



Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

Safeguarding Audit Report February 2024

National Catholic
Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:



A safe Church for everyone

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

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

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

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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 Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle'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 Diocese and its representatives at the time of the assessment and where applicable any further subsequent information the Diocese has supplied through the reporting process.

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

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Context

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

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

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

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

The NCSS give effect to the National Principles and are the way that the Catholic Church is responding to the recommendation of the Royal Commission that religious organisations adopt and implement the Child Safe Standards. The NCSS are designed to contextualise the National Principles and Child Safe Standards to the Catholic Church in Australia. For more information about the NCSS please see: [National Catholic Safeguarding Standards - Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd \(acsltd.org.au\)](https://www.acsltd.org.au/national-catholic-safeguarding-standards).

This audit report includes the results of the assessment against the NCSS for the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (**Diocese**).

1.2 Background

The Diocese represents the Catholic Church in a region that extends from Lake Macquarie north to Taree and as far inland as Merriwa and Murrurundi. Most Rev Bishop Michael Kennedy was installed as the ninth Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle on Friday 17 March 2023 at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton.

The Chancery which oversees the pastoral and administrative governance of the Diocese is located in Newcastle. The 2021 Church census indicates there is a Catholic population of 147,073 people (19% of total population) with a median age of 45 years. 15,575 members live alone, 17,071 people were born overseas and 876 people do not speak English well¹.

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland Newcastle has a history of child sexual abuse perpetrated by both clergy and lay people. Historically, there has been a failure of some Church Authority Leaders to adequately respond to disclosures of abuse. The abuse that occurred within the Diocese has indelibly impacted victims, survivors of abuse their families and the wider community.

In 2013, there was a Special Commission of Inquiry into the police investigation of child sexual abuse allegations in the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. The Royal Commission also considered the

¹ Source: [Maitland-Newcastle_2021DioSocialProfile-1.pdf \(catholic.org.au\)](https://www.catholic.org.au/maitland-newcastle-2021-dio-social-profile-1.pdf)

institutional response of the Diocese to child sexual abuse as part of [Case Study 43: Catholic Church authorities in Maitland-Newcastle](#).

The audit team observed that knowledge of the history of child sexual abuse has informed the resolve of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle to embrace safeguarding and to ensure that proper systems, policies and procedures are in place. The audit team acknowledge that both the primary and secondary trauma relating to this history continue to impact many people.

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle 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](#).

Our assessment of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's compliance with the NCSS indicators is detailed in Section 2 of this report. Our recommendations for improvement, including the Diocese'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.

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

This audit was conducted jointly by ACSL and Prolegis Lawyers, a specialist charity and not-for-profit law firm based in Sydney and Melbourne.

1.4 In scope assessment

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle was assessed against Edition 2 of the NCSS, covering both children and adults at risk. In August 2023, ACSL completed a review audit of the Diocese's NCSS Self-Assessment, which provided the Diocese with an opportunity to present their evidence of their congruency with the NCSS. Fieldwork was conducted from 5 November to 18 November, 2023. Fourteen parishes (37% of the Diocese's total parishes) were chosen for visits by ACSL as part of the audit process, consisting of four parish 'clusters' and one standalone parish. This report was completed in February 2024.

As part of this audit, ACSL also engaged with key personnel at the Office of the Bishop, Catholic Schools Office, Curia, CatholicCare Social Services, St Nicholas (Early Education and Care Centres and OOSH Services) and Office of Safeguarding. The activities of the Catholic Schools Office, CatholicCare and St Nicholas including their child safety practices, are subject to existing regulatory requirements and external accreditations. Under the ACSL audit framework, representatives from these entities were interviewed and the schools listed were visited to assess the implementation of their safeguarding practices.

The audit scope included:

- Audit activities at the Diocesan administrative centre.
- Interviews, observations, and enquiry with the Diocesan leadership, including their Safeguarding Committee and relevant ministerial personnel.
- A review of key safeguarding documents, policies, and procedures.
- Assessment of the design and testing of the operation of safeguarding controls implemented by the Diocese.
- Site visits to:
 - Cluster 1 – Maitland

- Cluster 2 – Cessnock
- Cluster 3 - Taree
- Cluster 4 – Newcastle
- Cluster 5 - Adamstown
- St Pius X High School, Adamstown
- St Joseph’s Primary School, Merewether
- St Joseph’s Primary School, Taree
- Interviews with over 100 personnel – inclusive of clergy, people in paid roles, volunteers, parishioners, school students and parents.

1.5 Disclaimer

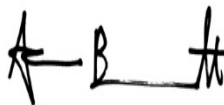
The information contained in this report is based on evidence provided by the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and its representatives at the time of the assessment and, where applicable, any subsequent information the Diocese has supplied through the reporting process.

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

Signed:



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2. Overall Audit Findings

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

ACSL assessment of the implementation of NCSS indicators by a Church Authority has been determined using a four-point maturity scale².

Our assessment indicates that the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 96 (98%) of the relevant indicators to their operations. Assessment for each maturity scale is as follows:

- 83 (85%) indicators are developed and embedded
- 13 (13%) indicators are substantially progressed.
- 2 indicators (2%) in the initial stages of implementation.

Of the 104 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church Authorities, 6 of these are not relevant to the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's operations.

The key findings from the audit are summarised below.

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

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

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

- The Diocese has an approved Safeguarding Policy which is publicly available.
- A dedicated Safeguarding Office has been established to support, develop and embed a safeguarding culture in the Diocese.
- The Safeguarding Policy adopts a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and utilises a trauma informed approach to its operations and activities.
- The personnel interviewed as part of the audit all valued the role and advice provided by the Office of Safeguarding.
- The Diocesan Protection and Safety Council and its sub-committees are responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of compliance with the NCSS.
- The personnel interviewed and parishes visited demonstrate an embedded culture of safeguarding children and adults, by championing and modelling sound practices, procedures and language.
- The Diocese has a range of governance structures which facilitate the implementation of robust safeguarding practices in parishes and/or ministries.
- The fieldwork investigation revealed that safeguarding practices are developed and embedded in some parishes and ministries, while in other clusters it is a developing process. This is an iterative process that requires constant attention both at a Diocesan and parish level.
- The Diocese has three separate Codes of Conduct (for clergy, for employees and for parish volunteers, and school employees). The Codes for employees and volunteers have been integrated into one Code of Conduct, approved by the Diocese to be rolled out in 2024.

² Refer Appendix A for definitions of the maturity scale used for the Compliance Assessment.

- The Code of Conduct for clergy and new Code of Conduct for all other personnel set clear behavioural standards towards children and adults at risk. There are accessible language documents for the current Codes and these will need to be modified slightly when the new Code is rolled out. This also provides the Diocese with the opportunity to reinforce the zero-tolerance approach taken to safeguarding and demonstrate a shared approach to safeguarding that emphasises subsidiarity in leadership and governance.
- The positions of Safeguarding Champions, Promoters and Co-ordinators are valuable in continuing to embed safeguarding practices across all Diocesan operations. In some cases, the Promoter is a senior Leader and the only person in the ministry acting as a point of contact for safeguarding concern.
- In the interests of clearer roles and responsibilities, ACSL recommends that a second person should be appointed to Safeguarding Promoter, preferably a person outside of leadership.
- During the fieldwork, ACSL noted that a temporary role focused on safeguarding in a school was instrumental in supporting cultural change and recommends that this position be extended into mid-2024. This finding was noted by the Diocese in the audit exit meeting and the position has been extended in line with the ACSL recommendation.
- There are governance arrangements in place to facilitate the implementation of the Safeguarding framework across the Diocese. Nevertheless, ACSL recommends that because of the diverse and dispersed nature of the Diocese, parishes are supported to maximise opportunities for regional training and networking opportunities, along with the 'whole of Diocese' opportunities offered (e.g. Safeguarding Network meetings).
- There are risk management plans in place in some parishes and ministries, however such plans need to be implemented in all parishes and ministries. It would assist the Diocese leadership if an aggregate parish and ministry risk register was created, which details all activities and generates a robust management system that monitors how risk management plans are implemented, reviewed, and reported to the Diocese.

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

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

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has produced a range of materials to make children and adults at risk aware of their rights to be safe from abuse and who to contact if they are concerned about their safety. This information is, overall, displayed in high traffic areas in the parishes and ministries.
- The information aimed at children was displayed in all areas visited.
- The Diocese is preparing more materials for adults at risk.
- Some entities may need additional support from the Diocese to develop strategies to engage with adults at risk (vulnerable adults) in their parishes/ministries since this is a new strategy/approach.
- The Diocese has developed template letters for school parent inviting them to provide feedback on school programs during their [COSI validation for Safe and Supportive Environment – Child Protection](#).
- The Diocese also has a range of participatory strategies to engage adults at risk in their funded ministries, for example, Refugee Hub and Community Kitchens.
- From 2024, the Diocese will conduct a standard 5-year survey review for parishes that involves participation of individuals and groups.
- There is a feedback survey for users of Office of Safeguarding and a Complaints and Feedback tab on the public website. Some Diocesan schools also have a mechanism for students and parents to raise safeguarding concerns anonymously.
- Children and adults at risk are encouraged to appreciate the importance of friendships, social connections and appropriate relationships that support a culture of safeguarding.

- Students at Diocesan schools demonstrated a high-level of knowledge about safeguarding and were able to articulate that safeguarding encompassed ideas including belonging, identity, and the right to feel safe.
- Materials on the availability of abuse prevention programs are provided locally in parishes or ministries. The audit noted these are available in public areas in the venues visited.

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

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

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has a long history of participating in community awareness programs, for instance, National Child Protection Week, NAIDOC week, and holding a Perpetual Day of Remembrance for victims/survivors of child sexual abuse.
- Section 12 of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy Framework provides guidelines on how Diocesan personnel engage with people in parishes and ministries.
- The Diocese encourages parents, carers/guardians in decision-making that affects their child or adult with diminished/diminishing capacity.
- Diocesan schools have parent engagement strategies that include partnering with families.
- A further strategy the Diocese has utilised for families with children is through the creation of a Family Engagement position to encourage active participation by families in parish and school ministries and to support effective communication systems.

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

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

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has translated safeguarding materials into several community languages for parishioners and mass is celebrated in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) languages. In one parish an LGBTQIA+ liturgy is celebrated.
- Students in one of the parish schools participated in a Loud Sky Art exhibition, which was an initiative of the survivor community.
- ACSL recommends that the Diocese develops a range of materials to build a greater understanding of when a person may become an adult at risk and effective safeguarding strategies in these circumstances. Schools with high enrolments of children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds could also further develop their safeguarding materials.
- Where new communities are emerging, parishes are beginning to consider the diverse needs of community members.
- The Diocese is encouraged to adapt their complaints pathways to promote greater inclusivity, so that complaints are managed in ways that are culturally safe and easily accessible.

NCSS Standard 5 – Robust human resource management

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

The audit team made the following key findings:

- Parishes – recruitment and onboarding volunteers is the responsibility of the Diocese and whilst this process might be onerous for some people, it is an appropriate process to assess the suitability of people who have sustained contact with children and/or adults at risk.
- A centralised system is in place to record the WWCC information of personnel.
- Carers/parents are responsible for ensuring that allied health professionals contracted by parents to support children through the NDIS have appropriate safeguarding credentials prior to commencing work with children in schools.
- These contractors are expected to sign into the school and provide relevant school personnel with their credentials prior to commencing work with children. The school[s] do not keep a record of the credentials. ACSL recommends that parents request these contractors to undertake Diocesan safeguarding induction.
- The Diocese has comprehensive recruitment policies and procedures that outline safeguarding requirements in its advertising, vetting, and screening of personnel.
- The selection, screening and assessment processes for candidates wishing to apply for the Diaconate and the Priesthood is comprehensive and is compliant with relevant Church directives.
- A zero-tolerance approach is explicit in advertising, screening, and recruitment practices for personnel.
- Positions are risk assessed prior to advertisement and recruitment practices follow normative human resource management practices.
- Ideally, all personnel should undertake safeguarding induction prior to commencing in their roles. However, ACSL also acknowledges there may be timing issues associated with safeguarding induction and if this occurs, then it is expected that all personnel undertake an induction within 12 weeks of commencing their role.
- ACSL recommends that as the Diocese is rolling out updated or new safeguarding resources that strategies are in place to support less resourced clusters to implement their safeguarding practices.

We have the following suggested improvements.

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland Newcastle could enhance its safeguarding practices by:

- providing independent external supervision for those in trauma facing counselling roles;
- providing support to less resourced parishes to recruit and onboard volunteers, particularly in parishes located in areas with a lower socio-economic demographic; and
- developing a protocol for sharing information about volunteers who serve across multiple diocesan entities (e.g., in both a school and a parish) to minimise duplicated registration requirements.

NCSS Standard 6 – Effective complaints management

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

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

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The reporting system of the Diocese is effective. The Diocesan Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.
- ACSL notes the requirement to maintain safeguarding records for a minimum of 50 years is documented in the Privacy Policy and is appropriately implemented.
- ACSL notes that some personnel interviewed requested that more training be provided on how complaints are managed between the Office of Safeguarding and Human Resources. Additional training should also be provided to parishes (in particular, clergy) on trauma-informed responses to complaints.
- In any complaint handling process, some people will always be concerned about confidentiality and ACSL recommends the Diocese provide further information to reinforce their commitment to maintaining confidentiality.
- ACSL further recommends that the once complaints are resolved that all relevant parties are informed of the outcomes.
- Personnel interviewed advised that complaints are taken seriously and investigated promptly and thoroughly. The processes are linked with the Code of Conduct and other policies. The policies empower personnel and others to make complaints in good faith.
- The Complaint Policy is presented in multiple formats for a diverse range of people.
- ACSL recommends the Diocese continue to work towards incorporating volunteers into the DMN People Management System to enable access to resources including the online complaint management training.

NCSS Standard 7 – Ongoing education and training

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

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The Diocese recognises that specific roles require training and support needs and there is regular training that focuses on building and maintaining culturally safe environments.
- Interviews with Diocesan staff, clergy, ministry, and parish personnel indicate a sound understanding of the requirements for child safeguarding, including knowledge of the appropriate responses should a complaint or concern be raised, indicators of child sexual abuse, including harmful behaviours of child towards another child.
- The Diocese has begun to implement training for personnel to understand the safeguarding needs of adults at risk. ACSL recommends that the Diocese uses its risk framework to develop targeted safeguarding training for specific ministries (e.g. prison ministry).
- Many personnel interviewed indicated a preference for face-to-face training where possible.
- ACSL recommends that the training strategy should be used to develop support networks for Parish Councils. ACSL notes that schools would benefit from training in building culturally safe environments for children.
- The safeguarding training is subject to continuous improvement.

NCSS Standard 8 – Safe physical and online environments

ACSL assessed how the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle focuses on the responsibility to minimise opportunities for abuse to occur in both physical and online environments. Standard 8 requires both the Diocese and its personnel to be proactive in recognising and mitigating safeguarding risks. The core aspects of this responsibility are the Code of Conduct, the Safeguarding Policy, and the Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy, which outline appropriate supervision and oversight of, and behaviour towards children and adults at risk. This includes considerations of managing risks associated with third parties or contractors and use of facilities by others.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The Diocese has introduced an effective QR code system for clergy when they celebrate mass or travel between mass centres.
- The auditors were asked for identification in all the clusters they visited, and it was noted there were also 'sign in' and 'sign out' registers in parishes.
- The IT monitoring system is managed by the Diocese. This system is however, 'opt in' and ACSL recommends that the Diocese develop a set of IT standards for parishes/ministries that do not 'opt in' to their monitoring system.
- In schools there is high visibility across high-risk areas. One school was yet to be fully fenced when the audit team was visiting, however this fencing has now been completed. There are initiatives in schools (e.g. Wellbeing Wednesday, Yonder) to promote safe environments and assist students in managing their use of digital devices.

NCSS Standard 9 – Continuous improvement

Standard 9 is focused on assessing how the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is preparing to meet emerging safeguarding risks and the continuous review and improvement approaches that are in place, across its ministries and services. This Standard expects the Diocese to regularly review policies and procedures, testing how they are understood and implemented by personnel. It also requires the Diocese to review incidents and complaints to identify systemic safeguarding issues that may arise. External review mechanisms strengthen the organisation's safeguarding capabilities, support continuous improvement, and enable the sharing of learnings/good practice.

The audit team made the following key findings:

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

NCSS Standard 10 – Policies and procedures support child safety

Standard 10 determines that the safeguarding policies and procedures are well documented and managed. This ensures consistent application of safeguarding practices across the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. The audit expects that safeguarding policies and procedures are publicly available, in formats that are easily understood. They should be developed and reviewed in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders. Safeguarding policies and procedures should not be static but be 'living' documents.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- Key safeguarding policies and procedures relating to safeguarding requirements are in place and operating effectively. The policies and procedures address the requirements of the NCSS. They are accessible and presented in child friendly formats. Recommendations 1, 2, & 5 encourage consideration of adults at risk.
- The leaders champion and model best practices in safeguarding and personnel interviewed during the audit understand and appear to implement safeguarding policies and procedures.

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

Audit recommendations are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation.³

- There are no Priority 1 (high rated) audit recommendations for the Diocese.
- There are 6 Priority 2 (medium rated) recommendations.
- There is 1 Priority 3 (low rated) recommendation.

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

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

Table 1: Summary of NCSS Assessment

National Catholic Safeguarding Standard	# NCSS indicators	Not Relevant	Assessment of Implementation			
			Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1: Committed leadership, governance & culture	17	1	12	4	-	-
2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate	6	-	3	1	2	-
3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6	-	6	-	-	-
4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected	4	-	3	1	-	-
5: Robust human resource management	22	4	17	1	-	-
6: Effective complaints management	19	-	19	-	-	-
7: Ongoing training & education	11	-	8	3	-	-
8: Safe physical and online environments	7	-	5	2	-	-
9: Continuous improvement	6	1	4	1	-	-
10: Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults	6	-	6	-	-	-
TOTAL	104	6	83	13	2	-
	98		98%		2%	

³ Refer Appendix B for definitions of the Priority ratings used for audit recommendations.

3. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation #1	1.1. The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will offer further support, resources and work with parishes still working to embed their safeguarding culture.
	1.2 The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will implement an efficient risk management /assessment tool and a user-friendly risk register to support parishes and ministries in mitigating safeguarding risks.
Recommendation #2	2.1 The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle support parishes and ministries to implement strategies to engage adults at risk (or their carers, where appropriate) to enable them to participate in decisions that affect them.
	2.2 The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle survey parish/ministry needs on what support they require to develop consultation with adults at risk (vulnerable adults).
	2.3 The Diocese provide parishes and ministries with information for adults at risk (or their carers) about respectful relationships.
Recommendation #3	3.1 The Diocese tailors its generic Complaint pathway to promote greater cultural inclusively and ease of access for children and adults at risk to make a complaint and it resolved in a meaningful way.
	3.2 The Diocesan Codes of Conduct is updated to include behavioural expectations when diocesan personnel are engaging with adults at risk and persons who identify as members of a marginalized people or group (e.g. LGBTQIA+)
Recommendation #4	4.1 Providing more support to less resourced parishes in their recruitment and onboarding of volunteers, with particular attention paid to meaningful ways to achieve this in parishes located in areas with a lower socio-economic demographic.
	4.2 The way information sharing of volunteers serving across multiple diocesan entities (e.g., in both a school and a parish) needs to be fully understood by everyone to ensure that this issue is understood and valued rather than observed as a negative.
	4.3 The Diocese will engage with the front facing ministry and negotiate a solution that meets the needs of the Diocese and the ministry.
Recommendation #5	5.1 Where possible, provide face-to-face safeguarding training for personnel.
	5.2 Continue to roll out training to understand the needs of adults at risk in the Diocese.
	5.3 As part of the ongoing school professional development program, promote training that assists schools to continue to build culturally safe environments.
	5.4 Assess the suitability of developing a Parish Council support network.
Recommendation #6	6.1 The Diocese develop a set of IT monitoring standards for any ministry/parish that does not 'opt-in' to their monitoring systems.
	6.2 Third party contractors engaged by parents/carers are encouraged to participate, at their own cost, in Diocesan safeguarding training.
Recommendation #7	7.1 The Diocese expand their data collection to undertake further trend analysis and feed this data into their continuous improvement processes.

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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:					
The fieldwork investigation revealed that the Diocese 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 countries other than Australia, the NCSS are applied wherever possible, taking into account cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.	Not relevant to current activities			

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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- Some inconsistency was noted as to the frequency of review required for parish risk assessments. Diocesan and parish risk register(s) are still under development. Refer to Recommendation #1 .					
Criterion 1.6 - Personnel understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping for safeguarding and professional standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.6.1	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures are documented and communicated to personnel.	✓			
1.6.2	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures align with best practice.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 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: 2.1.2/2.1.3 - The Diocese has limited forms of engagement with adults at risk to provide their views about decisions that affect them. Some entities may need support from the Diocese to implement engagement strategies. Safeguarding materials for adults at risk are yet to be fully displayed in all parishes and ministries. Refer to 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: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 2.3 - The importance of friendships and social connections for adults at risk is recognised and encouraged, helping them feel safe and less isolated.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.3.1	Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.			✓	
Observations: 2.3.1 - Parishes have been provided with some resources for adults at risk by the Diocese and these have yet to be fully advertised in all parishes and ministries. 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					
Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 3.2 – Families, carers and communities are engaged with and are provided information about the Church Authority’s approach to safeguarding.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.	✓			
3.2.2	Safeguarding information is provided and widely available, including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinators.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
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:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
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 indicators 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 company processes and supports are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 4.3 - The diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those living with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and adults who are unable to live at home, and those of diverse sexuality, are acknowledged.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.3.1	The Safeguarding Policy and procedures empower children and adults by reflecting attitudes and behaviours that respect their inherent dignity, are inclusive and are responsive to diverse needs.		✓		
Observations: The Diocese has yet to adapt Complaints pathways to promote greater inclusivity, cultural safety and accessibility. The Diocese could update their Codes of Conduct to include expected behavioural expectations when diocesan personnel are engaging with adults at risk (for example persons who identify as LGBTQIA+). Refer to Recommendation #3 .					

Standard 5		Robust human resource management			
People working with children and adults at risk are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice					
Criterion 5.1 – A strong commitment to safeguarding underpins an entity’s recruitment.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.1.1	The commitment to safeguarding and a zero-tolerance approach to abuse are explicit in advertising, screening, and recruitment for personnel.	✓			

5.1.2	Recruitment and screening procedures and processes are fully documented.	✓			
5.1.3	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children/adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.2 – Personnel have current clearances (for example, working with children checks) and/or equivalent background checks relevant to their role.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.2.1	All personnel are required to have a background check or clearance (as relevant to their role).	✓			
5.2.2	As required by legislation, personnel must have a current working with children check (or working with vulnerable people check) and/or NDIS Worker Screening Check prior to working with children and adults at risk.	✓			
5.2.3	Records of all checks are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation, for all personnel	✓			
Observations: In some parishes and entities volunteer induction records are not retained locally and instead rely on HR to maintain volunteer details. If a person works across more than one ministry, they can be asked to re-apply as a volunteer, which can be onerous. Refer to Recommendation #4 .					
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: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.4 - Ongoing supervision and people management includes an emphasis on safeguarding responsibilities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.		✓		
Observations: Requirements of the indicator are mostly in place. One group of front-facing personnel would benefit from participation in external Diocesan funded supervision. Refer to Recommendation #4 .					
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.	Not applicable			
5.5.3	Ongoing integrated formation for clergy and religious addresses both the canonical and civil safeguarding requirements. For priests, this would include supporting their fidelity to the Church’s teaching regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the inviolability of the Sacramental Seal.	✓			
5.5.4	All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.	✓			
5.5.5	All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals	✓			
5.5.6	All newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least five years post ordination or final profession.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
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			
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.	Not applicable			
5.6.3	Seminary and initial formation programs identify how to avoid abuse of power and the development and/or reinforcement of clericalist attitudes and behaviours.	Not applicable			
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 indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Criterion 5.8 – Where clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are recruited to ministry, programs are in place to support their cultural awareness, screening, induction, professional supervision and development.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.8.1	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia recruited to ministry, are screened and verification information is sought from the international Church Authority.	✓			
5.8.2	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia participate in a safeguarding induction program which is documented and occurs as soon as possible after commencement of ministry.	✓			
5.8.3	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are supported with a suitable mentor for at least the first two years of their time in Australia.	✓			
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• breaches of Code of Conduct.• disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child.• an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and• an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult.	✓			
6.1.3	The Complaint Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflict of interests are managed.	✓			
6.1.4	The Complaint Handling Policy acknowledges that power imbalances exist between the complainant and respondent and has strategies in place to address this.	✓			
6.1.5	The Complaint Handling Policy spells out who has responsibilities in relation to handling complaints and when procedures are enacted.	✓			
6.1.6	All abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referral are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. ACSL notes the framework is in place and annual refresher training for clergy and employees is in place. Access to online training for volunteers would benefit everyone.					

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 indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.3 - Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.3.1	The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned, and operates in conjunction, with the Code of Conduct, HR and other policies.	✓			
6.3.2	The Complaints Handling Policy commits to an initial risk assessment if a complaint of abuse is received, to identify and minimise any risk to children or adults. Ongoing risk assessments are conducted throughout investigation processes.	✓			
6.3.3	Complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.	✓			
6.3.4	Trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced abuse.	✓			
6.3.5	Sharing information relating to complaints adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant legislation.	✓			
6.3.6	The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures empower and support personnel to raise, in good faith, concerns and allegations about unacceptable behaviour towards children and adults by other personnel.	✓			
6.3.7	Where a complaint related to the sexual abuse of a child or adult against clergy or religious is substantiated under a civil standard, the Church Authority undertakes a risk management process to determine the appropriate action, in keeping with Church protocols.	✓			
6.3.8	Where a clergy or religious is convicted of a canonical offence relating to child sexual abuse, the respondent 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 any statutory or contractual processes.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.4.1	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> concerns and complaints of child abuse occurring within the entity be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities, in accordance with 	✓			

	regulations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 6.5 – The Church Authority ensures mechanisms are in place to support complainants of child and adult sexual abuse.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.5.1	Appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants.	✓			
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			
<i>Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and adults safe through information, ongoing education and training.</i>					
Criterion 7.1 - Personnel are trained and supported to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.1.1	Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.	✓			
7.1.2	The entity's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must as a minimum cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Code of Conduct.• safeguarding risk management.• Safeguarding Policy and procedures.• Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.• reporting obligations; and• e-safety training.	✓			
7.1.3	Records are maintained to ensure all personnel attend induction training and participate in refresher safeguarding training at least every three years.	✓			
7.1.4	All personnel with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive ongoing support and professional development to their role.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Criterion 7.2 - Personnel are supported to recognise the nature and indicators of child abuse, including harmful behaviours by a child towards another child.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.2.1	<p>Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place children at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the nature and impact of adult abuse. • understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse. • identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation. • recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including power imbalances can be exploited; and • understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse. 		✓		
Observations: The Diocese will need to, as part of their ongoing continuous training program, continue to focus on who are adults at risk and how such people can be recognised in their parishes and ministers. Refer to Recommendation #5 .					
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	<p>Personnel receive training on reporting obligations under Commonwealth/State/Territory legislative and canon law, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: The Diocese could continue to provide cultural training to personnel as many people expressed this would be useful to their roles. Refer to Recommendation #5 .					

Standard 8		Safe physical and online environments			
Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed.					
Criterion 8.1 – The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy addresses both physical and online risks, without compromising the individual’s right to privacy or wellbeing.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.1.1	Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services including risks arising from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">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); andthe 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: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Criterion 8.2 - The online environment is used in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policy.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.2.1	Personnel access and use online environments in line with the entity's Code of Conduct, Privacy Act and relevant communication protocols.	✓			
8.2.2	The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary, or other relevant policies and reported to the leadership.		✓		
Observations: The IT monitoring system is an 'opt-in' system and these systems may not be subject to the scrutiny the Diocese exercises in their systems. Refer to Recommendation #6 .					
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: Third Contractors who are engaged by family members or carers do not complete the Diocesan Safeguarding Training. Refer to Recommendation #6 .					

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 The Diocese has developed data reporting systems which could be expanded to collect further data to analyse systemic trends. Refer to Recommendation #7 .					
Criterion 9.3 - The Church Authority reports on the findings of its safeguarding reviews.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.3.1	The findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to are reported to stakeholders.	✓			
9.3.2	The findings of audits or reviews undertaken or validated by ACSL are made public.	Not applicable – this is the first audit by ACSL			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 10		Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults			
Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.					
Criterion 10.1 - Policies and procedures address the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.1.1	All relevant policies and procedures reference appropriate safeguarding approaches, requirements and responsibilities.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 10.2 - Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.2.1	The policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding are readily available and accessible to all personnel.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 10.3 - Best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development and review of policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.3.1	There are processes in place to monitor how safeguarding policies and procedures ae 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: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

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		Priority 2
1.2.1	<p>A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority and leaders by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.	
1.5.1	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.	
Details of finding	<p>The following points were noted:</p> <p>1.2.1 - Some parishes have a better developed safeguarding culture than others and our recommendation is that the Diocese continues to work with parishes in need of further support to better embed a safeguarding culture.</p> <p>1.5.1 – 1.5.3 - Risk management plans are in place and required to be fully implemented across all parishes and ministries. However, parishes would greatly benefit from being provided a more efficient risk management /assessment tool and a user-friendly risk register, and implementation support.</p>	
Recommendation	<p>1. The Diocese will offer further support, resources and work with parishes still working to embed their safeguarding culture.</p> <p>2. The Diocese will implement an efficient risk management /assessment tool and a user-friendly risk register to support parishes and ministries in mitigating safeguarding risks.</p>	
Agreed Action	<p>The Office of Safeguarding, in consultation with the Bishop’s Office and parish leaderships, is implementing a parish safeguarding compliance programme (PSCP), which will feed into a reporting structure that is being developed as a part of the Bishop’s formal quinquennial parish visitation cycle (Can. 396 §1 and Can. 398). The ongoing support of parishes is assessed in conjunction with work undertaken by the Bishop’s Office [refer recommendation #4 response].</p> <p>In consultation with the Diocese’s Governance service, external specialist support and the Office of Safeguarding, the Diocese will develop or externally obtain a fit for purpose parish management/assessment tool and risk register and a training and development package on risk assessment and safety planning to support parish staff.</p>	
Responsibility	Director of Safeguarding	
Due date	<p>Consultative roll out (information / education) of PSCP commencing February 2024. Trial implementation of PSCP from May 2024. Review of baseline, planning and initial implementation in Q.4 2024. Formal launch 2025.</p> <p>Risk management: Establishment of working party February 2024. Development of draft tools and training package by Q.4 2024. Trial application in select parishes till early 2025.</p>	



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		Priority 2
2.1.2	Adults at risk (or carers, where appropriate) are engaged to provide their views about what makes them feel safe and enable them to participate in decisions that affect them.	
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: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Parishes and ministries have limited engagement with adults at risk (or carers, where appropriate) about what makes them feel safe and enables them to participate in decisions that affect them.2. Entities may need additional support from the Diocese to strengthen engagement with adults at risk (vulnerable adults).3. Adults at risk (or their carers, where appropriate) are provided with limited information about respectful relationships.	
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Diocese support parishes and ministries to implement strategies to engage adults at risk (or their carers, where appropriate) to enable them to participate in decisions that affect them.2. The Diocese survey parish/ministry needs on what support they require to develop consultation with adults at risk (vulnerable adults).3. The Diocese provide parishes and ministries with information for adults at risk (or their carers) about respectful relationships.	
Agreed Action	<p>Office of Safeguarding develop and roll out a survey for parish leaders, workers and parishioners to assess the specific nature and need of ministry with vulnerable persons and perceived areas requiring development / support.</p> <p>The Parish Support Worker (Bishop’s Office) and the Compliance and Training Coordinator (Office of Safeguarding) will work with the survey results and, in collaboration with parish leaders, develop or obtain practice tools, training and other supports, producing a practice enhancement programme to promote a parish’s capacities to engage with and support vulnerable persons.</p> <p>The Office of Safeguarding and Parish Support Worker will roll out and support the adoption/implementation of the practice enhancement programme.</p>	
Responsibility	Chancellor of Maitland-Newcastle and Director of Safeguarding	
Due date	<p>Finalised survey April 2024.</p> <p>Launch of survey at Q.2 Promoter of Safeguarding Network (PSN) meeting (late May, 2024).</p> <p>Results and development of draft response strategy to be prepared for review and consultation at Q.3 PSN meeting (late August). Trial implementation in a couple of parishes, Q.4 2024.</p> <p>Review, adjustments and finalisation of practice enhancement programme for broad based implementation from 2025, as influenced by the parish continued viability and development options consultations being conducted by the Bishop’s Office [refer recommendation #4 response].</p>	



Standard 4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected

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

Recommendation #3		Priority 2
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.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The current complaint pathways should promote greater inclusivity, cultural safety and accessibility.2. The Diocesan Codes of Conduct could be updated to include behavioural expectations when diocesan personnel are engaging with adults at risk and persons who identify as LGBTQIA+.	
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Diocese tailors its generic complaint pathway to promote greater cultural inclusivity and ease of access for children and adults at risk to make a complaint and it resolved in a meaningful way.2. The Diocesan Codes of Conduct are updated to include behavioural expectations when diocesan personnel are engaging with adults at risk and persons as members of a marginalized people or group (e.g. LGBTQIA+)	
Agreed Action	<p>Development of a promotional strategy specifically targeting families, children, and vulnerable persons to promote the online public complaints portal and making it more user friendly, to place before Diocesan leadership for consideration. The strategy will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• high visibility placement of ‘single click’ links on diocesan public web sites• implementation of ‘easy use’ online portal for children and vulnerable persons• promotional campaign targeting children and families receiving services (e.g. education and care) and members of faith communities, notably vulnerable people in parishes. <p>In light of the ACBC recently publishing Integrity in Our Common Mission (IOCM), the Diocesan Code of Conduct (CoC) is currently under review to ensure its alignment with IOCM. As part of this review the Diocese will assess the inclusion of clearer (pronounced) expectations for Diocesan workers when engaging with vulnerable persons or those who identify as a member of a marginalized people or group.</p>	
Responsibility	In-house counsel Manager Governance Operations, Senior Policy Advisor, Quality & Assurance, Director of Safeguarding	
Due date	<p>Complaints process: Development of draft strategy, including technical consultation Q.2 2024. Presentation of strategy to DLG July 2024.</p> <p>Revised CoC: Consultative draft released for feedback – June 2024. Final draft for review of Diocesan Leadership Group & Bishop’s approval – July 2024. Launch of revised CoC (2024) – Q.3 2024.</p>	



Standard 5: Robust human resource management

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

Recommendation #4		
5.2	Personnel have current clearances (for example working with children checks) and/or equivalent background checks relevant to their role.	
5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring and annual performance reviews for personnel includes a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information sharing about volunteers serving across multiple diocesan entities (e.g., in both a school and a parish) is needed to ensure that volunteers are not required to double up on registration requirements.2. Parishes with limited resources can be overwhelmed with onboarding volunteers.3. A front facing trauma ministry does not have access to external professional supervision.	
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Providing more support to less resourced parishes in their recruitment and onboarding of volunteers, with particular attention paid to meaningful ways to achieve this in parishes located in areas with a lower socio-economic demographic.3. The way information sharing of volunteers serving across multiple diocesan entities (e.g., in both a school and a parish) needs to be fully understood by everyone to ensure that this issue is understood and valued rather than observed as a negative.4. The Diocese will engage with the front facing ministry and negotiate a solution that meets the needs of the Diocese and the ministry.	
Agreed Action	<p>The Bishop’s Office is currently undertaking a consultative process with parish communities to assess the parish’s continued viability and developing options / pathways for change (amalgamations / closure / other). This process will influence a number of medium and long term responses to ACSL audit recommendations.</p> <p>In the short to medium term, the Diocese is providing support to those parishes seeking such support through the People and Culture Service, the Bishop’s Office (Parish Support Worker) and OoSG with the recruitment and induction of volunteers.</p> <p>Preparation of promotional / informational brochure for schools and parishes re. the advantages of the centralisation of volunteer records and provision of information across diocesan agencies. Addition of information on centralised process in informational packs given to perspective volunteers. Also, as part of the continuous improvement cycle of safeguarding training, insertion of additional explanatory slide in modules (#1) and (#2) re. centralisation of volunteer records and provision of information across diocesan agencies.</p> <p>Diocesan employees in ‘front facing ministries’ currently receive workplace supervision. As part of this the supervisor will maintain ongoing monitoring and support for individual staff and encourage them to access external professional supervision, if required. Also, the workplace supervisor will encourage / support employee to access EAP as appropriate.</p>	
Responsibility	<p>Parish continued viability and development options consultation: Chancellor of Maitland-Newcastle</p> <p>Promotion of centralised volunteer induction and information: Director of Safeguarding</p> <p>Operational management in CatholicCare</p>	
Due date	<p>Short to medium term supports – Currently actioned. Parish continued viability and development options consultations – 18 to 24 months</p> <p>Promotion of centralised volunteer induction and information – draft brochure and supporting slides for Modules (#1) and (#2) by end Q.2 2024. Launch of revised modules and distribution of brochure from Q.3 2024.</p> <p>Supervision and support – current and ongoing.</p>	



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 #5		Priority 2
7.3.1	<p>Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand the nature and impact of adult abuse;• understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse;• identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation;• recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including power imbalances can be exploited; and• understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse.	
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 environments for people from these groups.	
Details of finding	<p>The following points were noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Many personnel interviewed expressed a preference for face-to-face training.2. The Diocese is still rolling out training to understand the safeguarding needs of adults at risk.3. Schools would benefit from building culturally safe environments.4. A training strategy to develop support networks for Parish Councils could support lesser resourced parishes.	
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Where possible, provide face-to-face safeguarding training for personnel.3. Continue to roll out training to understand the needs of adults at risk in the Diocese.4. As part of the ongoing school professional development program, promote training that assists schools to continue to build culturally safe environments.5. Assess the suitability of developing a Parish Council support network.	
Agreed Action	<p>The Diocese’s Safeguarding Training Regime 2024 (DSTR 24) was approved prior to the NCSS audit. The DSTR 24 includes Course (#3), a cycle of half day face-to-face training, specific to the particular child-related workplaces which are designed to be highly interactive, scenario-based peer-on-peer learning through application of knowledge and collective problem solving,</p> <p>The revised Safeguarding Training Module (#1) was launched as a part of National Child Protection Week 2023, which was a significant revision on the previous module, with a focus on the risks to needs of and Diocesan workers’ duties of care for vulnerable persons. As part of the continuous improvement cycle of safeguarding training, Module #1 will be reviewed, incorporating any changes in legislation or Church protocols (e.g. Integrity in Our Common Mission). The Office of Safeguarding will have a focus on increasing the number of scenarios involving vulnerable persons for Course (#3) for parishes and Catholic Care Social Services.</p> <p>The Office of Safeguarding will work with the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) to identify several school leadership teams able and willing to undertake a workplace trial of the SBS Inclusion Program; completing some or all of the eight specific learning programmes, dependent on</p>	

	which are most applicable for the particular school. Based on qualitative assessment of the trial leadership groups, the CSO will assess the business case for a wider trial and/or systemic roll out.
Responsibility	Face-to-face training and Vulnerable Persons: Director of Safeguarding Professional development programme – culturally safe environments: Head of Schools
Due date	Face-to-face training: Currently occurring and ongoing. Inclusion of more training scenarios in Course (#3) related to vulnerable persons: Final draft of additional set of scenarios by Q.3 2024. Field testing in Q.4. Broad based inclusion in Course (#3) from Q.1 2025. Recruitment and selection of schools for trial: End of Q.1 2024. Review of applicable learning programmes for specific schools and completion of agreed programmes – end of Q.3 2024. Collection of qualitative feedback, analysis and assessment of business case for further roll out end Q.4 2024.



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 #6		Priority 2
8.2.2	The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary, or other relevant policies and reported to leadership.	
8.4.1	If a third party provides services or uses the organization facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The IT system is managed and monitored by the Diocese. This is an ‘opt-in’ system and thus could fall outside the Diocesan IT standards.2. Third party contractors engaged by families or carers to provide support for students do not participate in safeguarding training.	
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Diocese develop a set of IT monitoring standards for any ministry/parish that does not ‘opt-in’ to their monitoring systems.2. Third party contractors engaged by parents/carers are encouraged to participate, at their own cost, in Diocesan safeguarding training.	
Agreed Action	In consultation, Technology Services will develop a set of Information Management and Cyber Security considerations/minimum specifications that parishes with third party IT providers will be required to meet. Implementation of these expectations will occur as influenced by the parish continued viability and development options consultations being conducted by the Bishop’s Office [refer recommendation #4 response]. As part of the continuous improvement cycle in the Office of Safeguarding, the current Cat.5 documentation package, for use with schools, include an explanatory brochure for Cat.5 contractors to encourage them to undertake free online safeguarding training Module (#2).	
Responsibility	Minimum specifications: Service Delivery Manager Technology Services and Director of Safeguarding Cat.5 documentation package: Director of Safeguarding	

Due date	<p>Minimum specifications: Draft set ready end May 2024. Piloted as part of trial implementation of PSCP ('parish safeguarding compliance programme') [refer recommendation #1]. As a measurement / assessment tool for compliance with NCSS Indicators (8.1.2), (8.2.2), (8.4.1). Review and refinement of draft minimum specifications as part of baseline review of PSCP pilot.</p> <p>Draft revisions of Cat.5 documentation package for schools for consultation Q.2 2024. Finalisation and roll out of changed paperwork Q.3 and Q.4 2024.</p>
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Standard 9: Continuous improvement

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

Recommendation #7		Priority 3
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.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: 1. Data collected by the Diocese could be expanded to undertake better trend analysis and feed into the continuous improvement process.	
Recommendation	1. The Diocese expand their data collection to undertake further trend analysis and feed this data into their continuous improvement processes.	
Agreed Action	Office of Safeguarding (OoSG) to consult with Data & Analytics Service to assess current data collection by OoSG and determine potential enhancements in quality, collection and usability of safeguarding data to highlight developing reporting trends and other areas of safeguarding risk.	
Responsibility	Director of Safeguarding	
Due date	Consultation end Q.1 2024. Development and review of recommended changes to data collection and analysis Q.3 2024. Implementation from Q.4 2024.	

Appendix A

COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT SCALE

	General	Processes & Systems	People & Resources
Yet to Develop	As an entity we are unable to demonstrate that the requirements of the indicator are in place and will implement the necessary strategies developed through the Standards Action Plan.	Processes may be in place however the specific requirements of the indicator have not been addressed. The actions generated through the Standards Action Plan will be implemented.	At an entity level resources have yet to be assigned. The people and resources will be determined and allocated in the Standards Action Plan.
Developing	Our entity has begun to address the requirements of the indicator, however processes are developing and not universally applied.	Some relevant processes have been implemented which align with the requirements of the indicator, however they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Gaps or control weaknesses have been identified resulting in non-compliance with the indicator.</p> <p>Mitigation actions are required to be developed and initiated as soon as practicable but no later than 30 days from the issuance of this report, with expected resolution within 3 months.</p>	<p>Progress has been made with respect to implementation of the required indicator, however full compliance is yet to be achieved.</p> <p>Mitigation actions are required to be developed and initiated within 3 months or earlier from the issuance of this report, with expected resolution within 6-9 months.</p>	<p>Issues have been identified which represent minor procedural weaknesses or improvement opportunities with respect to the operation of the indicator.</p> <p>Expected resolution is within 12 months or earlier from the issuance of this report.</p>

Appendix C

GLOSSARY

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

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

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	<p>means the improper treatment of a person that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm. Abuse can come in many forms, such as: physical or verbal maltreatment, neglect, injury, assault, violation, rape, unjust practices, crimes, exploitation, or other types of aggression.</p> <p>There are several categories of abuse of adults, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual abuse* • Physical abuse* • Emotional/psychological abuse* • Neglect* • Elder abuse* • Financial abuse* • Exploitation* <p>Within the context of the Catholic church and faith-based entities, it is also important to recognise spiritual abuse* as an additional subtype of abuse.</p>
Adult at risk	means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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	<p>means canonical crimes¹ of sexual abuse committed by clerics and religious are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>¹ The canonical crimes/delicts/offences committed by clerics or religious as stated in Art. 1 §1 a) of <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i>.</p> <p>² Definition of vulnerable person as stated in Art. 1 §2 b) of <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i>: “means: any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence”. This definition is captured by the term ‘Adult at risk’ within the NCSS.</p>
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	<p>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</p> <p>Child abuse refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission.</p> <p>Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical abuse • emotional/psychological abuse • neglect • sexual abuse • exposure to family violence
Church Authority	<p>means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>means when a person has trouble remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions that affect their everyday life, because of their condition. Some causes of long-term or permanent cognitive impairment include dementia, stroke, or brain injury.</p> <p>For further information see: https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment</p>
Complainant	<p>means any person who makes a complaint that may include any allegation, suspicion, concern, or report of a breach of the entity's Code of Conduct. A complaint may also include disclosures made to an institution that may be about, or relate to, abuse in the entity's context.</p>
Conflicts of interest	<p>means situations (perceived or actual) where a conflict arises between a person's official duties and their private interests, which could influence the performance of those official duties. Such conflict generally involves opposing principles or incompatible wishes or needs and may occur when personnel function in multiple roles.</p>
Consecrated Life/Institute of Consecrated Life	<p>is an association of faithful in the Catholic Church erected by canon law whose members profess the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience by vows or other sacred bonds (as defined in the Code of Canon Law under canons 573–730).</p> <p>Apart from being a member of an institute, consecrated life may also be lived individually; the Catholic Church recognises, as forms of individual consecrated life that are not members of institutes, namely that of hermits and consecrated virgins.</p>
Cultural safety	<p>means an environment that is safe for people of all ethnicities and cultural identities: where there is no assault, challenge, or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.</p>
Dicastery	<p>means a department of the Roman Curia.</p>
Dignity or Right to Risk	<p>refers to enabling individuals the right (or dignity) to take reasonable risks. It recognises that restricting this right can stifle the individual's growth, self-esteem and the overall quality of life:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">‘Given that an individual's personal dignity is manifested, in part, by their ability to remain autonomous, and being autonomous engenders risk-taking. Inhibiting an individual's ability to take risks erodes their dignity. Dignity of risk is therefore the principle of allowing an individual the dignity afforded by risk-taking, subsequently enhancing their personal growth and quality of life.’</p> <p>(Joseph E Ibrahim and Marie-Claire Davis, ‘Impediments to Applying the “Dignity of Risk” Principle in Residential Aged Care Services: “Dignity of Risk” in Residential Aged Care’, <i>Australasian Journal on Ageing</i> 32, no. 3 (September 2013): 188–93)</p>
Diminished capacity	<p>means if an adult needs to make a decision and is unable to carry out any part of this process (as listed below), they have impaired decision-making capacity.</p> <p>There are three elements to making a decision:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.