit is aimed at understanding how the Diocesan safeguarding efforts are embedded and/or developed in parishes and ministries.

The audit team reviewed documentation provided by the Catholic Diocese of Cairns, and a selection of parishes and ministries to assess how safeguarding is embedded in Diocesan activities and operations. The audit team made the following findings:

- The Diocese has an approved Safeguarding Policy which is publicly available.
- A dedicated part-time Safeguarding Co-ordinator was appointed 5 years ago to further develop safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices. The findings in this report draw on the dedicated and hard work of this role which has now become a fulltime role, in keeping with its responsibilities.
- There are specific cultural safeguarding representatives from diverse backgrounds in several parishes.
- The Diocese adopts a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and utilises a trauma-informed approach to its operations and activities.
- The personnel interviewed as part of the audit all valued the role and advice provided by the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee has been in place for years, meets 6 times a year and is responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of compliance with the NCSS. There has been some discussion about who the Safeguarding Committee reports to within the diocese. The NCSS requires that the Committee is at the highest level of leadership and reports to the Church Authority (Standard 1, Indicator 1.2.1 & 1.2.2)
- The personnel interviewed and parishes visited demonstrate an embedded culture of child safeguarding, by championing and modelling sound practices, procedures, and language.

---

<sup>2</sup> Refer Appendix A for definitions of the maturity scale used for the Compliance Assessment.



- The fieldwork investigation revealed that safeguarding practices are mostly developed and embedded in the parishes and ministries.
- The clergy in the Diocese have undertaken formation and signed a copy of *Integrity in Our Common Mission* in June 2024. Further formation on this Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) endorsed Code of Conduct will need to be rolled out.
- The two Codes of Conduct set clear behavioural standards. The Diocese has a separate Code of Conduct for other personnel (non-clergy). The Diocesan Code of Conduct for personnel needs to be reviewed and updated to specially consider the needs of all children (and adults at risk) as defined in Standard 1, Criterion 1.4.3.
- There are risk management plans in place in parishes and ministries, however such plans need to be further analysed to ensure robust risk management strategies are in use. It would assist the Diocesan leadership if an aggregate parish and ministry risk register was created, which details all activities and generates a management system that monitors how risk management plans are implemented, reviewed, and reported to the Diocese. *The audit team notes that this register was developed following the fieldwork audit.*

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

The focus of Standard 2 is on implementing safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to keep children safe, informed and provide opportunities to contribute to safeguarding policies and practices.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The Catholic Diocese of Cairns are developing a range of age-appropriate materials to engage and consult with children.
- The current information aimed at children was displayed in all areas visited.
- The Diocese is preparing materials for adults at risk.
- The Diocese is developing resources for children to appreciate the importance of friendships, social connections, and appropriate relationships.
- Outside of School Hours Care (OSCH) programs are connected to the Diocese through the parishes and more work needs to be developed to embed resources with information, access and/or referral to appropriate abuse prevention programs.

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

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

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The Catholic Diocese of Cairns participates in community awareness programs, for instance, National Child Protection Week, NAIDOC week.
- The Diocese encourages parents, carers/guardians in decision-making that affects their child.
- Diocesan schools have parent engagement strategies that include partnering with families.

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

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 findings:

- The Catholic Diocese of Cairns has translated safeguarding materials into several community languages for parishioners and mass is celebrated in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) languages. There are over 27 languages used in the Diocese and whilst safeguarding material is yet to be translated in each major language, the Diocese is implementing a plan to meet this need.
- The Diocese is encouraged to adapt their complaints pathways to promote greater inclusivity to overcome any possible language barriers, so that complaints are managed in ways that are culturally safe and easily accessible.

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

Standard 5 is focused on the personnel (clergy, staff, and volunteers) who are part of the Catholic Diocese of Cairns. The Standard expects human resource management to demonstrate a commitment to implementing a zero-tolerance culture of abuse. The audit process also examines how personnel are engaged, inducted, and supported to provide their ministry according to best practice standards.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- A Diocesan centralised system is in place to record the Blue Card information of personnel. Further, any clergy or personnel working with children with a disability have also undertaken the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) screening process.
- Personnel interviewed demonstrated a good understanding of safeguarding either through previous experiences or in-service induction.
- The Diocese has comprehensive recruitment policies and procedures that outline safeguarding requirements in its advertising, vetting, and screening of personnel.
- A zero-tolerance approach is explicit in advertising, screening, and recruitment practices for personnel.
- Some positions but not all are risk assessed prior to advertisement.
- Some personnel are yet to undertake regular supervision and annual performance reviews.
- The Diocese uses the Australian Catholic Ministry Register and have registered for the Catholic Ministry Formation Register.
- Ideally, all personnel undertake safeguarding induction prior to commencing in their roles. However, ACSL also acknowledges there may be timing issues associated with safeguarding induction and if this occurs, then it is expected that all personnel undertake an induction within 12 weeks of commencing their role.

### **NCSS Standard 6 – Effective complaints management**

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.

NCSS Standard 6 requires Diocesan 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, complaints management processes should specify what supports will be offered to all parties to a complaint. The audit also assesses whether all personnel interviewed in the Catholic Diocese of Cairns are aware of the complaint processes.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The reporting system of the Diocese is effective. The Diocesan Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.
- ACSL notes the requirement to maintain safeguarding records for a minimum of 50 years is documented in the Privacy Policy and the Record Keeping Policy is appropriately implemented.
- ACSL recommends that the once a complaint is resolved that all relevant parties are informed of the outcomes.

### **NCSS Standard 7 – Ongoing education and training**

NCSS Standard 7 requires the Catholic Diocese of Cairns to provide ongoing education and training to equip personnel with knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The Diocese recognises that specific roles require training and additional support needs and there is regular training that focuses on building and maintaining culturally safe environments.
- 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, indicators of child sexual abuse, including harmful behaviours of child towards another child.
- An immediate priority is to provide further training to clergy on *Vos Estis lux Mundi* (*You are the light of the world*) to clergy.
- The Diocese has begun to implement training for personnel to understand the safeguarding needs of adults at risk. ACSL recommends that the Diocese uses its risk framework to develop targeted safeguarding training for specific ministries.
- The safeguarding training is subject to continuous improvement.

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

ACSL assessed how the Catholic Diocese of Cairns implements its responsibility to minimise opportunities for abuse to occur in both physical and online environments. Standard 8 requires both the Diocese 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 and oversight of, and behaviour towards children. This includes considerations of managing risks associated with third parties or contractors and use of facilities by others.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The auditor was not asked for identification in the selected parishes and ministries, although it was noted there were 'sign in' and 'sign out' registers in parishes. The auditor was accompanied by the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator who confirmed his identity.
- The IT monitoring system is managed by the Diocese. The Diocesan policies need to state that all their equipment will be monitored.
- Some personnel need to register for a Diocesan email address and use it to conduct parish and/or ministerial activities.

### **NCSS Standard 9 – Continuous improvement**

Standard 9 is focused on assessing how the Catholic Diocese of Cairns 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 expects the Diocese to regularly review policies and procedures, testing how they are understood and implemented by personnel. It also requires the Diocese 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 enable the sharing of learnings/good practice.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The Diocese’s safeguarding practices are regularly reviewed and the process to analyse complaints and identify systemic failures is developed.
- ACSL recommends that data collection is expanded to undertake better trend analysis and feed into this continuous improvement process.
- This is the first time the Diocese has undertaken an NCSS audit. The report will be published on ACSL’s website.

### **NCSS Standard 10 – Policies and procedures support child safety**

Standard 10 determines that the safeguarding policies and procedures are well documented and managed. This ensures consistent application of safeguarding practices across the Catholic Diocese of Cairns. 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 not be static but be ‘living’ documents.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- Key safeguarding policies and procedures relating to safeguarding requirements are in place and operating effectively. The policies and procedures address the requirements of the NCSS. They are accessible and are presented in child friendly formats.
- The leaders champion and model best practices in safeguarding and personnel interviewed during the audit understood and appeared to be implementing safeguarding policies and procedures.

Table 1 (on the following page) shows the overall assessment for each of the Standards.

Audit recommendations are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation. [?](#)

- There are no Priority 1 (high rated) audit recommendations for the Diocese.
- There are 5 Priority 2 (medium rated) recommendations.
- There is 1 Priority 3 (low rated) recommendation.

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

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

**Table 1: Summary of NCSS Assessment**

National Catholic Safeguarding Standard	# NCSS indicators	Not Relevant to the Diocese of Cairns	Assessment of Compliance			
			Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1: Committed leadership, governance & culture	16	2	12	2	-	-
2: Children are safe, informed and participate	5	-	2	1	2	-
3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6	-	6	-	-	-
4: Equity is promoted and diversity is respected	4	-	3	1	-	-
5: Robust human resource management	23	4	16	2	1	-
6: Effective complaints management	24	-	24	-	-	-
7: Ongoing training & education	9	-	8	1	-	-
8: Safe physical and online environments	10	-	6	2	2	-
9: Continuous improvement	8	1	7	-	-	-
10: Policies and procedures support child safety	6	-	6	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>-</b>
			<b>(95%)</b>		<b>(5%)</b>	

### 3. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation #1	<p><b>Indicator 1.2.2:</b> The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee Terms of Reference appoints the Committee at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of child safeguarding practices, including safeguarding policies and related procedures. The Terms of Reference are being reviewed and ACSL recommend that the Terms of Reference are updated to include consideration of adults at risk.</p> <p>Further, the Committee should retain its status at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices. The Safeguarding Committee should undertake safeguarding training when the Terms of Reference are completed.</p>
	<p><b>Indicator 1.5.2:</b> All parishes and ministries to provide a copy of their Risk Assessments to the Safeguarding Coordinator for review.</p>
Recommendation #2	<p><b>Indicator 2.2.1:</b> Age-appropriate safeguarding resources that focus on appropriate friendships are developed for parishes and ministries.</p>
	<p><b>Indicator 2.4.1:</b> Generic safeguarding support materials are available for all ministries and in parishes.</p>
Recommendation #3	<p><b>Indicator 4.2.1:</b> The Diocese roll out child (and adult at risk) safeguarding materials and resources in appropriate communication mediums.</p>
Recommendation #4	<p><b>Indicator 5.1.3:</b> All positions should be risk assessed against expected level of contact with children (and adults at risk).</p>
	<p><b>Indicator 5.1.4:</b> Recruitment processes will pay attention to the need for personnel to be attentive to the cultural needs of parishioners.</p>
	<p><b>Indicator 5.4.1:</b> All personnel will participate in professional supervision and annual performance reviews.</p>
Recommendation #5	<p><b>Indicator 7.4.1:</b> The Diocese adopt the training that has been developed by Catholic Education and where appropriate possibly deliver this program and relevant modules as face-to-face format. One immediate priority is to provide training to clergy on <i>Vos estis lux mundi</i> to clergy.</p>
Recommendation #6	<p><b>Indicator 8.2.1:</b> The Diocese embed policies that address safe use of online applications for children and adults at risk that enable them to learn, communicate and seek help.</p>
	<p><b>Indicator 8.2.2:</b> All personnel are provided with a domain name email address for use in the conduct of their ministerial activities.</p>
	<p><b>Indicator 8.3.1:</b> The Safeguarding Committee develop a plan to monitor the roll-out of appropriately designed confessional spaces in parishes.</p>
	<p><b>Indicator 8.4.1:</b> Ensure all parishes have Third-Party Agreements in place for all external activities. Request these agencies to provide a copy of their Risk Assessment and safeguarding policies and procedures.</p>

## 4. 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 – There is a public commitment to safeguarding that takes a zero tolerance approach to child 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 entity publishes a Child Safeguarding Commitment Statement which is openly displayed and publicly available.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.2 - A child safeguarding culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the entity from the top down and bottom up.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.2.1	The Church Authority and leaders of the entity create and maintain an entity's culture of safeguarding by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting child safeguarding regularly;</li> <li>• emphasising that child-safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; and</li> <li>• actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management.</li> </ul>	✓			
1.2.2	The entity appoints a Safeguarding Committee at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of child safeguarding practices, including the Child Safeguarding Policy and related procedures and practices.		✓		
1.2.3	The entity appoints and promotes the role of Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s), with clearly defined responsibilities for safeguarding children at diocesan, religious institute or ministerial PJP level.	✓			
1.2.4	Personnel understand that child safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and are empowered to provide input on child safeguarding practices.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> 1.2.2 The Safeguarding Committee Terms of Reference are being reviewed. This Committee is appointed at the highest level of leadership to oversee child (and now from July 2024, adults at risk) safeguarding practices. As part of the review, role descriptions can be evaluated to ensure they are fit for purpose under the current version of NCSS. Refer <a href="#">Recommendation #1</a> .					
Criterion 1.3 - Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of a Child 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 safeguarding is clear.	✓			
1.3.2	Where the Church Authority's governance includes countries other than Australia, the entity must apply these Standards taking into account relevant international declarations and local legislation.	Not relevant to current activities			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.4 – A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for personnel on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.4.1	The Code of Conduct explicitly and equally applies to all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour of personnel towards children.	✓			
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 takes into account the needs of all children, paying particular attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with particular vulnerabilities, for example, children who can't live at home.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.5 - The entity has risk management strategies focusing on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.5.1	The entity has a clearly documented child safeguarding risk management plan, as part of its overall risk management strategy, which considers actual and potential risks relating to children.	✓			
1.5.2	The entity has appropriate risk management processes in place to assess, evaluate, review and oversee the safeguarding of children participating in, or receiving, ministries offshore including cultural immersions, pilgrimages, solidarity campaigns and world youth days.	N/A			
1.5.3	Leaders of the entity manage safeguarding risks effectively, through regular identification, monitoring, reporting and review of risks.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> 1.5.3 The fieldwork investigation revealed that while the Diocese has developed and embedded an overarching risk management culture, some risk assessments require further analysis to embed strong practices. Refer <a href="#">Recommendation #1</a> .					
Criterion 1.6 - Personnel understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.6.1	The entity has documented information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures which are communicated to personnel.	✓			
1.6.2	The entity's information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures relating to all aspects of child safeguarding, including incidents and complaints, apply sound record keeping principles.	✓			



**Observations:**

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

<b>Standard 2</b>	<b>Children are safe, informed and participate</b>
-------------------	--

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

Criterion 2.1 - Children are informed about their rights, including safety, information and participation.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.1.1 The entity has age-appropriate strategies to proactively engage with children; seek children's views; consult children about decisions that affect them; and consult children about what makes them feel safe and how this can be recognised and implemented by the entity.			✓	
2.1.2 The entity ensures children are made aware of their rights, including their right to be safe from abuse, and are informed whom to contact if they have concerns about their safety or the safety of their peers.	✓			

**Observations:**

2.1.1 The Diocese is developing their resources to engage and consult with children. Refer [Recommendation #2.](#)

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 The entity provides children with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful peer relationships, including through social media.			✓	

**Observations:**

2.2.1 Some parishes have child-appropriate resources on the importance of friendships and in parishes that have newer families as parishioners, further resources (e.g. videos) could be developed and rolled out across the Diocese. Refer [Recommendation #2.](#)

Criterion 2.3 - Where relevant to the setting and context, children and families may be offered access to abuse prevention programs and related information that is age-appropriate.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.3.1 Where relevant, the entity provides children and families with information, access and/or referral to abuse prevention programs, appropriate to the child's age, development, ability and level of understanding.	✓			

**Observations:**

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

Criterion 2.4 - Personnel are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.4.1 Personnel have the knowledge, skills and awareness to identify potential signs of harm and actively support children to raise concern.		✓		

**Observations:**

2.4.1 OSHC programs are connected to the Diocese through the parishes and more work is needed to provide programs with resources, information, access and/or referral to appropriate abuse prevention programs. Refer [Recommendation #2.](#)

<b>Standard 3</b>	<b>Partnering with families, carers and communities</b>
-------------------	---

*Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safeguarding*

Criterion 3.1 – Families and carers participate in decisions affecting their child.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

3.1.1	The entity supports and encourages families/carers to take an active role in monitoring children's safety when participating in activities.	✓			
<b>Observations</b>					
Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 3.2 – The entity engages and openly communicates with families, carers and communities about its child safeguarding approach, and relevant information is accessible.</b>		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.2.1	The entity promotes open dialogue and provides a range of ways for families, carers and communities to contribute to discussions about its child safeguarding approach.	✓			
3.2.2	The entity provides families, carers and communities with relevant safeguarding information including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s).	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 3.3 - Families, carers and communities have a say in the entity's policies and practices.</b>		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.3.1	Processes are in place to engage families, carers and communities about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 3.4 – Families, carers and communities are informed about the entity's operations and governance.</b>		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.4.1	The entity ensures families, carers and communities are aware of the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries or activities directly to their children.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 3.5 - The entity takes a leadership role in raising community awareness of the dignity and rights of all children.</b>		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.5.1	Appropriate to the context or setting the entity actively promotes and/or participates in civic engagement activities and/or campaigns which promote holistic awareness of children's rights and child abuse prevention.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

<b>Standard 4</b>		<b>Equity is promoted and diversity is respected</b>			
<b><i>Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice</i></b>					
<b>Criterion 4.1 - The entity actively anticipates children's diverse circumstances and backgrounds and provides support and responds effectively to those who are vulnerable.</b>		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.1.1	The entity's Child Safeguarding Policy and practices reflect an understanding, and identification, of diverse circumstances and experiences that increase a child's vulnerability to abuse.	✓			

4.1.2	The entity's Complaints Handling Policy and practices demonstrate an understanding of barriers that prevent children from disclosing abuse and barriers for adults recognising and/or responding to disclosures and articulates processes that reduce barriers to disclosure.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 4.2 – All children have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.2.1	The entity produces child-friendly material in accessible language and formats that promotes inclusion and informs all children of the support and complaints processes available to them.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> The Diocese has produced child-friendly material in accessible language for many of their culturally diverse communities and have developed a plan to roll out materials in all community languages. Refer <a href="#">Recommendation #3</a> .					
Criterion 4.3 - The entity pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and children of diverse sexuality.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.3.1	The entity's Child Safeguarding Policy and practices reflect attitudes and behaviours that respect the human rights of all children and are inclusive and responsive to diverse needs.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

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 – Recruitment, including advertising, interview questions, referee checks and personnel pre-employment screening, emphasises child safeguarding.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.1.1	The entity emphasises its commitment to child safeguarding and zero-tolerance approach to child abuse in all aspects of its advertising, screening and recruitment for personnel.	✓			
5.1.2	The entity documents its safeguarding approach in recruitment and screening procedures and processes.	✓			
5.1.3	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children and appropriate child safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.			✓	
5.1.4	Position descriptions, selection criteria, referee checks and interview questions articulate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that children are valued and respected.</li> <li>the commitment of the entity to child safeguarding.</li> <li>where appropriate to the role, an understanding of children's developmental needs and culturally safe practices.</li> </ul>		✓		

<b>Observations:</b>					
5.1.3 Some but not all positions have been risk assessed against expected level of contact with children (and adults at risk). Refer <a href="#">Recommendation #4</a> .					
5.1.4 Given the high concentration of parishioners from culturally diverse backgrounds, a greater emphasis on culturally safe practices could be provided through induction. Refer <a href="#">Recommendation #4</a> .					
<b>Criterion 5.2 – Relevant personnel (including all seminarians, clergy and religious) have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.</b>					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.2.1	The entity has a policy which is implemented that ensures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>personnel have a current working with children check as required by legislation, prior to working with children; and</li> <li>where a working with children check is not required by legislation, other background checks for personnel are conducted prior to working with children.</li> </ul>	✓			
5.2.2	The entity keeps records and monitors the status of working with children checks and/or background checks for all personnel.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 5.3 - Personnel receive an appropriate induction and are aware of child safeguarding responsibilities, including reporting obligations.</b>					
		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 indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 5.4 - Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safeguarding</b>					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.4.1	Support, mentoring, oversight and professional supervision processes for personnel include child safeguarding.	✓			
5.4.2	Annual performance reviews for personnel include child safeguarding responsibilities relevant to their role.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b>					
5.4.2 Annual performance reviews are yet to be developed and embedded for all personnel. Refer <a href="#">Recommendation #4</a> .					
<b>Criterion 5.5 – Robust processes exist for screening candidates before and during seminary and religious formation, as well as for ongoing formation, support and supervision of clergy and religious.</b>					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.5.1	The Church Authority draws upon broad-ranging professional advice in its decision-making relating to candidates for seminary/formation programs and ordination/profession of vows. This includes a positive duty to disclose to other Church Authorities where an applicant or candidate for seminary/formation programs	✓			

	does not continue through to ordination/profession of vows.				
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	The entity promotes as normative the participation of all bishops, leaders of religious institutes, clergy and religious in active ministry, in no less than six hours professional/pastoral supervision per year.	✓			
5.5.4	The entity promotes as normative, all clergy and religious in active ministry, for the sake of proper accountability, are offered and access both ongoing professional development and annual performance appraisals.	✓			
5.5.5	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>					
Requirements of the indication are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.6 - Seminary and formation programs for clergy and religious have appropriate curriculum to build the knowledge and skills of candidates to understand and lead child safeguarding initiatives.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.6.1	Seminary and initial formation programs have appropriate curriculum throughout the formation program which builds candidates' knowledge and skills in a range of areas to support child safeguarding	Not applicable			
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs ensure promotion of pastoral responses to victims/survivors of sexual abuse.	Not applicable			
5.6.3	Seminary and initial formation programs are delivered in such a way as to protect against the development and/or reinforcement of clericalist attitudes and behaviours.	Not applicable			
<b>Observations:</b>					
N/A.					
Criterion 5.7 - Credentialing and movement of seminarians, clergy and religious is appropriately managed.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.7.1	The entity implements a system to assess the credentials and manage movement of all seminarians, clergy and religious moving between different seminaries and Church jurisdictions.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.8 - Entities which receive overseas clergy and religious for work in ministry have targeted programs for the screening, induction, professional supervision, and development of these individuals.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.8.1	Selection and screening procedures for overseas clergy and religious are targeted, thorough and follow, as far as practicable, the same processes as for Australian personnel. This includes the Australian Church Authority obtaining screening information from the International Church Authority.	✓			
5.8.2	All overseas clergy and religious participate in a Safeguarding Induction program, documented by the entity, before work with children begins.	✓			
5.8.3	Overseas clergy and religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least the first two years of their time in Australia.	✓			

5.8.4	The entity promotes as normative the participation of all overseas clergy and religious in active ministry in no less than six hours of professional/pastoral supervision per year.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
<b>Standard 6</b>		<b>Effective complaints management</b>			
<b><i>Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, families, carers, communities and personnel</i></b>					
Criterion 6.1 - The entity has an effective Complaints Handling Policy and procedures which clearly outline 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	The entity's policies, procedures and practices ensure that all mandatory reporting obligations are met.	✓			
6.1.2	There are documented procedures that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take for different types of complaints, including breaches of Codes of Conduct, disclosures, allegations or concerns of abuse of a child, be they historic or current.	✓			
6.1.3	There are clear procedures for identifying and mitigating actual and perceived conflicts of interest in complaint management.	✓			
6.1.4	The entity works in cooperation with relevant organisations and seeks specialist advice from statutory child protection services when necessary	✓			
6.1.5	Key roles and responsibilities in relation to handling complaints are articulated within the Complaint Handling Policy and procedures.	✓			
6.1.6	The Complaint Handling Policy and procedures differentiate, where appropriate, between a child victim and an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child.	✓			
6.1.7	A process is in place to record all child abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referrals. The system must be secure so that confidential information is stored, protected and retained for 50 years.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvements noted.					
Criterion 6.2 - The entity has a child-focused complaints handling system that is understood by children, families, carers and personnel.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.2.1	The complaints handling system prioritises the safety and well-being of children.	✓			
6.2.2	The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures are publicly available in a variety of formats, including age and developmentally appropriate for children, enabling complaints processes to be easily understood.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvements 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 requires that, upon receiving a complaint of child abuse, an initial risk assessment is conducted to identify and minimise any risk to children. Ongoing risk assessments are required throughout all investigation processes.	✓			
6.3.2	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that at the completion of the initial risk assessment, where a complaint of child sexual abuse is plausible, and there is a risk that the person may come into contact with children, the person be stood down from their role and/or ministry while the complaint is investigated.	✓			
6.3.3	The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned, and operates in conjunction, with the entity's documented disciplinary and grievance policies and processes, in such a way that at the completion of the initial risk assessment, a breach or breaches of the Code of Conduct in relation to inappropriate behaviour towards a child are effectively investigated and managed, and include provisions for personnel to be redeployed, stood down and/or dismissed.	✓			
6.3.4	Complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.	✓			
6.3.5	Support and care are provided to a child who has experienced or is alleging abuse, and other affected parties.	✓			
6.3.6	Appropriate confidentiality is maintained with due regard for the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant legislation in relation to information sharing in the context of child safeguarding.	✓			
6.3.7	Documented policies and processes empower and support personnel to raise, in good faith, concerns and allegations about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other personnel.	✓			
6.3.8	Where a complaint related to child sexual abuse against a seminarian, clergy or religious is substantiated on the balance of probabilities, with due respect to the rights of individuals, the Church Authority should remove that individual from ministry.	✓			
6.3.9	Where a seminarian, clergy or religious is convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse, that individual should be permanently removed from ministry. The Church Authority must take practicable steps to prohibit that individual from holding themselves out as being a person with religious authority and should present a case to the relevant dicastery for dismissal from the clerical state and/or dispensation from vows.	✓			

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

Criterion 6.4	The entity has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.	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 authority/ies, regardless of whether the reporting is mandated; and</li> <li>personnel cooperate with law enforcement procedures and directives.</li> </ul>	✓			
-------	--	---	--	--	--

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



Criterion 6.5 - Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.5.1	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that all relevant reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.6 - The Church Authority ensures mechanisms are in place to care for adult complainants.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.6.1	The entity offers appropriate pastoral care to adult complainants, which recognises their unique needs. This should include an offer from the Church Authority to meet the complainant in person.	✓			
6.6.2	The Church Authority facilitates adult complainants' access to appropriately trained personnel whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the complainant. This is done in consultation with the complainant.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.7 - The Church Authority ensures mechanisms are in place to monitor and support respondents facing allegations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.7.1	The Church Authority has access to appropriately trained personnel - lay, religious or clergy - whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent. This is done in consultation with the respondent.	✓			
6.7.2	The Church Authority has suitable arrangements in place for the monitoring and support of a respondent, where there is a plausible complaint, until (and if) the Church Authority no longer has responsibility for monitoring the respondent.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					

Standard 7		Ongoing education and training			
<i>Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through information, ongoing education and training</i>					
Criterion 7.1 - Personnel are trained and supported to effectively implement the entity's child safeguarding policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.1.1	The entity provides regular opportunities to educate/train personnel on its Child Safeguarding Policy and procedures including through induction and refresher safeguarding training (at least every three years).	✓			
7.1.2	The entity's induction and refresher safeguarding training must as a minimum cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• safeguarding risk management.</li> <li>• Child Safeguarding Policy and procedures.</li> <li>• Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.</li> <li>• reporting obligations; and e-safety training.</li> </ul>	✓			



7.1.3	The entity keeps records of participation to ensure all personnel attend induction and refresher safeguarding training.	✓			
7.1.4	The entity ensures that personnel who have specific child safeguarding responsibilities, such as those appointed to the role of safeguarding co-ordinator and those appointed to the Safeguarding Committee, receive ongoing support and professional development relevant to their role.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 7.2 - Personnel receive training 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	The entity provides regular training to relevant personnel which equips them with the knowledge to: <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 understand, identify, and respond to abusive behaviours by a child towards another child.</li> </ul>	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 7.3 - Personnel receive training to enable them to respond effectively to child safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of child abuse.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
7.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The entity provides training to equip relevant personnel to appropriately respond to and support those bringing forward concerns, disclosures and allegations of child abuse.</li> </ul>	✓			
7.3.2	The entity provides training to ensure personnel are aware of information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.	✓			
7.3.3	The entity provides training to ensure personnel are aware of their reporting obligations under state/territory legislative requirements including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reporting criminal behaviour to police;</li> <li>mandatory reporting to child protection authorities;</li> <li>Reportable Conduct Scheme; and reporting to regulatory authorities/government departments</li> </ul>	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 7.4 - Personnel receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
7.4.1	The entity provides cultural safety training to equip relevant personnel to create culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b>					

The Diocese adopt the training that has been developed by Catholic Education and where appropriate possibly deliver this program and relevant modules as face-to-face format. One immediate priority is to provide training to clergy on *Vos estis lux mundi* to clergy. Refer [Recommendation #5](#).

Standard 8		Safe physical and online environments			
<b>Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed</b>					
Criterion 8.1 - Personnel identify and mitigate risks in online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.1.1	The entity's safeguarding risk management plan addresses physical and online risks including risks arising from child to child and adult to child interactions, and the nature of physical spaces.	✓			
8.1.2	The entity's policies require the use of safe online applications for children to learn, communicate and seek help.		✓		
8.1.3	Personnel are proactive in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children.	✓			
8.1.4	A policy is documented and implemented that ensures where one-to-one interactions between an adult and child take place, they are conducted in an open or visible space, or within the clear line of sight of another adult. This includes ministries/services such as counselling, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, coaching, spiritual direction and mentoring.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
8.1.2 The Diocese has developed some polies to address safe use of online applications for children (and adults at risk) to learn, communicate and seek help. These need to be embedded across the Diocese. Refer <a href="#">Recommendation #6</a> .					
Criterion 8.2 - The online environment is used in accordance with the entity's Code of Conduct, safeguarding policies and procedures.		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 and relevant communication protocols.	✓			
8.2.2	The entity routinely monitors the online environment, reporting and responding to breaches of its Code of Conduct or child safeguarding policies in accordance with the entity's disciplinary, complaint handling or other relevant processes.			✓	
<b>Observations:</b>					
Only some volunteers use a Diocesan domain name address to communicate with parishioners. Refer <a href="#">Recommendation #6</a> .					
Criterion 8.3 - Risk management plans consider risks posed by the entity's settings, activities and physical environments.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.3.1	The entity assesses safeguarding risks in the physical environments under its control or management including buildings, structures, open spaces, grounds, homes of religious and clergy, and arrangements for live-in carers/caretakers.			✓	
8.3.2	Where an entity becomes aware that a person (other than personnel of that entity) attending any of its services or activities is the subject of a substantiated complaint of child sexual abuse or has been convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse, the entity has in place and implements a process for assessing and managing the	✓			

	risks posed to children by that person's ongoing involvement in the service or activity.				
<b>Observations:</b>					
8.3.1 ACSL notes the Diocese is progressing assessing church confessional spaces to ensure that the confessional precludes physical contact between the penitent and the cleric and/or there is a clear line of sight into the confessional. Refer <a href="#">Recommendation #6</a> .					
Criterion 8.4 - Entities that contract facilities and services to and from third parties have procurement policies that ensure safeguarding of children.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.4.1	The entity considers the risks posed to children arising from any third parties engaged by the entity and conducts sufficient due diligence to ensure that the third party has appropriate child safeguarding practices and policies in place.		✓		
8.4.2	The entity has conducted sufficient due diligence on all third parties who use the entity's facilities to ensure child safeguarding practices and policies are in place.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
8.4.1 ACSL notes that the Diocese's requirement that all users of parish/church facilities complete a Third Party Agreement is yet to be fully developed and embedded. Refer <a href="#">Recommendation #6</a> .					

Standard 9		Continuous improvement			
<i>Entities regularly review and improve implementation of their systems for keeping children safe</i>					
Criterion 9.1 - The entity regularly reviews and improves child safeguarding practices.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.1.1	The entity has a clearly documented Safeguarding Implementation Plan which outlines the monitoring and continual improvement of child safeguarding practices. The Child Safeguarding Implementation Plan is regularly reviewed, progress is tracked, and actions/strategies updated.	✓			
9.1.2	The Church Authority monitors compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards during systematic visits to parishes, ministries and/or congregational works.	✓			
9.1.3	The Safeguarding Committee coordinates annual self-audits at a local level (parishes, ministries and/or congregational works).	✓			
9.1.4	The entity's Child Safeguarding Policy is subject to regular review – at least every three years.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
Criterion 9.2 - The entity analyses concerns and complaints to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.2.1	Processes are in place to analyse individual incidents or complaints relating to child safeguarding practices and/or failures.	✓			
9.2.2	Processes are in place to identify systemic issues or patterns and drive continuous improvement.	✓			
<b>Observations</b>					
Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					
Criterion 9.3 - The Church Authority reports on the findings of relevant reviews to personnel, children, families, carers and community.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

9.3.1	The Church Authority promotes to all its stakeholders any audit reports relating to the Church Authority, and related entities, published by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd	N/A			
9.3.2	The Church Authority reports on findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures and practices to its stakeholders.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendation for improvement noted.					

<b>Standard 10</b>	<b>Policies and procedures support child safety</b>
--------------------	---

<b><i>Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children</i></b>					
--	--	--	--	--	--

Criterion 10.1 - Policies and procedures address 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 recommendation 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 entity's policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding are readily available and accessible to all personnel	✓			

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

Criterion 10.3 - Best practice policy models and stakeholder consultation inform the development and review of policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.3.1	The entity has processes in place to monitor adherence to policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding.	✓			
10.3.2	The entity has processes in place to develop and review its policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding. These processes include consulting with and incorporating advice from experts, children, families, carers and communities.	✓			

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

Criterion 10.4 - The Church Authority and leaders model compliance with policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.4.1	The Church Authority and leaders promote and enact all policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding.	✓			

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

Criterion 10.5 - Personnel understand and implement the policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.5.1	The entity encourages regular discussion and feedback from personnel on their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures.	✓			

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

## 5. Detailed findings



### Standard 1: Committed leadership, governance and culture

*Child safeguarding is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture*

Recommendation #1		Priority 2
1.2.2	The entity appoints a safeguarding committee at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of child safeguarding practices, including Child Safeguarding Policy and related procedures and practices.	
1.5.3	Leaders of the entity manage safeguarding risks effectively, through regular identification, monitoring, reporting and review of risks	
Details of finding	<p><b>1.2.2</b> The Diocesan Safeguarding Terms of Reference were due for revision in June 2024. Currently, the Safeguarding Committee is appointed at the highest level of leadership to oversee child (and adult at risk) safeguarding practices. This is congruent with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standard 1. The Committee decided to wait until Bishop-Elect Joe Caddy is installed before finalising the policy review process. It is expected the Safeguarding Committee will confirm the authority of the Committee in the Diocese.</p>	
	<p><b>1.5.3</b> The fieldwork investigation revealed that while the Diocese has developed and embedded an overarching risk management culture, some risk assessments require further analysis to embed strong practices.</p>	
Recommendation	<p><b>1.2.2</b> The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee Terms of Reference appoints the Committee at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of child safeguarding practices, including safeguarding policies and related procedures. The Terms of Reference are being reviewed and ACSL recommend that the same Terms of Reference are updated to include adults at risk. Further, the Committee retains its status at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices. Finally, it would be useful for the Diocese to provide some leadership training to the Safeguarding Committee when the Terms of Reference are completed.</p>	
	<p><b>1.5.3</b> All parishes and ministries continue to provide a copy of their Risk Assessments to the Safeguarding Coordinator for review.</p>	
Agreed Action	<p>1.2.2 The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee Terms of Reference will re-appoint the Committee at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices, including safeguarding policies and related procedures. The Diocese will provide leadership training to the Safeguarding Committee when the Terms of Reference are completed.</p> <p>1.5.3 All parishes and ministries continue to provide a copy of their Risk Assessments to the Safeguarding Coordinator for review.</p>	
Responsibility	Diocesan Safeguarding Co-Ordinator	
Due date	30 April 2025	



## Standard 2: Children are safe, informed and participate

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

Recommendation #2		Priority 2
2.2.1	The entity provides children with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful peer relationships including social media.	
2.4.1	Personnel have the knowledge, skills and awareness to identify potential signs of harm and actively support children to raise concern.	
Details of finding	<p>The following points were noted:</p> <p><b>2.2.1</b> Some parishes have child-appropriate resources on the importance of friendships and in parishes that have newer families as parishioners, further resources (e.g. videos) could be developed and rolled out across the Diocese.</p> <p><b>2.4.1</b> The OSHC programs are connected to the Diocese through the parishes and more work needs to be done to provide programs with resources, information, access and/or referral to appropriate abuse prevention programs.</p>	
Recommendation	<b>2.2.1</b>	Age-appropriate safeguarding resources that have a focus on appropriate friendship are developed and rolled out to parishes and ministries.
	<b>2.4.1</b>	Generic provider safeguarding support materials are available for all ministries and in parishes.
Agreed Action	<p>2.2.1 Age-appropriate safeguarding resources will focus on how appropriate friendships are developed and rolled out to parishes and ministries.</p> <p>2.4.1 Generic provider safeguarding support materials will be available for all ministries and in parishes.</p>	
Responsibility	Diocesan Safeguarding Co-Ordinator	
Due date	30 April 2025	



## Standard 4: Equity is promoted and diversity is respected

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

Recommendation #3		Priority 3
4.2.1 - The entity produces children material in accessible language and formats that promote inclusion and informs all children of the support and complaint processes available to them.		
Details of finding	<p>The following points were noted:</p> <p><b>4.2.1</b> The Diocese has produced child-friendly material in accessible language for many of their culturally diverse communities and has developed a plan to roll out materials in a range of community languages.</p>	
Recommendation	<b>4.2.1</b>	The Diocese roll out child (and adult at risk) safeguarding materials and resources in appropriate communication mediums.

<b>Agreed Action</b>	4.2.1 The Diocese will produce child-friendly material in accessible language for many of their culturally diverse communities and has developed a plan to roll out materials in a range of community languages. 4.2.2 The Diocese will roll out child (and adult at risk) safeguarding materials and resources in appropriate communication mediums.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Diocesan Safeguarding Co-Ordinator
<b>Due date</b>	30 August 2025



### Standard 5: Robust human resource management

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

<b>Recommendation #4</b>		<b>Priority 2</b>
<b>5.1.3</b>	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children and appropriate child safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.	
<b>5.1.4</b>	Position descriptions, selection criteria, referee checks and interview questions articulate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That children are valued and respected;</li> <li>• The commitment of the entity to child safeguarding; and</li> <li>• Where appropriate to the role (Indicator 5.1.3), an understanding of the child developmental needs and culturally safe practices.</li> </ul>	
<b>5.4.1</b>	Professional supervision, mentoring and annual performance reviews for personnel includes a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.	
<b>Details of finding</b>	<b>5.1.3</b>	Some but not all positions have been risk assessed against expected level of contact with children.
	<b>5.1.4</b>	There is a high concentration of parishioners from culturally diverse backgrounds, and a greater emphasis on culturally safe practices could be provided through induction and ongoing training.
	<b>5.4.1</b>	Some personnel are yet to participate in professional supervision and annual safeguarding performance reviews.
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>5.1.3</b>	All positions to be risk assessed against expected level of contact with children (and adults at risk) and appropriate recruitment process implemented.
	<b>5.1.4</b>	Recruitment processes to highlight awareness of the needs of parishioners from different cultural backgrounds.
	<b>5.4.1</b>	All personnel should participate in professional supervision and annual performance reviews.
<b>Agreed Action</b>	5.1.3 All positions will be risk assessed against expected level of contact with children (and adults at risk) and appropriate recruitment process implemented. 5.1.4 Recruitment processes will highlight awareness of the needs of parishioners from different cultural backgrounds. 5.4.1 All personnel will participate in professional supervision and annual performance reviews.	

<b>Responsibility</b>	Diocesan Safeguarding Co-Ordinator
<b>Due date</b>	30 April 2024



### Standard 7: Ongoing education and training

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

<b>Recommendation #5</b>		<b>Priority 2</b>
<b>7.4.1 – The entity provides cultural safety training to equip relevant personnel to create culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</b>		
<b>Details of finding</b>	<b>7.4.1</b> ACSL notes that Catholic Education are working on their Reconciliation Action Plan and the provision of this training and information could be broadened to include all personnel across the Diocese. The personnel interviewed expressed a preference for all safeguarding training to be held-to-face. One immediate priority is to provide training to clergy on <i>Vos estis lux mundi</i> to clergy.	
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>7.4.1</b> The Diocese consult with Catholic Education in relation to their RAP which could be developed to meet the needs of the Diocese.	
<b>Agreed Action</b>	7.4.1 The Diocese will consult with Catholic Education in relation to their RAP which will be developed to meet the needs of the Diocese. In addition, the Diocese will provide training to clergy on <i>Vos estis lux mundi</i> to clergy.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Diocesan Safeguarding Co-Ordinator	
<b>Due date</b>	30 April 2025	



### 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.*

<b>Recommendation #6</b>		<b>Priority 2</b>
<b>8.1.2</b>	The entity's policies require the use of safe online applications for children to learn, communicate and seek help.	
<b>8.2.2</b>	The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary, or other relevant policies and reported to leadership.	
<b>8.3.1</b>	The entity assesses and mitigates safeguarding risks in the physical environments under its control and/or management, including buildings, structures open spaces, grounds homes of religious and clergy and arrangements for live-in carers/caretakers.	
<b>8.4.1</b>	If a third party provides services or uses the organization facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.	



<b>Details of finding</b>	<b>8.1.2</b>	The Diocese has yet to embed policies to address safe use of online applications for children (and adults at risk) to learn, communicate and seek help.
	<b>8.2.2</b>	Only some volunteers use a Diocesan domain name address to communicate with parishioners.
	<b>8.3.1</b>	ACSL notes the Diocese is progressing the assessment of church confessional spaces to ensure that the confessional precludes physical contact between the penitent and the cleric and/or there is a clear line of sight into the confessional.
	<b>8.4.1</b>	ACSL notes that the Diocese's requirement that all users of parish/church facilities to complete a Third-Party Agreement is yet to be fully developed and embedded.
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>8.1.2</b>	The Diocese embed polices that address safe use of online applications for children and adults at risk to learn, communicate and seek help.
	<b>8.2.2</b>	All personnel are provided with a domain name email address in the conduct of their ministerial activities.
	<b>8.3.1</b>	The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee develop a plan to monitor the roll-out of appropriately designed confessional spaces in parishes.
	<b>8.4.1</b>	Ensure all parishes have Third-Party Agreements in place for all external activities. Request these agencies to provide a copy of their Risk Assessment and safeguarding policies and procedures.
<b>Agreed Action</b>	8.1.2 The Diocese will embed polices that address safe use of online applications for children and adults at risk to learn, communicate and seek help. 8.2.2 All personnel will be provided with a domain name email address in the conduct of their ministerial activities. 8.3.1 The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee will develop a plan to monitor the roll-out of appropriately designed confessional spaces in parishes 8.4.1 All parishes will have Third-Party Agreements in place for all external activities. These agencies will provide a copy of their Risk Assessment and safeguarding policies and procedures to the parish.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Diocesan Safeguarding Co-Ordinator	
<b>Due date</b>	30 April 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: <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 NCCSS 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 NCCSS 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>.</p> <p><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>	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: <a href="https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment">https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment</a>
<b>Complainant</b>	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.
<b>Conflicts of interest</b>	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.
<b>Consecrated Life/Institute of Consecrated Life</b>	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.
<b>Cultural safety</b>	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.
<b>Dicastery</b>	means a department of the Roman Curia.
<b>Dignity or Right to Risk</b>	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)
<b>Diminished capacity</b>	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: <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>Diocese</b>	means a diocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelature 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 diocese, 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.