Archdiocese of Perth
Safeguarding Audit Report
February 2025

National Catholic
Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:

ACSL
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD

A safe Church for everyone

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

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

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
Website: www.acsltd.org.au

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Foreword

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

NCSS Certification:

- Provides independent recognition that the 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 Archdiocese of Perth's performance against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. The report includes compliance level ratings for each standard, criteria, and indicator, and includes explanatory notes for key findings.

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

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

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Context

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

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

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

The Australian Human Rights Commission released the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the National Principles). The National Principles are derived from the Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) which relate specifically to child safety.

The NCSS give effect to the National Principles and are the way that the Catholic Church is responding to the recommendation of the Royal Commission that religious organisations adopt and implement the Child Safe Standards. The NCSS are designed to contextualise the National Principles and Child Safe Standards to the Catholic Church in Australia. For more information about the NCSS please see: **National Catholic Safeguarding Standards - Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd.**

This audit report includes the results of the assessment against the NCSS for the Archdiocese of Perth.

1.2 Background

The Archdiocese of Perth, established in 1845 and recognised as an Archdiocese in 1913, is located in Perth, the capital city of the state of Western Australia. It is bounded in the north by the Diocese of Geraldton, in the east by the South Australian border, and in the south by the Diocese of Bunbury and by the Southern Ocean in its south-east corner. Perth is the Metropolitan See for the Province of Western Australia which includes the Dioceses of Bunbury, Geraldton and Broome. Archbishop Costelloe was installed as the ninth Bishop and sixth Archbishop of Perth on 21 March 2012.

The Archdiocese of Perth has been assessed by ACSL as a Church entity needing to undertake the full NCSS audit. There are 10 NCSS Standards, 48 NCSS Criteria and 104 NCSS Indicators that apply to full audit entities. For further details of the risk-based audit framework, refer to the ACSL website.

There are 109 parishes within the Archdiocese (consisting of 94 metropolitan and 15 country parishes). There are 112 schools (including primary and secondary schools, 2023 data), two seminaries and one Catholic university, which are not included in the scope of this audit.

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

The full audit report is also publicly available on the Publications and Reports page of the ACSL website.

1.3   Audit Approach

The purpose of the 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 Archdiocese of Perth and the extent to which they meet the requirements of the NCSS.

This audit was conducted jointly by ACSL and Australian Audit, a specialist auditing firm located in Perth.

1.4   In scope assessment

The Archdiocese of Perth was assessed against Edition 2 of the NCSS, covering both children and adults at risk. In July/August 2024, ACSL completed a review audit of the Archdiocese of Perth NCSS Self-Assessment, which provided the Archdiocese with an opportunity to present evidence of their congruency with the NCSS. Fieldwork was conducted from 27 August to 6 September. Twenty-seven parishes (25% of the Archdiocese's total parishes) were chosen for visits by ACSL as part of the audit process. There were two audit teams with two auditors who completed the fieldwork component of the audit. This report was finalised in February 2025.

As part of this audit, ACSL also engaged with key personnel at the Office of the Archdiocese, the Safeguarding Program and the WA Professional Standards Office. The activities of a number of the agencies audited under this NCSS framework are also subject to existing regulatory requirements and external accreditations (e.g. NDIS). Under the ACSL audit framework, representatives from these entities were interviewed to assess the implementation of their Archdiocesan safeguarding practices.

The audit scope included:

- Audit activities at the Archdiocesan administrative centre.
- Interviews, observations, and enquiry with the Archdiocesan leadership, including their Safeguarding Program and Professional Standards Office and relevant ministerial and agency personnel.
- A review of the Archdiocese's intranet, focusing on key safeguarding documents, policies, and procedures.
- Assessment of the design and testing of the operation of safeguarding controls implemented by the Archdiocese.
- Site visits to:
    - o   27 parishes, country and metropolitan
    - o   7 agencies
    - o   3 chaplaincies
    - o   3 communities
- Interviews with over 130 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 Archdiocese of Perth and its representatives at the time of the assessment and, where applicable, any subsequent information the Archdiocese of Perth 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

Mr Robert Campbell
Director
Australian Audit

2. Overall Audit Findings

The NCSS assessment of the Archdiocese of Perth indicates that the Archdiocese of Perth is successfully implementing and embedding a culture of safeguarding throughout the Archdiocese.

ACSL's assessment of the implementation of NCSS indicators by a Church Authority has been determined using a four-point maturity scale[1]. This maturity scale provides a more granular analysis than mere compliance and provides for a program of continuous improvement.

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

The Archdiocese of Perth is a complex governance environment with multi-faceted operational arrangements and challenges. It is to be commended for its safeguarding efforts, particularly its significant investment in safeguarding resources. Standards, policies, procedures and documents are created by the Safeguarding Office; advice and best practices are provided and promoted from this central function; the Safeguarding Office provides significant support to the agencies and parishes in their adoption of safeguarding practices.

Our assessment indicates that the Archdiocese of Perth has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 90% of the relevant indicators to their operations. Assessment for each maturity scale is as follows:

- 62% indicators are developed and embedded
- 28% indicators are substantially progressed.
- 10% in the initial stages of implementation.

Of the 104 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church entities, 5 of these are not relevant to the Archdiocese of Perth's operations.

The key findings from the audit are summarised below.

NCSS Standard 1 – Committed Leadership, governance and culture

The Archdiocese of Perth takes a zero tolerance to abuse approach. The Archdiocese has invested in a small but efficient Safeguarding Office who are providing a comprehensive service including centralised safeguarding resources, safeguarding support and advice to parishes and agencies. This Office has created and shared a range of safeguarding policies and procedures which includes a safeguarding contribution to the Code of Conduct.

The Archdiocese of Perth has developed and embedded a strong safeguarding culture at an Archdiocesan office level, while some parishes and agencies are still working to embed strong practices. The safeguarding co-ordinators across the Archdiocese are committed and dedicated, usually volunteers, who are essential to this culture.

The Archdiocese of Perth has recently appointed a Risk Manager at the central level. This appointment will allow the risk management practices across the Archdiocese to improve and encompass safeguarding.

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

There are transparent and accountable governance arrangements in place to facilitate the implementation of the safeguarding framework across the Archdiocese.

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

The Archdiocese of Perth has many strong resources and practices to ensure children are safe, informed and participate. These resources are made visible and made available in public areas in most parishes and agencies. Practices are being developed to ensure adults at risk are safe, and more resources are required for greater inclusion of, and communication with, adults at risk.

NCSS Standard 3 – Partnering with families, carers and communities

Many families, carers and communities are involved in safeguarding within the Archdiocese of Perth. More strategies could be adopted to involve, inform and encourage greater involvement.

The Archdiocese of Perth has strong connections with a number of different cultural communities. Some of these connections are numerous and longstanding, with new ones being established as needs arise. These connections meet a need within each community; each community obtains safeguarding resources and support from the Archdiocese's Safeguarding Office.

NCSS Standard 4 - Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected

Equity and diversity are valued and encouraged within the Archdiocese of Perth; improvement could be made by providing translations of materials for the many communities involved. Since the fieldwork, the Safeguarding Office has created a number of these resources in different languages and formats (including Easy Read format), and these are being rolled out.

The multicultural communities associated with the Archdiocese of Perth hold well-attended diverse, and inclusive events. They run separately to the parish events, sometimes using parish venues.

NCSS Standard 5 - Robust human resource management

The Archdiocese of Perth has strong recruitment and human resource management policies, procedures and strategies which have a safeguarding lens. At the parish level, these could be implemented more consistently, for example adoption of position descriptions for volunteer roles. Where fieldwork observations highlighted inconsistencies in the recording of volunteer details, the Archdiocese Safeguarding Office has since proactively worked with each relevant parish to address the issues and improve the systems.

Ongoing supervision and people management policies are in place but need additional time and resources. Mentoring programs for new clergy are in place to ensure clergy become familiar with Australia's culture, and are being expanded to ensure they are more comprehensive. The professional/pastoral supervision program is actively supported by the Archdiocese executive team. While mentoring programmes, professional/pastoral supervision, professional development and regular appraisals are available, not all clergy and religious in ministry are availing of these opportunities on a regular basis.

NCSS Standard 6 - Effective complaints management

Complaints policies and procedures are comprehensively documented within the Archdiocese of Perth and meet legislative requirements and address pastoral issues. Additional training, or reminders, are important to ensure all remain aware of this complaint management framework.

NCSS Standard 7 - Ongoing training & education

Regular education and training are provided to clergy, staff and volunteers. This education and training are flexible both in format and in accessibility. The recently modified training framework is slowly being adopted in the parishes.

In particular, the Archdiocese is to be commended on the uptake of its new safeguarding induction program. Launched towards the end of June 2024, over 2035 people have completed the online course (data for 17/06/24 – 19/11/24).

NCSS Standard 8 - Safe physical and online environments

The Archdiocese has many safeguarding tools in place to minimise opportunities for abuse to occur. Examples include clergy movement forms, self-assessment tools and volunteer registers. Templates, protocols and instructions are available on the Archdiocese intranet for agencies and parishes to access and implement.

The recent appointment of an Archdiocese Risk Manager will improve the risk management strategy, particularly regarding safeguarding. The recent adoption and current roll-out of Microsoft Teams will contribute to the safety, security and consistency of the Archdiocese's online environment.

NCSS Standard 9 - Continuous improvement

The Archdiocese of Perth regularly reviews and improves their safeguarding systems. There are many processes in place to ensure the Safeguarding Office contributes to the continuous improvement of the environment.

NCSS Standard 10 - Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults

The policy and procedures of the Archdiocese of Perth are thoroughly documented and reviewed, and stored within the Intranet, which has been designed to be accessed by all staff, parishes and agencies (some parishes need additional assistance for this access). There are processes implemented to ensure these policies and procedures are reviewed and monitored. The Church Authority and leaders promote and champion the NCSS and all policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding.

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

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

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

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

Table 1: Summary of NCSS Assessment

National Catholic Safeguarding Standard	# NCSS indicators	Not Relevant	Assessment of Implementation			
			Developed Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1: Committed leadership, governance & culture	17	1	9	4	3	-
2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate	6	-	2	2	2	-
3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6	-	2	4	-	-
4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected	4	-	3	1	-	-
5: Robust human resource management	22	3	11	5	3	-
6: Effective complaints management	19	-	17	2	-	-
7: Ongoing training & education	11	-	7	4	-	-
8: Safe physical and online environments	7	-	2	3	2	-
9: Continuous improvement	6	1	3	2	-	-
10: Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults	6	-	5	1	-	-
TOTAL	**104**	**5**	**61**	**28**	**10**	**-**
	99		**90%**		**10%**	

These are detailed in Section 3 of this report. Each recommendation also contains the response of the Archdiocese of Perth to the audit finding, including management actions.

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

3. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation #1	i. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support, resources and work with parishes and agencies still working to embed their safeguarding culture. ii. The Archdiocese will update the Archdiocesan wide risk framework to include safeguarding components.
Recommendation #2	i. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support, resources and work with parishes on adults at risk engagement and support.
Recommendation #3	i. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support, resources and work with parishes on community engagement and awareness for adults at risk. ii. The Archdiocese will continue to work with parishes to further integrate safeguarding into community roles through job descriptions.
Recommendation #4	i. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support and resources for parishes and agencies on complaint processes and supports, focusing on materials in additional languages and accessible formats.
Recommendation #5	i. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further resources and support on record keeping.
Recommendation #5	ii. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further resources and support on clergy mentoring, professional development and professional pastoral supervision.
Recommendation #6	i. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further training and resources for parishes and agencies about the implementation of data retention policies and procedures.
Recommendation #7	i. The Archdiocese will continue to promote and adopt cultural safety training.
Recommendation #8	i. As per Recommendation #1 - The Archdiocese will update the Archdiocesan wide risk framework to include safeguarding components. ii. The Archdiocese will continue to implement the standardised IT infrastructure, including training for all clergy, personnel and volunteers.
Recommendation #9	i. The Archdiocese will continue in its plan to undertake additional analysis of individual incidents and complaints relating to safeguarding practices. ii. Parishes and non-externally regulated agencies will be encouraged to share findings from safeguarding self-assessments with their stakeholders.
Recommendation #10	i. The Archdiocese will establish a reflection program (for example a community of practice) to encourage additional reflection and feedback from personnel.

4. Assessment of Compliance with NCSS indicators

Standard 1	Committed leadership, governance and culture
The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture	

Criterion 1.1 – There is a public commitment to safeguarding that takes a zero tolerance approach to abuse.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.1.1	The Safeguarding Policy is approved and endorsed by the Church Authority and/or relevant leadership body and is publicly available.	✓			
1.1.2	The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, widely displayed, and made publicly available.	✓			

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

Criterion 1.2 - A culture of safeguarding children and adults is championed and modelled at all levels of the Church Authority from the top down and bottom up.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.2.1	A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority and leaders by: • promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone. • emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and • actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management.		✓		
1.2.2	A Safeguarding Committee is appointed at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices, policies, and procedures.	✓			
1.2.3	A Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) is appointed with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.			✓	
1.2.4	Personnel understand that good safeguarding practices are everyone's responsibility and are empowered to contribute to the organisation's safeguarding practices.			✓	

Observations:
1.2 The fieldwork investigation revealed that the Archdiocese of Perth has developed and embedded an overarching safeguarding culture while some parishes and ministries are still working to embed strong practices. Refer Recommendation #1.

Criterion 1.3 - Governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy across the entity's activities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.3.1	Governance arrangements are transparent and include safeguarding roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability for the safeguarding of children and adults is clear.	✓			
1.3.2	Where the Church Authority's governance includes	Not relevant to current activities			

	countries other than Australia, the NCSS are applied wherever possible, taking into account cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.				

Observations:

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

Criterion 1.4 – The entity's Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural standards towards children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.4.1	The Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour.	✓			
1.4.2	The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, families, and carers.	✓			
1.4.3	The Code of Conduct considers the needs of all children and adults at risk, paying particular attention to: • First Nations people. • individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are considered to be at risk of abuse'; • individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. • children in out of home care, or are homeless; and, • children and adults of diverse sexuality.	✓			
1.4.4	The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.	✓			

Observations:

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

Criterion 1.5 - The entity's risk management plan focuses on preventing, identifying, and mitigating safeguarding risks to children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.5.1	The Risk Management Plan considers the needs of children and adults with diminished capacity, and how and when adults at risk make informed choices (dignity of risk).			✓	
1.5.2	The Risk Management Plan incorporates procedures to assess, evaluate, review, and oversee safeguarding of children and adults at risk within its ministry and/or service.			✓	
1.5.3	There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report, and review risks.			✓	

Observations:

1.5 The fieldwork investigations and desktop review indicate that risk management needs improvement within the Archdiocese of Perth. The recent appointment of a new Risk Manager at the Archdiocese level will support addressing these gaps. Refer Recommendation #1.

Criterion 1.6 - Personnel understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping for safeguarding and professional standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.6.1	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures are documented and communicated to personnel.		✓		
1.6.2	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures align with best practice.	✓			

Observations:
1.6.1 The fieldwork indicates that comprehension of these policies and procedures is sporadic. Refer to Recommendation #1.

Standard 2	Children and adults are safe, informed and participate

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

Criterion 2.1 – Children and adults at risk engaged in an entity's ministry and/or services are informed about their rights, including safety, decision making, participation and how a complaint will be managed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.1.1	Age-appropriate strategies are used to engaged children, seek their views about what makes them feel safe, and enable them to participate in decisions that affect them.	✓			
2.1.2	Adults at risk (or carers where appropriate) are engaged to provide their views about decisions which affect them, what makes them feel safe and to contribute to safeguarding approaches.			✓	
2.1.3	The organisation makes children and adults at risk aware of their rights, including their right to be safe from abuse, and who to contact if they are concerned about their safety or the safety of others.		✓		

Observations:
2.1 Interviews conducted during the fieldwork indicate that support material, resources and engagement with adults at risk requires additional attention. 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	Children are provided with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful peer relationships.		✓		

Observations:
Information is supplied in resources but not explained in all parishes. Refer to Recommendation #2.

Criterion 2.3 - The importance of friendships and social connections for adults at risk is recognised and encouraged, helping them feel safe and less isolated.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.3.1	Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.			✓	

Observations:
2.3.1 Interviews conducted during the fieldwork indicate that support material, resources and engagement with adults at risk requires additional attention. Refer to Recommendation #2.

Criterion 2.4 – Where relevant to the setting or context, children and families are offered access to abuse prevention programs and related information that is age appropriate.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.4.1	Children and families are provided with information, access and/or referral to abuse prevention programs, appropriate to the child's age, development, ability, and level of understanding.	✓			

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

Standard 3	Partnering with families, carers and communities

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

Criterion 3.1 – Parents, carers and/or guardians participate in decisions affecting their child, or adults with diminished capacity.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.1.1	The entity encourages parents, carers and/or guardians to take an active role in monitoring the safety of those engaged in the ministry and/or service.		✓		

Observations

3.1.1 Fieldwork indicates that not all parishes actively remind parents, carers and/or guardians that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Refer Recommendation #3.

Criterion 3.2 – Families, carers and communities are engaged with and are provided information about the Church Authority's approach to safeguarding.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.		✓		
3.2.2	Safeguarding information is provided and widely available, including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinators.	✓			

Observations:

3.2.1 Fieldwork indicates that not all parishes actively remind families, carers and communities to contribute to safeguarding discussions. Refer Recommendation #3.

Criterion 3.3 - Families, carers and communities are informed about the Church Authority's operations and governance; and have an opportunity to have a say in the safeguarding policies and practices.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.3.1	Processes are in place to engage families, carers and communities about their views on safeguarding policies and practices.		✓		
3.3.2	Families, carers and communities are aware of the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services directly to children and adults at risk.		✓		

Observations:

3.3 Fieldwork indicates that not all parishes inform families, carers and communities about operations and governance, and neither are they provided an opportunity to have a say in the local safeguarding policies and practices. Refer Recommendation #3.

Criterion 3.4 – The entity raises community awareness of the dignity and rights of all children and adults		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.4.1	The entity promotes and/or participates in activities which raise awareness of abuse prevention and the rights and dignity of children and adults at risk.	✓			

Observations:

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

Standard 4	Equity is promoted and diversity is respected			
Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice				

Criterion 4.1 - The diverse circumstances and backgrounds of children and adults at risk are acknowledged and accommodated by providing appropriate support.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.1.1	The Safeguarding Policy and procedures demonstrate an understanding, and awareness of the diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse.	✓			
4.1.2	The Complaints Handling Policy and practices address barriers that may prevent a disclosure of abuse being made and that hinders personnel from recognising and responding appropriately.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Criterion 4.2 – Children and adults have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that promote inclusion, are culturally safe, and accessible.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.2.1	Information about complaint processes and supports are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.		✓		
Observations: 4.2.1 Fieldwork indicates that this information could be additionally provided in more accessible and culturally safe ways. Refer to Recommendation #4.					

Criterion 4.3 - The diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those living with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and adults who are unable to live at home, and those of diverse sexuality, are acknowledged.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.3.1	The Safeguarding Policy and procedures empower children and adults by reflecting attitudes and behaviours that respect their inherent dignity, are inclusive and are responsive to diverse needs.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 5	Robust human resource management

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

Criterion 5.1 – A strong commitment to safeguarding underpins an entity's recruitment.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.1.1	The commitment to safeguarding and a zero-tolerance approach to abuse are explicit in advertising, screening, and recruitment for personnel.	✓			
5.1.2	Recruitment and screening procedures and processes are fully documented.		✓		
5.1.3	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children/adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.		✓		

Observations:

5.1.2 – 5.1.3 Fieldwork investigations indicate that these indicators are addressed at the Archdiocese administrative and agency level, but are not consistently implemented at the parish level. Refer Recommendation #5.

Criterion 5.2 – Personnel have current clearances (for example, working with children checks) and/or equivalent background checks relevant to their role.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.2.1	All personnel are required to have a background check or clearance (as relevant to their role).	✓			
5.2.2	As required by legislation, personnel must have a current working with children check (or working with vulnerable people check) and/or NDIS Worker Screening Check prior to working with children and adults at risk.	✓			
5.2.3	Records of all checks are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation, for all personnel		✓		

Observations:

5.2.3 Fieldwork investigations indicate that personnel have the required background checks or clearances. Records are maintained at the parish and agency level, but more accuracy and consistency in monitoring is required. Refer Recommendation #5.

Criterion 5.3 - Personnel complete appropriate induction and are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities including reporting obligations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.3.1	All personnel participate in a safeguarding induction program, which occurs as soon as possible after commencement.		✓		
5.3.2	All Church Authorities and their leadership team undertake the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders.		✓		

Observations:

5.3 Fieldwork investigations indicate that there is a commitment to completing the training, but additional time is required for completion. Refer to Recommendation #5.

Criterion 5.4 - Ongoing supervision and people management includes an emphasis on safeguarding responsibilities.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.4.1 Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.			✓	

Observations:

5.4.1 Fieldwork investigations indicate ongoing supervision and people management policies are in place and actively encouraged, but the implementation needs additional time and resources. Refer to Recommendation #5.

Criterion 5.5 – Before and during seminary and religious formation, candidates are appropriately screened and supported, including processes for ongoing formation, support and supervision of clergy and religious.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.5.1 The Church Authority seeks professional support in screening candidates for seminary/formation programs and before ordination/profession of vows. This includes a responsibility to enquire if an applicant or candidate has previously withdrawn or been exited from another seminary or formation program.	✓			
5.5.2 Seminary and initial formation programs have robust screening processes for candidates for religious ministry, including external psychological and psychosexual assessments.	✓			
5.5.3 Ongoing integrated formation for clergy and religious addresses both the canonical and civil safeguarding requirements. For priests, this would include supporting their fidelity to the Church's teaching regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the inviolability of the Sacramental Seal.	✓			
5.5.4 All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.			✓	
5.5.5 All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals			✓	
5.5.6 All newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least five years post ordination or final profession.	✓			

Observations:

5.5.4 & 5.5.5 While fieldwork indicates that professional/pastoral supervision is available and required as part of Integrity in Our Common Mission, many clergy do not understand the benefits of professional supervision. Professional development and regular appraisals are offered frequently but irregularly accessed. Refer to Recommendation #5.

Criterion 5.6 - The curriculum for seminary and formation programs for clergy and religious includes safeguarding knowledge and skills development of candidates to understand and lead initiatives for safeguarding children and adults.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.6.1 Seminary and initial formation programs build candidates' knowledge and skills in a range of areas to support safeguarding children and adults.	Not applicable - refer to audit scope			

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.	Not applicable - refer to audit scope			
5.6.3	Seminary and initial formation programs identify how to avoid abuse of power and the development and/or reinforcement of clericalist attitudes and behaviours.	Not applicable - refer to audit scope			

Observations:
N/A.

Criterion 5.7 – The movement and credentialling of those in active ministry is appropriately managed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.7.1	A system to assess the safeguarding credentials and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy, religious and lay ministries between different seminaries, formation programs and other Church entities is in place.	✓			

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

Criterion 5.8 – Where clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are recruited to ministry, programs are in place to support their cultural awareness, screening, induction, professional supervision and development.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.8.1	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia recruited to ministry, are screened and verification information is sought from the international Church Authority.	✓			
5.8.2	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia participate in a safeguarding induction program which is documented and occurs as soon as possible after commencement of ministry.	✓			
5.8.3	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are supported with a suitable mentor for at least the first two years of their time in Australia.	✓			

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

Standard 6	Effective complaints management

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

Criterion 6.1 - The entity's Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.1.1	Policies and procedures address mandatory reporting obligations.	✓			
6.1.2	There are clear procedures that provide step-by-step responses and action to be taken for different types of complaints, including: • breaches of Code of Conduct. • disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current		✓		

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
	abuse of a child. • an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and • an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult.				
6.1.3	The Complaint Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflict of interests are managed.	✓			
6.1.4	The Complaint Handling Policy acknowledges that power imbalances exist between the complainant and respondent and has strategies in place to address this.	✓			
6.1.5	The Complaint Handling Policy spells out who has responsibilities in relation to handling complaints and when procedures are enacted.	✓			
6.1.6	All abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referral are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years.		✓		

Observations:

6.1.2, 6.1.6 Fieldwork investigations indicate that the data retention period requires additional reiteration and training. Refer to [Recommendation #6](#).

Criterion 6.2 - The Complaint Handling Policy is understood by children, adults, families, carers, and personnel, and focuses on the rights of children and adults at risk.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.2.1	The Complaint Handling Policy and procedures demonstrate how the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk are prioritised.	✓			

Observations:

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

Criterion 6.3 - Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.3.1	The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned, and operates in conjunction, with the Code of Conduct, HR and other policies.	✓			
6.3.2	The Complaints Handling Policy commits to an initial risk assessment if a complaint of abuse is received, to identify and minimise any risk to children or adults. Ongoing risk assessments are conducted throughout investigation processes.	✓			
6.3.3	Complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.	✓			
6.3.4	Trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced abuse.	✓			
6.3.5	Sharing information relating to complaints adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant legislation.	✓			
6.3.6	The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures	✓			

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
	empower and support personnel to raise, in good faith, concerns and allegations about unacceptable behaviour towards children and adults by other personnel.				
6.3.7	Where a complaint related to the sexual abuse of a child or adult against clergy or religious is substantiated under a civil standard, the Church Authority undertakes a risk management process to determine the appropriate action, in keeping with Church protocols.	✓			
6.3.8	Where a clergy or religious is convicted of a canonical offence relating to child sexual abuse, the respondent is to be prohibited from the exercise of ministry until such times as the process for imposing a penalty is completed by the relevant dicastery.	✓			

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

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

Criterion 6.5 – The Church Authority ensures mechanisms are in place to support complainants of child and adult sexual abuse.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.5.1	Appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants.	✓			

Observations:

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

Criterion 6.6 - The Church Authority ensures respondents facing allegations are supported and monitored.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.6.1	Appropriately trained personnel engaged in consultation with the respondents to counsel and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent.	✓			
6.6.2	Arrangements are in place to monitor, supervise and support a respondent, where there is a complaint, until (and if) the Church Authority no longer has this responsibility.	✓			

Observations:

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

Standard 7	Ongoing education and training

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

Criterion 7.1 - Personnel are trained and supported to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.1.1	Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.		✓		
7.1.2	The entity's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must as a minimum cover: • Code of Conduct. • safeguarding risk management. • Safeguarding Policy and procedures. • Complaints Handling Policy and procedures. • reporting obligations; and • e-safety training.	✓			
7.1.3	Records are maintained to ensure all personnel attend induction training and participate in refresher safeguarding training at least every three years.	✓			
7.1.4	All personnel with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive ongoing support and professional development to their role.		✓		

Observations:

7.1.1 & 7.1.4 – Regular education and training on safeguarding practices is available. A recently modified training framework is being slowly adopted within parishes. Refer to Recommendation #7.

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

Observations:

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

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

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
	• identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation. • recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including power imbalances can be exploited; and • understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse.				

Observations:

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

Criterion 7.4 - Personnel have the information and skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.4.1	Education and training programs equip relevant personnel to appropriately respond to and support anyone bringing forward concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.	✓			
7.4.2	Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.	✓			
7.4.3	Personnel receive training on reporting obligations under Commonwealth/State/Territory legislative and canon law, which includes: • reporting suspected criminal behaviour to police. • mandatory reporting to child protection authorities. • Reportable Conduct Scheme. • reporting to other regulatory authorities or government departments; and • Canonical reporting requirements.	✓			

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

Training is available however is not evident in all parishes. Refer Recommendation #7.

Standard 8	Safe physical and online environments

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

Criterion 8.1 – The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy addresses both physical and online risks, without compromising the individual's right to privacy or wellbeing.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.1.1	Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services including risks arising from: • one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child; • ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction and mentoring; • potential physical contact between the penitent and the confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated; • one-to-one interaction with adults at risk; • child-to-child interactions. • adult-to-child interactions; • adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); and • the nature of physical spaces. Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.		✓		
8.1.2	The entity's policies require the safe use of online applications for children and adults to learn, communicate and seek help.	✓			
8.1.3	Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults.			✓	

Observations:

8.1.1 & 8.1.3 Fieldwork investigations indicate that risk assessments and documentation is not routinely undertaken at a parish level, and personnel are not involved. Refer to Recommendation #8.

Criterion 8.2 - The online environment is used in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policy.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.2.1 Personnel access and use online environments in line with the entity's Code of Conduct, Privacy Act and relevant communication protocols.		✓		
8.2.2 The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary, or other relevant policies and reported to the leadership.		✓		

Observations:

8.2.1 The Archdiocese is implementing a consistent standard online environment, which requires additional time to complete the roll-out. In this interim period before wholesale implementation of Archdiocesan IT support, there are gaps in the monitoring of online environments. Refer to Recommendation #8.

Criterion 8.3 - Risk management plans address the range of settings, activities, and physical environments in which ministry and/or service occur.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.3.1 A process is in place to assess and manage risk if the organisation becomes aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their ministry and/or service.	✓			

Observations:

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

Criterion 8.4 – Where facilities and services are contracted to and from third parties, contractual arrangements specify safeguarding considerations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.4.1	If a third party provides services or uses the organisations facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.			✓	

Observations:

8.4.1 An Archdiocese level draft policy has been created and is yet to be rolled out. Refer to Recommendation #8.

Standard 9	Continuous improvement

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

Criterion 9.1 - The safeguarding practices for the protection of children and adults at risk are regularly reviewed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.1.1	The Safeguarding Implementation Plan outlines how safeguarding practices are monitored and reviewed, and how this information is reported.	✓			
9.1.2	The Church Authority monitors the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and co-ordinates annual local self-assessment checks.	✓			
9.1.3	The Safeguarding Policy is subject to review at least every three years and outcomes of this review are documented.	✓			

Observations:

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

Criterion 9.2 – Concerns and complaints are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures in safeguarding practices.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.2.1	All individual incidents or complaints relating to safeguarding practices and/or failures are considered by the leadership to identify systemic patterns and support continuous improvement.		✓		

Observations

9.2.1 Individual incidents or complaints relating to safeguarding practices are considered by leadership, plans are in place to further analyse the systematic patterns. Refer to Recommendation #9.

Criterion 9.3 - The Church Authority reports on the findings of its safeguarding reviews.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.3.1	The findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to are reported to stakeholders.		✓		
9.3.2	The findings of audits or reviews undertaken or validated by ACSL are made public.	Not applicable – this is the first audit by ACSL			

Observations:

9.3.1 Findings from relevant self-assessments are not always reported to stakeholders. Refer Recommendation #9.

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

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

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

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

10.5.1 Fieldwork investigations indicate that most personnel at an agency and parish level would like more opportunities to reflect and provide feedback on safeguarding policies and procedures. Refer Recommendation #10.

5. Detailed findings

Standard 1: Committed leadership, governance and culture

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

Recommendation #1		
1.2.1	A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority and leaders by: • promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone. • emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and • actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management.	Priority 3
1.2.3	A Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) is appointed with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.	
1.2.4	Personnel understand that good safeguarding practices are everyone's responsibility and are empowered to contribute to the organisation's safeguarding practices.	
1.5.1	The Risk Management Plan considers the needs of children and adults with diminished capacity, and how and when adults at risk make informed choices (dignity of risk).	
1.5.2	The Risk Management Plan incorporates procedures to assess, evaluate, review, and oversee safeguarding of children and adults at risk within its ministry and/or service.	
1.5.3	There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report, and review risks.	
1.6.1	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures are documented and communicated to personnel.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: • Safeguarding co-ordinators were appointed in all agencies and parishes, however their roles were not always clearly understood. • Safeguarding practices were not always seen as a shared responsibility, with personnel perceiving limited opportunities to contribute to safeguarding practices locally. • A Risk Management leader has recently been appointed at Archdiocesan level. Risk Management Plans were embedded within agencies with external regulations, however there is inconsistency in implementation within agencies and parishes that are solely under the NCSS framework. • Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures are documented. The Archdiocese office communicates through numerous channels, however, Fieldwork indicates there is often a gap within the local communication and implementation of such at the parish and non-externally regulated agency level.	
Recommendation	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support, resources and work with parishes and agencies still working to embed their safeguarding culture. 2. The Archdiocese will update the Archdiocesan wide risk framework to include safeguarding components.	
Agreed Action	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support, resources and work with parishes and agencies still working to embed their safeguarding culture. 2. The Archdiocese will update the Archdiocesan wide risk framework to include safeguarding components.	

Responsibility	Office of the Archbishop, Archdiocesan Finance & Administration Office and Archdiocese Safeguarding Office.
Due date	31 August 2026.

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

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

Recommendation #2		
2.1.2	Adults at risk (or carers where appropriate) are engaged to provide their views about decisions which affect them, what makes them feel safe and to contribute to safeguarding approaches.	Priority 2
2.1.3	The organisation makes children and adults at risk aware of their rights, including their right to be safe from abuse, and who to contact if they are concerned about their safety or the safety of others.	
2.2.1	Children are provided with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful peer relationships.	
2.3.1	Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: • Engagement with adults at risk within the agencies was observed. However, within the parishes, there was limited engagement with, or support resources available for, adults at risk or their carers	
Recommendation	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support, resources and work with parishes on adults at risk engagement and support.	
Agreed Action	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support, resources and work with parishes on adults at risk engagement and support.	
Responsibility	Office of the Archbishop and Archdiocese Safeguarding Office.	
Due date	28 February 2026.	

Standard 3: Partnering with families, carers and communities

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

Recommendation #3		
3.1.1	The entity encourages parents, carers and/or guardians to take an active role in monitoring the safety of those engaged in the ministry and/or service.	Priority 3
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.	
3.3.1	Processes are in place to engage families, carers and communities about their views on safeguarding policies and practices.	

3.3.2	Families, carers and communities are aware of the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services directly to children and adults at risk.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: • Parents, carers and/or guardians are welcomed to take an active role within the communities, however they are not always actively reminded that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. • Information about roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services is provided at an Archdiocesan level. With a limited understanding of their own roles and responsibilities, this information is not always filtered by the safeguarding co-ordinators to families, carers and communities within the parishes and non-externally regulated agencies.	
Recommendation	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support, resources and work with parishes on community engagement and awareness for adults at risk. 2. The Archdiocese will continue to work with parishes to further integrate safeguarding into community roles through job descriptions.	
Agreed Action	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support, resources and work with parishes on community engagement and awareness for adults at risk. 2. The Archdiocese will continue to work with parishes to further integrate safeguarding into community roles through job descriptions.	
Responsibility	Office of the Archbishop and Archdiocese Safeguarding Office.	
Due date	31 August 2026.	

Standard 4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected

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

Recommendation #4		Priority 3
4.2.1	Information about complaint processes and supports are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: • The information about complaints processes and supports is provided, however provision can be improved by providing in additional languages and accessible formats.	
Recommendation	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support and resources for parishes and agencies on complaint processes and supports, focusing on materials in additional languages and accessible formats.	
Agreed Action	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further support and resources for parishes and agencies on complaint processes and supports, focusing on materials in additional languages and accessible formats.	
Responsibility	Office of the Archbishop and Archdiocese Safeguarding Office.	
Due date	31 August 2026.	

Standard 5: Robust human resource management

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

Recommendation #5		
5.1.2	Recruitment and screening procedures and processes are fully documented.	Priority 3
5.1.3	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children/adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.	
5.2.3	Records of all checks are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation, for all personnel	
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.	
5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.	Priority 1
5.5.4	All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.	
5.5.5	All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: • Recruitment and screening procedures and processes, position risk assessments, are fully documented at an Archdiocesan level however this is not always filtered to a parish level. • Personnel have the required background checks or clearances. Records are maintained and monitored at the parish and agency level, but need more consistency. • Safeguarding induction program is provided in a variety of flexible formats, however fieldwork suggests this is not always completed as soon as possible after commencement. • Church Authorities and their leadership team are scheduled to undertake the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory session for leaders. • Ongoing supervision and people management policies are in place; implementation needs additional time and resources within the parishes and agencies. • Mentoring, professional/pastoral supervision, professional development and regular appraisals are available, however not all clergy and religious in ministry are availing of these opportunities on a regular basis.	
Recommendation	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further resources and support on record keeping. 2. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further resources and support on clergy mentoring, professional development and professional pastoral supervision.	
Agreed Action	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further resources and support on record keeping, focusing on materials in additional languages and additional formats. 2. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further resources and support on clergy mentoring, professional development and professional pastoral supervision.	
Responsibility	Office of the Archbishop, Office of the Vicar General and Archdiocese Safeguarding Office	

Due date	Action 1 (Priority 2) – 28 February 2026
	Action 2 (Priority 1) - 30 April 2025 for plans; 31 August 2025 implementation

Standard 6: Effective Complaints Management

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

Recommendation #6		
6.1.2	There are clear procedures that provide step-by-step responses and action to be taken for different types of complaints, including: • breaches of Code of Conduct. • disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child. • an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and • an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult.	**Priority 3**
6.1.6	All abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referral are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: • The Archdiocese's process is to have a single point of reporting and support for safeguarding concerns and complaints. • There is limited familiarity with the Archdiocesan policies and procedures related to data retention.	
Recommendation	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further training and resources for parishes and agencies about the implementation of data retention policies and procedures.	
Agreed Action	1. The Archdiocese will continue to offer further training and resources for parishes and agencies about the implementation of data retention policies and procedures.	
Responsibility	Office of the Archbishop and Archdiocese Safeguarding Office.	
Due date	31 August 2026.	

Standard 7: Ongoing education and training

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

Recommendation #7		
7.1.1	Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.	
7.1.4	All personnel with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive ongoing support and professional development to their role.	**Priority 2**
7.5.1	Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create, culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	
7.5.2	Training is provided to relevant personnel to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds and how to create safe environments for people from these groups.	

Details of finding	The following points were noted: • A new Archdiocesan training framework has been adopted, with parish and non-externally regulated agency personnel progressing within the new framework. • Personnel with safeguarding responsibilities are not always aware of the ongoing professional development and counselling support available for their roles. • Cultural Safety training is available, however completion of this training is not evident in all parishes.
Recommendation	1. The Archdiocese will continue to promote and adopt cultural safety training.
Agreed Action	1. The Archdiocese will continue to promote and adopt cultural safety training.
Responsibility	Office of the Archbishop and Archdiocese Safeguarding Office.
Due date	28 February 2026.

Standard 8: Safe physical and online environments

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

Recommendation #8		
8.1.1	Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services including risks arising from: • one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child; • ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction and mentoring; • potential physical contact between the penitent and the confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated; • one-to-one interaction with adults at risk; • child-to-child interactions. • adult-to-child interactions; • adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); and • the nature of physical spaces. Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.	**Priority 3**
8.1.3	Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults.	
8.2.1	Personnel access and use online environments in line with the entity's Code of Conduct, Privacy Act and relevant communication protocols.	
8.2.2	The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary, or other relevant policies and reported to the leadership.	
8.4.1	If a third party provides services or uses the organisations facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: • For non-externally regulated agencies and parishes, risks are discussed informally; while assessments and documentation is lacking and not routinely completed. • The Archdiocese is working towards a consistent and standardised IT infrastructure across the parishes and agencies.	

	• An Archdiocesan draft policy for third party agreements has been created however it is yet to be endorsed and rolled out. • The Archdiocesan has recently appointed a Risk Management lead who will work to develop a risk framework that includes safeguarding components for non-externally regulated agencies and parishes.
Recommendation	1. As per Recommendation #1 – The Archdiocese will update the Archdiocesan wide risk framework to include safeguarding components. 2. The Archdiocese will continue to implement the standardised IT infrastructure, including training for all clergy, personnel and volunteers.
Agreed Action	1. As per Recommendation #1 – The Archdiocese will update the Archdiocesan wide risk framework to include safeguarding components. 2. The Archdiocese will continue to implement the standardised IT infrastructure, including training for all clergy, personnel and volunteers.
Responsibility	Office of the Archbishop, Archdiocesan Finance & Administration Office and Archdiocese Safeguarding Office.
Due date	31 August 2026.

Standard 9: Continuous improvement

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

Recommendation #9		
9.2.1	All individual incidents or complaints relating to safeguarding practices and/or failures are considered by the leadership to identify systemic patterns and support continuous improvement.	**Priority 3**
9.3.1	The findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to are reported to stakeholders.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: • Individual incidents or complaints relating to safeguarding practices are considered by leadership, plans are in place to further analyse the systematic patterns. • Findings from relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures and practices are not always reported to stakeholders at a parish level.	
Recommendation	1. The Archdiocese will continue in its plan to undertake additional analysis of individual incidents and complaints relating to safeguarding practices. 2. Parishes and non-externally regulated agencies will be encouraged to share findings from safeguarding self-assessments with their stakeholders.	
Agreed Action	1. The Archdiocese will continue in its plan to undertake additional analysis of individual incidents and complaints relating to safeguarding practices. 2. Parishes and non-externally regulated agencies will be encouraged to share findings from safeguarding self-assessments with their stakeholders.	
Responsibility	Office of the Archbishop, Archdiocesan Finance & Administration Office and Archdiocese Safeguarding Office.	
Due date	31 August 2026.	

Standard 10: Policies and Procedures support the safety of children and adults at risk

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

Recommendation #10		Priority 3
10.5.1	Personnel are encouraged to reflect on their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: • Fieldwork investigations indicate that most personnel at an agency and parish level would like more opportunities to reflect and provide feedback on safeguarding policies and procedures.	
Recommendation	1. The Archdiocese will establish a reflection program (for example a community of practice) to encourage additional reflection and feedback from personnel.	
Agreed Action	1. The Archdiocese will establish a reflection program (for example a community of practice) to encourage additional reflection and feedback from personnel.	
Responsibility	Archdiocese Safeguarding Office.	
Due date	31 August 2026.	

Appendix A

COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT SCALE

	General	Processes & Systems	People & Resources
Yet to Develop	As an entity we are unable to demonstrate that the requirements of the indicator are in place and will implement the necessary strategies developed through the Standards Action Plan.	Processes may be in place however the specific requirements of the indicator have not been addressed. The actions generated through the Standards Action Plan will be implemented.	At an entity level resources have yet to be assigned. The people and resources will be determined and allocated in the Standards Action Plan.
Developing	Our entity has begun to address the requirements of the indicator, however processes are developing and not universally applied.	Some relevant processes have been implemented which align with the requirements of the indicator, however they are: - siloed; and/or - undocumented; and/or - inconsistent; and/or - lack clarity.	Personnel capabilities vary across the entity and resources and responsibility are not formally assigned. This will be addressed in the Standards Action Plan.
Developed	Our entity is addressing the indicator and is in the process of implementing its requirements. The gaps will be highlighted and addressed through the Standards Action Plan.	Relevant processes and systems have been defined and developed but are yet to be implemented across the full operations of the entity. A plan is being developed to fully implement processes and systems.	Resources have been assigned and responsibilities defined, however there is no formal training or communication of standard procedures, and it is unlikely that deviations will be detected. This will be remediated through the Standards Action Plan.
Developed and embedded	The entity can demonstrate that indicator requirements are formally embedded. Processes are operating effectively, and opportunities provided for continuous improvement.	Relevant processes are integrated and coordinated, including remote operations and reviews/audits of activities.	Personnel are trained to detect and report on deviations or break downs in processes. Resources have been assigned to monitor and address requirements.

Appendix B

AUDIT FINDING PRIORITIES

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

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

Appendix C

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

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

Abuse	when used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term covering both child and adult abuse
Abuse of Power	means the abuse of position, function, or duty to take advantage of another. This can take many forms and include situations where a person has power over another person by virtue of their relationship (e.g., employer and employee, teacher and student, coach and athlete, parent or guardian and child, clergy/religious and parishioner) and uses that power to their advantage.
Accessible language	means information is provided in multiple formats for individuals with different levels of English literacy and proficiency, modes of communication, languages, and cognitive abilities.
Adult	means any person 18 years or older. When used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term referring to all adults, including adults at risk.
Adult abuse	means the improper treatment of a person that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm. Abuse can come in many forms, such as: physical or verbal maltreatment, neglect, injury, assault, violation, rape, unjust practices, crimes, exploitation, or other types of aggression. There are several categories of abuse of adults, such as: • Sexual abuse* • Physical abuse* • Emotional/psychological abuse* • Neglect* • Elder abuse* • Financial abuse* • Exploitation* Within the context of the Catholic church and faith-based entities, it is also important to recognise spiritual abuse* as an additional subtype of abuse.
Adult at risk	means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people:

	• who are elderly. • with a disability. • who suffer from mental illness. • who have diminished capacity. • who have cognitive impairmen.t • who have suffered previous abuse. • who are experiencing transient risks. • who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance. • who are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background/ • who are of diverse sexuality/ • who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse.
Allegation	means a complaint, still to be verified, claiming, or asserting that someone has committed an act of abuse against a child or adult. The term is used interchangeably and in combination with "complaint".
Audit	means a mechanism to assess how a Church Authority, ministry or entity governed by a Church Authority, is implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference	means the assembly of Bishops of Australia exercising together certain pastoral offices for the Catholics of Australia.
Bishop	means a diocesan bishop or archbishop, the ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of the Eastern Churches
Canon law	means the revised code of canon law promulgated by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in 1983 and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches as promulgated in 1990 and any other universal or legislation promulgated by the competent ecclesiastical authority.
Canonical Offence	means canonical crimes[1] of sexual abuse committed by clerics and religious are: • forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts. • performing sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person. • the production, exhibition, possession, or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions. [1] The canonical crimes/delicts/offences committed by clerics or religious as stated in Art. 1 §1 a) of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi.* [2] Definition of vulnerable person as stated in Art. 1 §2 b) of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*: "means: any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence". This definition is captured by the term 'Adult at risk' within the NCSS.
Catholic Religious Australia	CRA is the conference of major superiors comprising leaders of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life within the Catholic Church in Australia.

Certification	means the act of giving official authority or approval and certification of the implementation of the NCSS and permission to use the ACSL Certification symbol.
Child/ren	means individuals under 18 years of age.
Child abuse	There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Definition sourced from the Australian Institute of Family Studies: https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect Child abuse refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission. Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes: • physical abuse • emotional/psychological abuse • neglect • sexual abuse • exposure to family violence
Church Authority	means: • a diocesan bishop or archbishop, an ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of an eparchy of an Eastern Church. • the competent authority, howsoever titled, exercising the ministry of governance for religious institutes in Australia in accordance with their Constitutions; or • for ministerial PJPS the competent authority in accordance with the statutes. • for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organization in accordance with its rules.
Church Protocols	means official procedures or system of rules which govern the affairs of the Catholic Church in Australia, for example, Vos Estis Lux Mundi and the National Response Protocol.
Civil Standard	the most common standard of proof relates to civil proceedings, which is the balance of probabilities (incorporating the principles from Briginshaw v Briginshaw) – which means it is more probable than not that what the person says happened is true (in criminal cases, the standard is proof beyond reasonable doubt).
Clergy	includes bishops, priests and deacons.
Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia	means any cleric or member of a religious institute who is specifically recruited or welcomed from overseas by a Church Authority or entity.
Cleric	a member of the clergy.
Clericalist/ism	means an attitude toward clergy/religious characterised by an excessive deference and an assumption of their moral superiority. Pope Francis has said that it occurs when "clerics feel they are superior, [and when] they are far from the people." It can be "fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons".

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

	• understanding the nature and effect of the decision; • freely and voluntarily deciding; and • communicating the decision in some way.
Diocese	means a diocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelature of the Latin Church and an eparchy of an Eastern Church.
Disability (persons with)	means those who have physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (Article 2, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.)
Diversity	means a range of people who have various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests.
Diverse sexuality	refers to all the diversities of sex characteristics, sexual orientations, and gender identities, without the need to specify each of the identities, behaviours, or characteristics that form this plurality.
Elder abuse	means a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.
Emotional abuse (adults)	is a common form of abuse that occurs in close relationships. Emotional abuse is defined as abuse that occurs when a person is subjected to behaviours or actions aimed at preventing or controlling their behaviour, with the intent to cause them emotional harm or fear, through manipulation, isolation, or intimidation.
Emotional abuse (children)	Emotional abuse of children refers to a parent or caregiver's inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts towards a child and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurturing and emotional availability. Such acts of commission or omission are likely to damage a child's self-esteem or social competence.
Entity	means a diocese, religious institute, ministerial PJP (including their agencies) or association recognised as Catholic in accord with canon law.
Exploitation	is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person. It is taking advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain.
Exposure to family violence	is generally considered to be a form of psychologically abusive behaviour, where a child is present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse, or psychological maltreatment, or is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member's violent behaviour.
Financial abuse	involves the illegal or improper use or mismanagement of a person's money, property or resources. Stealing, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, forced changes to a will, inappropriate removal of a resident's decision-making powers and misuse of power of attorney are all forms of financial abuse or exploitation.
Formation/program	means a program preparing individuals for ordination or profession of vows and a life-long journey to the invitation of Christ to proclaim and live the Gospel message, within the life of the Church.

Good Standing	A person in good standing is regarded as having complied with all their safeguarding obligations, and is not subject to any form of allegation, disciplinary process, sanction suspension.
Grooming (child)	refers to a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging a child as a precursor to sexual abuse. It includes establishing a 'special' friendship/relationship with the child. Grooming can include the conditioning of parents and other adults to think that the relationship with the child is 'normal' and positive.
Grooming (adult)	is the predatory act of manoeuvring another individual into a position that makes them more isolated, dependent, likely to trust, and more vulnerable to abusive behaviour.
Guardian	refers to the person(s) who has the legal authority to care for the personal and property interests of another person.
Institutional abuse	means abuse or poor care within an institution or specific care setting. Possible causes of institutional abuse include: • a "closed" culture within an organisation where transparency is discouraged. • lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service. • failure to properly check the backgrounds and interview staff. • inadequate training. • lack of safeguarding policies and procedures. • lack of support of staff by management. • poor supervision; and • poor standards of care.
Lay/lay person	means members of the Catholic Church and Church personnel other than bishops, priests, deacons and religious.
Leaders	means personnel who are responsible for important governance decisions within a Church entity and/or who lead and coordinate Church improvement initiatives.
Mentor	means an experienced and trusted advisor or a person who gives a younger or less experienced person help and advice over a period.
Ministerial PJP	means a legal entity which is constituted a public juridic person in canon law and carries on its mission in the name of the Church, in accordance with its statutes approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority.
Ministry	means any activity within, or conducted by, an entity, that is authorised by formal appointment and designed to carry out the apostolic and charitable works of the Catholic Church.
NDIS Worker Screening Check	The NDIS Worker Screening Check is an assessment of whether a person who works, or seeks to work, with people with disability poses a risk to them. The assessment determines whether a person is cleared or excluded from working in certain roles with people with disability. For further information see https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/ndis-worker-screening-check
Neglect (adult)	is the failure of a carer to provide the necessities of life to a person for whom they are caring.
Neglect (child)	refers to a failure by a caregiver to provide the basic requirements for meeting the physical and emotional developmental needs of a child. Physically neglectful behaviours include a failure to provide

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

Review	means an internal self-assessment of an entity's implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. A review can also be an assessment that forms part of the process of continuous improvement which occurs when following up recommendations made during an audit.
Risk-based audit and Review Framework	means a framework for assessing the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards that reflects a proportionate response based on the risk profile of the Church Authority.
Risk Profile	means an assessment against key safeguarding risk factors.
Safeguarding	refers to proactive measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals. These measures allow children, young people and adults to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. Within the life of the Church, safeguarding includes pastoral, liturgical and spiritual responses through engagement in the Sacraments and the life of the Church.
Safeguarding Committee	means a committee established to advise and support the Church Authority on all matters relating to safeguarding, including the development and implementation of a Safeguarding Implementation Plan and coordinating annual self-audits at a local level. Committee members need relevant and varied professional expertise in relation to safeguarding, child protection, organisational culture and structure, policy development, etc. and include lay women and men.
Safeguarding Culture	means embedding safeguarding into everything an organisation does. In promoting this culture, young people and adults at risk will understand they will be listened to, supported, and known action will be taken on their behalf.
Safeguarding Commitment Statement	means a Commitment Statement describing an entity's commitment to keep children and adults safe from harm. It informs the entity's safeguarding culture.
Safeguarding Co-ordinator	means an individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
Safeguarding Implementation Plan	means a documented plan which articulates actions to be taken across the entity to ensure safeguarding practices are in place. It includes actions, strategies, responsibilities, delegations, and accountabilities, and tracks review and progress. It is overseen by the Safeguarding Committee.
Safeguarding policies and procedures	means any policies or procedures of the entity that address elements of safeguarding children and adults. For example, but not limited to: • recruitment. • risk management. • complaint handling; and • acceptable use of online applications.
Seminarian	a student in a theological formation and education centre preparing for ordination as a priest.
Seminary	means a centre for the formation and education of students preparing for ordination.

Sexual abuse (adult)	Sexual abuse is a form of sexual assault. Sexual abuse includes rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment, and sexual interference. Sexual activity with an adult who is incapacitated by a mental or physical condition (such as dementia) that impairs his or her ability to grant informed consent, is defined as sexual assault/abuse. Sexual assault/abuse includes where through force, threats or abuse of authority, an individual commits a canonical offence or forces someone to perform or submit to sexual acts. Sexual assault is a crime.
Sexual abuse (child)	refers to exposing a child to any form of sexual activity. This may or may not involve physical contact. This may take the form of taking sexually explicit photographs or videos of children, forcing children to watch or take part in sexual acts and forcing or coercing children to have sex or engage in sexual acts with other children or adults.
Spiritual abuse	means abuse of a person that invokes a person's religious beliefs and faith to perpetrate harm. Spiritual abuse can occur as a secondary experience of abuse when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of spiritual authority and trust within the Church a
Substantiated complaint	means under the civil standard of proof an allegation of abuse for which the investigator finds that sufficient evidence exists to believe that the alleged conduct more likely than not occurred.
Third parties	means any individual, group or legal entity outside the Church entity who contract services and facilities to or from the Church entity.
Transient Risk	means short-term risk, experienced by people at different stages in their life: e.g. when someone is vulnerable due to: • grief • bereavement • relationship breakdown • homelessness • unemployment • financial hardship
Trauma-informed and victim-centred support	is a strengths-based framework which is founded on five core principles – safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Trauma-informed services do no harm: they do not re-traumatise or blame victims for their efforts to manage their traumatic reactions, and they embrace a message of hope and optimism that recovery is possible. In trauma-informed services, trauma survivors are seen as unique individuals who have managed their responses to the experiences as best that they could.
Validation	means an assessment by ACSL of any self-assessment, review or audit, undertaken to achieve ACSL Certification status.
Working With Children Check	means generic term used in the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards to denote the statutory screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. There is not yet a single national framework setting out requirements for 'working with children' checks. Each State/Territory in Australia has its own system. They are one part of a Church entity's recruitment, selection, and screening practices.
Working with Vulnerable People Check	means the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 in the Australian Capital Territory which requires those

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

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

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