Diocese of Darwin

Safeguarding Audit Report
September 2023

National Catholic
Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:

ACSL
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD

A safe Church for everyone

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

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

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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 (CPSL), the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards (ACCPS) and the Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR). ASCL is a company limited by guarantee, owned by 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 adults at risk and children. 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.

This audit report includes the results of the assessment against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards for the Diocese of Darwin.

1.2 Background

The Diocese of Darwin covers an area of 1.3 million square kilometres and was established in 1938. The safeguarding policies, procedures and practices for ministry and pastoral work of the Diocese cover 20 parishes, 18 schools and a range of social welfare agencies. A demographic snapshot[1] of the Diocese of Darwin in 2021 showed the following:

- a total population of 230,861 people.
- a Catholic population of 39,006 (16.9%).
- the median age of Catholics is 37 years.
- 14,270 Catholic families reside within the Diocese, while 3,060 Catholics live alone.
- 11,875 Catholics were born overseas.
- 1,149 Catholics do not speak English well.
- 1,667 people need assistance with core activities.

The ACSL audit of the Diocese of Darwin is assessed against the first version of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). There are 10 NCSS Standards, 49 NCSS Criteria and 104[2] NCSS indicators that apply to the Diocese of Darwin. For further details of the NCSS risk-based framework and the standards applicable to each entity type, visit the ACSL website.

Our assessment of the Diocese of Dawin's implementation of the NCSS is detailed in Section 2 of this report. Our recommendations for improvement, including the Diocese of Darwin's management responses, are included in Section 3 of this report.

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

1.3 Audit Approach

The purpose of the 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.

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[1] Source: Darwin_-2021-Diocesan-Social-Profile-1.pdf (catholic.org.au)
[2] Of the 111 NCSS indicators applicable to full audit entities, 7 of these are not relevant to the Diocese of Darwin's operations

1.3.1 The first NCSS Audit in 2019

The Diocese undertook an NCSS Audit in 2019 and were assessed as having either fully implemented or substantially progressed in the implementation of 92 (89%) of the 103 indicators relevant to their ministries.

The Diocesan 2019 audit scope included:

- Audit activities at the diocesan office.
- Assessed the safeguarding practices at six parishes (33%) chosen randomly across the Diocese.
- Conducted safeguarding meetings with key personnel at CatholicCare NT as well as the Northern Territory Catholic Education office.

The 2019 Audit made eight Priority Two (medium rated) and five Priority Three (low rated) recommendations which have now been implemented.

1.3.2 The 2023 NCSS Audit

The audit processes we have undertaken are intended to provide reasonable assurance that safeguarding controls have been designed appropriately and are operating effectively. Therefore, this report provides a point-in-time assessment of the safeguarding practices implemented by the Diocese and the extent to which it meets the requirements of the NCSS. Our testing procedures included the following:

- interviews, observations and enquiry with the Diocesan leadership which incorporates their Safeguarding Committee, Missionaries of Charity Sisters and relevant ministerial personnel;
- visits to parishes, ministries and the diocesan office;
- review of key safeguarding documents, policies and procedures; and
- assessment of the design and testing of the operation of safeguarding controls implemented by the Diocese.

CatholicCare NT and the diocesan schools associated with the Northern Territory Catholic Education Office were not included in the ACSL audit scope. These entities are audited under a range of standards. The audit team did meet with key personnel from these entities to discuss their safeguarding practices and have begun a conversation with ACSL to register for their own sub-accounts on the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal.

In Scope Audit Assessment

- St. Joseph's Parish Katherine.
- St Paul's Parish, Nightcliff.
- Holy Spirit Parish, Casuarina.
- Cathedral Parish Visit.
- Youth Ministry.
- Diaconate Program.
- Interviews with agreed diocesan personnel.

The audit commenced with a review of the self-assessment completed on the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal and a desktop audit in June 2023. A site visit was conducted from July 24 -27, 2023. Whilst the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal is focused on the second edition of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) which covers children as well as adults at risk, interviews with key personnel addressed the indicators which are unique to child safeguarding practices. This report was completed in September 2023.

The audit included detailed in-person interviews and a review of safeguarding documentation with clergy and diocesan personnel.

The format of this audit report for the Diocese differs from the initial 2019 Audit Report and other ACSL Audit reports. As a subsequent or second audit, it was agreed by the Diocese and ACSL that presenting overall findings and recommendations would be more helpful to strengthening safeguarding practices in the Diocese. ACSL acknowledges the significant work the Diocese has undertaken in meeting their safeguarding responsibilities across their parishes and ministries. As a second audit against the NCSS, this report has a descriptive focus which details findings whilst suggesting minor improvements. The findings follow from in-

depth interviews and ministry visits to describe how safeguarding practices are implemented and offer some additional safeguarding recommendations, in line with the Diocese's commitment to continuous improvement.

1.4 Disclaimer

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

Certification issued by *Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited* (ACSL) does not guarantee the safety, quality or acceptability of a participating organisations, its services or programs, or that legislative and funding requirements are being, or will be, met.

Signed:

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Dr David Treanor   Dr Ursula Stephens
Manager Audit and Review   Chief Executive Officer

2. Overall Audit Findings

Assessment of the implementation of NCSS has been determined using a four-point maturity scale[3].

Our assessment indicates that the Diocese of Darwin has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 104 (100%) of the 104[4] indicators which are relevant to their operations. The recommendations are a set of further practical safeguarding strategies and are intended to enhance and support exiting practices. These recommendations are Priority three (low rated) recommendations.

The key findings from the audit are summarised below.

NCSS Standard 1 – Committed leadership, governance and culture

The Diocese has a dedicated Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Safeguarding Committee which is responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of compliance with the NCSS. In interviews with the Bishop and personnel across the Diocese, ACSL notes a diocesan culture has emerged which embeds safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices throughout the Diocese's operations. Examples of how the culture is embedded in diocesan practices include: the Bishop's commitment statement on the Diocese's website; the Code of Conduct is a living document that is spoken about; the views of parishioners are sought, valued and addressed; the diversity of the diocesan population is respected; personnel are supported in their work with children; complaint processes are in place, as are continuous improvement processes; and there is an understanding of risk and risk management strategies. As a result of the

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[3] Refer Appendix A for definitions of the maturity scale used for the Compliance Assessment.
[4] Of the 111 NCSS Indicators applicable to entities undergoing audit, 7 of these are not relevant of the Diocese of Darwin.

interrogation of the Diocese's safeguarding policies, procedures and practices combined with site visits and formal and informal interviews, ACSL have good reasons to believe the diocesan leadership team have embedded and model safeguarding practices. The Diocese has a strategy in place to update their safeguarding policies, procedures and practices to include adults at risk.

A comprehensive suite of safeguarding materials and guidance has been provided to clergy, diocesan personnel, and parishes. It is the expectation of the Diocese that parishes appoint a child safety officer, and this role and the person's contact details are displayed in public areas of the parish churches, as well as in the parish newsletters/bulletins. The Diocese have processes in place to promote child safety awareness e.g., Child Protection Week. ACSL recommends that the Diocese participate in awareness days and events, such as Carers Week and International Day of People with a Disability, to highlight the importance of inclusive safeguarding practices.

The Diocese has a strong framework around risk management, with risk assessments now being completed by all parishes for their key activities. In interviews with personnel, ASCL noted that some youth program risk assessments needed to be included in the Diocesan risk register. ACSL recommends that the Diocesan Schools Risk Register is sent to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer for their information and review. Finally, ACSL recommends that, in the event of a parishioner needing to offer a ministry on an 'ad hoc' basis that a sign in system is maintained in the parish. For instance, if a scheduled reader is unable to attend mass on a particular day and another person takes up this ministry, then his/her details are recorded in a parish diary.

NCSS Standard 2 – Children are safe, informed and participate

NCSS Standard 3 – Partnering with families, carers and communities

Discussions with personnel in the Diocese confirmed their commitment to and awareness of safeguarding practices. One example of this commitment in action is the safeguarding information presented in parish and diocesan newsletters. Moreover, child-friendly posters and statutory pamphlets produced by Northern Territory authorities on reporting safeguarding concerns information are displayed in the children's ministry physical spaces to inform families, carers and communities about their rights, and to provide age-appropriate information for children to raise concerns or complaints. The parishes and ministries actively seek to engage and partner with families, carers and communities to keep everyone informed about safeguarding practices.

ACSL recommends as part of the Diocese's continuous improvement strategies that it develop and provide a parish handbook to all parishes; a parish handbook provides an overview of the parish and includes names and contact details for all personnel and ministry activities. ACSL also recommends that the Diocese develop materials for adults at risk over the next nine months, and finally, create registers for home visitors programs where the system is not already in place.

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

Many of the parish facilities have easy access for prams and people in wheelchairs which provides parishioners with easy access to venues and also easy access to leave the venue if s/he is feeling unsafe. The interviews confirmed that personnel are aware of the diverse cultures in the Diocese and there is a separation of 'youth' and 'young adult' ministries. Some of the safeguarding materials have been translated into different languages for parishioners. The youth program personnel were very aware of contemporary gender issues for young people including those with diverse sexuality. Personnel were also aware and responsive to potential peer-on-peer abuse safeguarding issues.

The Diocese is home to a number of multicultural communities, with several Masses being conducted in languages other than English. There is also an active focus on diversity in all of the Diocese's policies and practices, as well as a specific emphasis on engagement and collaboration with Indigenous communities. Safeguarding materials continue to be updated to be relevant to these communities.

ACSL provides suggestions to the Diocese to further enhance their safeguarding practices. These include:

1. Adapting relevant safeguarding materials in relevant mediums for adults at risk.
2. When the Diocese is renovating physical spaces, that is considers providing single cubicle non gender specific facilities.
3. Updating the Diocesan Code of Conduct to include the expected behavioural expectations when diocesan personnel are engaging with adults at risk and person of diverse sexuality.

NCSS Standard 5 – Robust human resource management

The Diocese of Darwin has comprehensive recruitment policies and procedures that outline safeguarding requirements in its advertising, vetting and screening of personnel. ACSL commends the sample interview questions which have been developed as part of the screening process for suitably qualified personnel. The importance of checks is well understood and implemented.

Formal performance reviews are conducted for personnel, and knowledge of safeguarding policies are assessed as part of this review. The requirement for personnel to undertake professional/pastoral supervision is implemented by the Diocese and the Bishop meets clergy monthly, either pastorally or for supervision.

ACSL recommends that the Diocese considers 'circles of support' supervision arrangements for clergy in part-time ministry and that annual safeguarding appraisals are introduced for all roles in the Diocese. The Diocese could also introduce safeguarding role descriptions all volunteer safeguarding personnel to clarify their role and authority. The Diocese also need to review and update the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator position description in anticipation of the duties that might be required to implement safeguarding practices for adults at risk.

The Diocese welcomes clergy from several different congregations to minister in parishes and there are different historical processes in place to manage any historical safeguarding matters. ACSL recommends that the Diocese develop a ministry/service agreement to articulate clear roles and responsibilities for each Church Authority.

The interviews held with deacons in formation confirmed they are undertaking safeguarding training for their ministry.

NCSS Standard 6 – Effective complaints management

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

We note the requirement to maintain safeguarding records for a minimum of 50 years is documented in the Privacy Policy and is appropriately implemented. Mandatory reporting procedures are in place and the Code of Conduct is linked to the Complaint Policy. There are effective systems in place to record and monitor the movement of clergy, Ochre Cards and National Police Checks.

NCSS Standard 7 – Ongoing education and training

Interviews with diocesan personnel indicate a strong understanding of the requirements for child safeguarding, including knowledge of the appropriate response should a complaint or concern be raised.

The Diocese has provided various forms of safeguarding training to personnel, with records of attendance appropriately kept. There is excellent communication between the Safeguarding Coordinator and the Bishop. When ACSL delivers training on implementing NCSS Edition 2, Diocesan personnel will benefit from attending these courses.

NCSS Standard 8 – Safe physical and online environments

The Diocese has a robust IT monitoring system in place. Filtering is in place to block inappropriate online activity for devices that are networked within the diocesan IT system. Diocesan personnel have signed the Code of Conduct.

The parishes ACSL visited are aware of the importance of ensuring that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is conducted for children in open or visible spaces or within the clear line of sight of another adult.

The Diocese has a hire agreement template for hiring out any premise to third parties, which contains the appropriate safeguarding clauses.

ACSL recommends that all safeguarding volunteers/coordinators are provided with Diocesan email addresses. In one parish the physical space is such that any member of the public could access the priest cloister. The installation of a safety gate at the end of the stairwell will act as a deterrent and accordingly ACSL recommends that this gate is installed.

NCSS Standard 9 – Continuous improvement

The Diocese of Darwin has fully implemented the recommendations from the 2019 NCSS Audit. The Diocese of Darwin has a formal Safeguarding Implementation Plan, including self-audit and monitoring processes, which will be updated to include the actions arising from this second ACSL audit.

NCSS Standard 10 – Policies and procedures support child safety

Key policies and procedures relating to safeguarding requirements are in place and operating effectively.

The table on the following page shows the overall compliance assessment for each of the Standards.

National Catholic Safeguarding Standard	# NCSS indicators	Not Relevant to the Diocese of Darwin	Assessment of Compliance			
			Managed & measurable	Defined & developed	Initial / Ad hoc	Not addressed
1: Committed leadership, governance & culture	16	2	13	1	-	-
2: Children are safe, informed and participate	5	-	5	-	-	-
3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6	-	5	1	-	-
4: Equity is promoted and diversity is respected	4	-	4	-	-	-
5: Robust human resource management	23	4	17	2	-	-
6: Effective complaints management	24	-	24		-	-
7: Ongoing training & education	9	-	9	-	-	-
8: Safe physical and online environments	10	-	8	2	-	-
9: Continuous improvement	8	1	6	1	-	-
10: Policies and procedures support child safety	6	-	6	-	-	-
TOTAL	*111*	*7*	**97**	**7**	**-**	**-**
			(100%)			

Audit recommendations are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation[5]

There are no Priority 1 (high rated) or Priority 2 (medium rated) audit recommendations for the Diocese of Darwin.

There are five Priority 3 (low rated) recommendations, which are detailed in Section 3 of this report. Each recommendation also contains the Diocese of Darwin response to the audit findings, including associated management actions.

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

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

3.   Recommendations

Standard 1: Committed leadership and culture

Recommendation #1	
Criterion 1.5 – The entity has risk management strategies focusing on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children.	**Priority 3**

Details of finding	The following points were noted: 1. The Diocesan Schools Risk Register is yet to be submitted to the Diocese. 2. The Youth program risk register needs to include all possible activities. 3. There is no system of recording people who participate in ministries on 'ad hoc' basis.
Recommendation	1. The Diocese Schools will submit their risk registers annually to the Safeguarding Coordinator for their information and review. 2. The Youth program will update their risk register to ensure all activities are covered and provide to the Safeguarding Coordinator. 3. Parishes, as needed, will create a signing book/diary to record any parishioner who may deliver a ministry on an 'ad hoc' basis.
Agreed Action	The Diocese will request: 1. Diocesan Schools to submit their risk registers annually to the Safeguarding Coordinator for their information and review. 2. The Youth program will update their risk registers to ensure all activities are covered and provide a copy to the Safeguarding Coordinator. Parishes to create a signing book/diary to record any parishioner who may deliver a ministry on a 'ad hoc basis.
Responsibility	Safeguarding Coordinator
Due date	30 September 2024

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

Recommendation #2	
Criterion 2.1 – Children are informed about their rights, including safety, information and participation.	**Priority 3**

Details of finding	The following points were noted: 1. The Diocese does not have a parish handbook template which individual parishes could use as a repository of information for their parishioners.
Recommendation	1. The Diocese develop a template parish handbook that provides critical information to everyone. The template would include critical safeguarding information that parishes need to continue to meet the safeguarding obligations.

Agreed Action	1. The Diocese will develop a template parish handbook that provides critical information to everyone. The template would include critical safeguarding information that parishes need to continue to meet their safeguarding obligations.
Responsibility	Safeguarding Coordinator
Due date	30 September 2024

Standard 4: Equity is promoted and diversity is respected

Recommendation #3		Priority 3
Criterion 4.3 - The entity pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and children of diverse sexuality.		
Details of finding	The following points were noted: 1. Safeguarding materials need to continue to be translated and presented in different languages and mediums for all parishioners.	
Recommendation	1. As time and resources permit, present safeguarding materials in different languages and mediums.	

Agreed Action	1. The Diocese will develop a timeframe to roll out safeguarding materials in different languages and mediums.
Responsibility	Safeguarding Coordinator
Due date	30 September 2024

Standard 5: Robust human resource management

Recommendation #4		Priority 3
Criterion 5.3 - Personnel receive an appropriate induction and are aware of child safeguarding responsibilities, including reporting obligations.		
Criterion 5.4 - Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safeguarding.		
Details of finding	The following points were noted: 1. Safeguarding appraisals are yet to be rolled out to all personnel. 2. Volunteer safeguarding position descriptions are yet to be rolled out. 3. The Position Description of the Safeguarding Coordinator needs to be reviewed to include adults at risk for NCSS Edition 2. 4. Clergy in part-time ministry (if appropriate) could participate in circle of support supervision programs.	
Recommendation	1. All personnel have an annual safeguarding appraisal. 2. Position Descriptions be provided to all volunteers. 3. Review and revise the Position Description for the Safeguarding Coordinator. 4. Review supervision arrangements for part-time clergy.	

Agreed Action	The Diocese will: 1. Provide relevant personnel with annual safeguarding appraisals. 2. Develop position descriptions for all volunteers. 3. Review and revise the Position Description for the Safeguarding Coordinator. 4. Review supervision arrangements for part-time clergy.
Responsibility	Safeguarding Coordinator
Due date	30 September 2024

Standard 8: Safe physical and online environment

Recommendation #6	
Recommendation #6	**Priority 3**
Criterion 8.3 - Risk management plans consider risks posed by the entity's settings, activities and physical environments.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: 1. Parish Volunteers do not have a Diocesan email address. In the absence of a diocesan email address, volunteers do not appear to be representing the diocese, nor can their current email communication be tracked by the diocese which creates safeguarding risks, including volunteers acting without diocesan authority. 2. It is possible for a member of the public to access the priest's cloister in one parish.
Recommendation	1. Parish Volunteers are provided with a generic Diocesan (for example: safeguarding_parishname@darwin.catholic.org.au) email addresses. This email will be used by volunteers in their safeguarding roles. 2. A gate is installed to mitigate any member of the public from accessing the priest's cloister.
Agreed Action	The Diocese will: 1. Introduce domain name email addresses for volunteer safeguarding personnel. 2. Install a gate in the priests cloister.
Responsibility	Safeguarding Coordinator
Due date	30 September 2024

Appendix A

COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT SCALE

The compliance assessment of the entity's performance against each indicator will be determined using a four-point scale, as follows:

	General	Processes	People/Resources
Not Addressed	• The entity has not addressed the required Indicator or is unable to demonstrate that the requirements of the indicator are in place and/or are operating effectively and continuously.	• Processes are non-existent. • Processes exist however the specific requirements of the indicator have not been addressed.	• No resources have been assigned.

Initial/Ad-Hoc	• The entity has commenced to address the indicator, however processes are ad-hoc or are applied on a case-by-case basis.	• 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.
			• Capabilities vary across the entity.
			• Resources are not formally assigned.

Defined and Developed	• The entity has addressed the indicator and is in the process of implementing the requirements across the entity.	• Relevant processes have been defined and developed, however are yet to be rolled out across the full operations of the entity.	• 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.
Managed and Measurable	• The entity has demonstrated that Indicator requirements are formally embedded and are operating effectively and continuously.	• Relevant processes are integrated and coordinated, including remote operations and activities.	• Personnel have been trained to detect and report on deviations or break downs in processes. • Resources have been assigned to monitor and address non-compliance.

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 consider 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.

Term	Definition
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 impairment - who have suffered previous abuse - who are experiencing transient risks - who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance - who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander - who are from a culturally and 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[2]; - 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 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 by 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.