Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

Safeguarding Audit Report
August 2025

National Catholic
Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:

ACSL
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD

A safe Church for everyone

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

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

This report is available on the ACSL website.

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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 and Catholic Religious Australia 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 Missionaries of the Sacred Heart'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 Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and its representatives at the time of the assessment and where applicable any further subsequent information the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart have supplied through the reporting process.

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

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Context

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

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

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

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

This audit report includes the results of the assessment against the NCSS for the Trustees of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

1.2 Background

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) Religious Congregation was founded by Fr. Jules Chevalier at Issoudun, France in 1854. MSC is an international order of Brothers and Priests within the Catholic Church numbering about 1600 working in over fifty countries, on six continents.

The Australian Province has around 115 confreres and its ministries in Australia include: parishes, retreat centres, education; working with urban and traditional aboriginal communities; working in the media, prison chaplaincy, universities and hospitals.

The MSC vision is "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved". MSC values include a spirituality of the heart and a spirituality of compassion, of love and of mission.

1.3 Audit classification

The MSC has been assessed by ACSL as a Church entity needing to undertake a 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 how MSC comply with the NCSS indicators is detailed in Section 4 of this report. Our recommendations for improvement, including the MSC management responses, are included in Section 5 of this report.

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

1.4 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 National Catholic Safeguarding Standards are interrelated and interdependent. They work together to ensure every entity, ministry, and organisation across the Catholic Church in Australia places the safety of children and adults at risk at the core of how they plan, think and act. The 10 Standards are grouped into four capability areas according to common safeguarding principles. These capability groupings and how they work together holistically are represented below:

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 MSC and the extent to which they meet the requirements of the NCSS.

ASCL audit processes integrate The International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (IIA Standards) which are developed by the Global IIA and followed by all IIA members in Australia. These Standards include principles and requirements for undertaking professional and internal auditing and for evaluating internal audit performance.

ACSL utilises an efficient risk assessment mechanism that permits its auditors to focus their efforts on risks that are proportionate to the purpose, size, complexity, and structure of a Church Authority. This approach to planning audits ensures optimum use of the Church Authority's limited resources, has maximum impact on the activities, ministries, and parishes, and ensures constant stakeholder engagement. It is also congruent with the IIA Standards.

ACSL assesses the risk management safeguarding practices of a Church Authority through a multilayered system keeping in mind IIA Standard 2010.A1 which states: "*The internal audit (here meaning the Church Authority) activity's plan of engagements must be based on a documented risk assessment, undertaken at least annually. The input of senior management and the board must be considered in this process*." ACSL can thus provide objective assurance that the Church Authority is complying with the risk management components of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS).

1.5 In scope assessment

In this audit, the MSC were assessed against Edition 2 of the NCSS, covering both children and adults at risk. In January and February 2025, ACSL completed a review audit of the MSC's NCSS Self-Assessment, where evidence of its congruency with the NCSS was provided. Fieldwork visits of ministries and activities were conducted in March 2025. This report was completed in July 2025.

The audit scope included:

- Audit activities at the Congregational administrative centre.
- Interviews, observations, and enquiry with the Congregation and ministry leadership, including their 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 ministries across the entity.
- Site visits to:
    - o MSC Provincial Administration
    - o Randwick, Blackburn and Moonah parishes
    - o Daramalan College.
- Interviews with over 40 personnel – inclusive of clergy, people in paid roles, volunteers and school students.

Excluded from the audit scope were the MSC formation community (or seminary), and the overseas operations (Vietnam, Japan, Fiji and Papua New Guinea).

1.6 Disclaimer

The information contained in this report is based on evidence provided by the MSC and its representatives at the time of the assessment and, where applicable, any subsequent information the MSC 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. Overarching findings

The NCSS assessment of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart indicates that it 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 scale[1].

Our assessment indicates that the MSC has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 90 (92%) of the relevant indicators to its operations. Assessment for each maturity scale is as follows:

- 90 (92%) indicators are fully or substantially progressed
- 8 (8%) indicators are developing and not substantially progressed.

Within this audit, 98 of the 104 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church Authorities are relevant to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart's operations.

Note on scoring:

- If an indicator is assessed as **'developed and embedded'** or **'developed'**, it means the implementation is **fully or substantially progressed** — so the indicator will be **counted as implemented**.
- If an indicator is assessed as **'developing'** or **'yet to develop'**, it means the implementation is **not substantially progressed**, so the indicator will be **counted as not implemented**.

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

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NCSS

Not yet implemented 8%

Fully or substantially implemented 92%
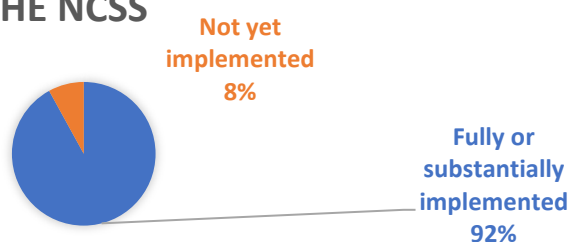
The key findings from the audit are summarised by NCSS capability area below.

Capability Area: Leadership, monitoring and improvement (Standards 1 and 9)

The focus in Standards 1 and 9 is on how the MSC leadership influences and implements a positive safeguarding culture across its ministries. These Standards expect MSC key personnel to display strong leadership that includes an accountable and transparent governance structure within its ministry activities. The audit assessed safeguarding policies, procedures and process to understand how a zero-tolerance approach to abuse is implemented and how all people (children and adults) are provided a safe environment, free from abuse and discrimination.

MSC Provincial administration has recently reviewed and revised its Code of Conduct and a range of other safeguarding policies, with the expectation that the new versions will be adopted shortly. Parishes have adopted their relevant Diocese/Archdiocese safeguarding policies. Providing safeguarding committees with relevant terms of reference would increase the cohesiveness of their approach and improve safeguarding oversight.

The MSC recognise that specific groups of people are at increased risk of experiencing abuse and require heightened awareness of the situations that make them vulnerable. Accordingly, there are additional procedures in place to support these groups and monitor the heightened risks experienced by such persons. Specifically, Darmalan College's First Nations Education Policy which contains best practice principles.

A review of the MSC organisational design has recently been completed and re-structures are occurring to reflect the review recommendations.

Outside the scope of this audit, MSC governance includes activities in Vietnam, Japan and PNG. Of note is that the ministry in Vietnam is working on a culturally relevant interpretation of the NCSS and a local implementation guide.

Overall, MSC has in place appropriate and proportional risk management assessments for its ministries. The MSC would benefit from introducing a formal Safeguarding Implementation Plan (NCSS Indicator 9.1.1) that articulates how its overall safeguarding risk management practices are monitored and reviewed, and how this information is reported and to whom. The current discussions within MSC of their safeguarding vision can direct, and contribute to, this implementation plan.

Capability Area: Engaging with children, adults, families and communities (Standards 2, 3 and 4)

Personnel support the implementation of safeguarding processes in their ministries. There are strong resources and practices to ensure children are safe, informed and participate.

The audit also assessed MSC recognition of people's diverse needs and circumstances as developed and embedded. This recognition is essential to building a safeguarding culture where ministries and services are provided in culturally safe and inclusive ways, facilitating self-determination.

Students interviewed believe they are in a safe space and would send their own children to the school – an indication of the strong community within the school. To increase engagement with children, in 2026 the MSC Provincial plans to hold a conference for school captains from the four Australian MSC schools and include safeguarding on the agenda.

There is a need in some parishes to highlight the additional risks that some adults in the parishes may experience. One strategy could be to use the national "themed" weeks to highlight the risks that different groups might face in their lives.

In one of the parishes audited, personnel noted the need to develop a listening voice for children and families who have recently joined the parish. In addition, there are some parishioners new to Australia and the parish could draw upon and display the Archdiocesan multi-lingual safeguarding resources.

Capability Area: Right people, right role, right knowledge (Standards 5 and 7)

Personnel who are engaged in ministry are critical to the success of implementing the MSC mission and it is incumbent on the Congregation to have the right people in the right role with the right knowledge. The audit assessment of Standard 5 revealed MSC employment practices are underpinned by a strong safeguarding culture. Overall, there is consistency between current employment relations and best practice HR processes. School based recruitment and training practices are influenced by their past experiences and applied stringently.

The audit findings reveal an emphasis on safe recruitment and professional development which enhances risk mitigation. While annual appraisals for clergy and volunteers are yet to be implemented consistently, there are plans to include safeguarding in annual appraisals. In addition, safeguarding officers across the Province, in particular volunteer safeguarding officers, would benefit from position descriptions that include clarity about their responsibilities. Ongoing support and professional supervision of personnel requires additional attention to systemic processes, particularly safeguarding aspects, to ensure there are no gaps between supervisors.

ACSL are finalising an audit tool to accurately assess seminaries in Australia. The desktop audit of the MSC formation community indicates before and during formation, candidates are screened and appropriately supported for their future ministry and this includes a focus on safeguarding.

The assessment of Standard 7 showed that ongoing Congregational training focuses on the nature and indicators of abuse, particularly organisational abuse, and how to create safe environments. The assessment noted the training promotes continuing development of practical skills in protecting

children and adults at risk and responding to disclosures. It is essential to ensure all volunteers are consistently provided with a safeguarding induction programme.

The interviews at parishes revealed that personnel do not fully understand their obligations under MSC policies and procedures regarding information sharing and record keeping. ACSL recommends the training is updated to ensure personnel can adhere to the policies and procedures.

Capability Area: Systems, Policies and Procedures (Standards 6, 8 and 10)

The audit identified that MSC processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities and personnel. The audit assessment also noted that processes are formally documented in the Congregational policies and procedures, and they are made publicly available.

For Standard 8, the audit focused on strategies MSC implement to focus on minimising the opportunity for abuse to occur in both its physical and online environments. Risk management is developed and embedded in the ministries assessed and this includes considerations of managing risks associated with third parties or contractors and use of facilities by others. Agreements with clergy from other congregations are being formalised. Risk assessments tend to focus on each of the ministry activities and events rather than MSC as an entire entity. The Standards require MSC to consider risk at the entity level as well as the individual ministry level.

A major consideration for risks is in the physical environments. A number of the MSC properties need reconfiguring to minimise safeguarding risks. Plans are in place for these changes to occur, with temporary measures in place until finalised.

Standard 8 acknowledges risks to safety and the need for continuous review and improvement. The key documents/policies which capture this responsibility are the Code of Conduct, the Safeguarding Policy, Safeguarding Handbook and the Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy, which outline appropriate supervision, oversight and behaviour towards children and adults at risk. A number of these documents are in review and revisions are expected to be endorsed and adopted within the next few months. ACSL suggests that MSC refine and develop its entity-wide Safeguarding Implementation Plan to articulate its safeguarding practices across all ministries and introduce strategies to monitor, review and report on these activities.

Standard 10 ensures that the safeguarding policies and procedures are well documented and managed. The current review of MSC governance and operations has prompted changes to safeguarding policies and procedures, which are in the process of redevelopment, endorsement and subsequent adoption.

Table 1: Summary of NCSS Assessment

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

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	5	10	1	
2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate	6	-	2	3	1	
3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6	-	4	2		
4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected	4	-	3	1		
5: Robust human resource management	22	5	9	4	4	
6: Effective complaints management	19	-	19	-		
7: Ongoing training & education	11	-	10	1		
8: Safe physical and online environments	7	-	3	4		
9: Continuous improvement	6		4	-	2	
10: Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults	6	-	6	-		
TOTAL	104	6	65	25	8	0
			92 %		8%	

3. Summary of recommendations

- There are no Priority 1 (high rated) audit recommendations for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC).
- There are five Priority 2 (medium rated) recommendations.
- There are no Priority 3 (low rated) recommendation.

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

Recommendation #1 **(Leadership, monitoring and improvement)**	1. Complete the endorsement and adoption of Provincial Safeguarding Policy. 2. Complete recruitment of Provincial Safeguarding Manager. 3. Complete the review, modifications and adoption of the Provincial Safeguarding Handbook. 4. Complete the endorsement and adoption of Provincial Code of Conduct. 5. Compile a whole of entity Safeguarding Implementation Plan which includes a safeguarding risk management plan with a greater safeguarding lens. 6. Continue to provide training to personnel on record keeping policies.
Recommendation #2 **(Engaging with children, adults, families and communities)**	1. Develop and encourage formal mechanisms for engaging with adults at risk who are part of parish communities. 2. Provide additional resources supporting behaviours and expectations for safe and respectful relationships. 3. Develop and provide additional appropriate resources for parishes for community members who are new to Australia.
Recommendation #3 **(Engaging with children, adults, families and communities)**	1. Encourage the creation of formal mechanisms to engage with the new families and youth who have joined parishes within the Congregation. 2. Develop a strategy to support parish ministries to promote community awareness of the dignity and human rights of all children and adults

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

Recommendation #4 **(Right people, right role, right knowledge)**	1. Include within position descriptions details about the expected level of contact with children/adults at risk and share this with parish communities. 2. Volunteers to be consistently offered a safeguarding induction program as soon as possible after commencement. 3. Annual performance reviews of clergy and volunteers to be conducted consistently and regularly and ensure safeguarding is a topic within such. 4. Continue efforts and plans to ensure safeguarding requirements are addressed within ongoing integrated formation, all clergy and religious participate in ongoing professional/pastoral supervision and newly ordained clergy are supported with a suitable mentor. 5. In ministries other than parishes, ensure the Provincial system for clergy movement is adopted.
Recommendation #5 **(Systems, policies and procedures)**	1. Develop entity wide risk registers. 2. Continue with the reconfiguration of physical spaces. 3. Involve a greater range of personnel in the development of risk management plans. 4. Complete the revision, review and formalise agreements for use of facilities by other Church Authorities.

Detailed recommendations can be found in Section 5 of this report. Each recommendation also contains the response of the MSC to the audit finding, including agreed management actions.

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

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:

The Provincial Safeguarding Policy is under review and the draft has been circulated within the congregation for consultation before endorsement. This process was nearing completion during the NCSS audit process. Refer recommendation #1.

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

Observations:

MSC is currently in a period of transition. Recruitment processes for a Safeguarding Manager at the Provincial level are underway. The role will focus on the priorities that the Province has identified it needs going into the future. 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	N/A			

	and local jurisdictional issues.				

Observations:

1.3.1 Governance arrangements are under review and consultation prior to endorsement. MSC will continue to implement appropriate safeguarding processes, including completing a Safeguarding Handbook at the Provincial level.
1.3.2 Outside of scope - The implementation of the NCSS in ministries in Vietnam is being addressed by local clergy. Refer recommendation #1.

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

Observations:

The Provincial Code of Conduct is in process of being reviewed, updated and endorsed. Refer recommendation #1.

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:

Safeguarding Risk Management Plans are conducted at a ministry/activity level rather than at a whole of entity level. All risk management plans would benefit from the addition of a greater focus on safeguarding. Refer recommendation #1.

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

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:

One parish will develop a strategy to engage the youth who have recently joined the parish. Across MSC, there are limited formal mechanisms in place to engage with adults at risk who are part of parish communities. Refer recommendation #2.

Criterion 2.2 - The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, helping children feel safe and less isolated.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.2.1	Children are provided with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful peer relationships.	✓			

Observations:

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:

More information could be displayed focused on the behaviours and expectations for safe and respectful relationship. Refer 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:

There are some new families in one parish who are new to Australia and the safeguarding materials that are on display may not be appropriate to their literacy requirements. Refer recommendation #2.

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:
There are no formal mechanisms to engage with the new families and youth who have joined one parish. Refer recommendation #3.

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

Observations:
Requirements of the indicator 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:

As an entity, the MSC could develop a strategy to support its parish ministries to promote community awareness of the dignity and human rights of all children and adults. Refer recommendation #3.

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: The Safeguarding Policy and procedures are under the final stages of review. At the time of the audit, policies were in the consultation phase prior to endorsement. Refer recommendation #1.				
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 complaints 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: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.				

Standard 5	Robust human resource management			
People working with children and adults at risk are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice				
Criterion 5.1 – A strong commitment to safeguarding underpins an entity's recruitment.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

5.1.1	The commitment to safeguarding and a zero-tolerance approach to abuse are explicit in advertising, screening, and recruitment for personnel.	✓			
5.1.2	Recruitment and screening procedures and processes are fully documented.	✓			
5.1.3	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children/adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.		✓		

Observations:

At a parish level, additional clarity about each position's level of contact with children and adults at risk could be documented and shared with the community. Refer recommendation #4.

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:

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

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:

Volunteers should consistently be offered a safeguarding induction program as soon as possible after commencement. Refer recommendation #4.

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:

Annual performance reviews of clergy and volunteers should be conducted consistently and regularly. There are plans to include safeguarding within annual appraisals. Refer 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.	N/A		
5.5.2	Seminary and initial formation programs have robust screening processes for candidates for religious ministry, including external psychological and psychosexual assessments.	N/A		
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:

The current Safeguarding Handbook (in draft form) references these criteria with plans to ensure they are consistently adopted in the future. There are also plans to include safeguarding as components of appraisals. As supervisors retire, it can take time to find appropriate replacements – forward planning could minimise the disruption. Refer recommendation #4.

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.	N/A		
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.	N/A		
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.	N/A		

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		✓		

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
	programs and other Church entities is in place.				

Observations:

There is a system in place for clergy movement in parishes – we recommend use of the Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR) for clergy movement in the other ministries. Refer recommendation #4.

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

Observations:

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

Standard 6	Effective complaints management

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

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

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.1.6	All abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referral are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years.	✓			

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

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

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

Criterion 6.3 - Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.3.1	The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned, and operates in conjunction, with the Code of Conduct, HR and other policies.	✓			
6.3.2	The Complaints Handling Policy commits to an initial risk assessment if a complaint of abuse is received, to identify and minimise any risk to children or adults. Ongoing risk assessments are conducted throughout investigation processes.	✓			
6.3.3	Complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.	✓			
6.3.4	Trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced abuse.	✓			
6.3.5	Sharing information relating to complaints adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant legislation.	✓			
6.3.6	The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures empower and support personnel to raise, in good faith, concerns and allegations about unacceptable behaviour towards children and adults by other personnel.	✓			
6.3.7	Where a complaint related to the sexual abuse of a child or adult against clergy or religious is substantiated under a civil standard, the Church Authority undertakes a risk management process to determine the appropriate action, in keeping with Church protocols.	✓			
6.3.8	Where a clergy or religious is convicted of a canonical offence relating to child sexual abuse, the respondent is to be prohibited from the exercise of ministry until such times as the process for imposing a penalty is completed by the relevant dicastery.	✓			

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 7	**Ongoing education and training**

Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and adults safe through information, ongoing education and training.				
Criterion 7.1 - Personnel are trained and supported to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.1.1	Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.	✓			
7.1.2	The entity's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must as a minimum cover: • Code of Conduct. • safeguarding risk management. • Safeguarding Policy and procedures. • Complaints Handling Policy and procedures. • reporting obligations; and	✓			

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
	• e-safety training.				
7.1.3	Records are maintained to ensure all personnel attend induction training and participate in refresher safeguarding training at least every three years.	✓			
7.1.4	All personnel with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive ongoing support and professional development to their role.	✓			

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

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

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

Criterion 7.3 – Personnel are supported to recognise the factors that contribute to adult abuse, with a focus on adults at risk.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.3.1	Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, building knowledge to: • understand the nature and impact of adult abuse. • understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse. • identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation. • recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including power imbalances can be exploited; and • understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse.	✓			

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

Criterion 7.4 - Personnel have the information and skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.4.1	Education and training programs equip relevant personnel to appropriately respond to and support anyone bringing forward concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.	✓			
7.4.2	Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.		✓		
7.4.3	Personnel receive training on reporting obligations under Commonwealth/State/Territory legislative and canon law,	✓			

	which includes: • reporting suspected criminal behaviour to police. • mandatory reporting to child protection authorities. • Reportable Conduct Scheme. • reporting to other regulatory authorities or government departments; and • Canonical reporting requirements.				

Observations:

Additional training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures could be offered to parish personnel.

Refer recommendation #1.

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:

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

Standard 8	**Safe physical and online environments**

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

Criterion 8.1 – The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy addresses both physical and online risks, without compromising the individual's right to privacy or wellbeing.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.1.1	Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services including risks arising from: • one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child; • ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction and mentoring; • potential physical contact between the penitent and the confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated; • one-to-one interaction with adults at risk; • child-to-child interactions. • adult-to-child interactions; • adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); and • the nature of physical spaces. Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.		✓		
8.1.2	The entity's policies require the safe use of online applications for children and adults to learn, communicate and seek help.		✓		

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.1.3	Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults.		✓		

Observations:

Risk assessments tend to focus on activities and events rather than whole of entity, ACSL recommends the development of entity wide risk registers.

Physical spaces are being reconfigured through local consultation – temporary measures are in place until more permanent changes are adopted.

Risk management plans would improve, and safeguarding would benefit, from greater involvement of a range of personnel. Refer recommendation #5.

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

		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:

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

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

		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

		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:

Agreements are being revised, reviewed and formalised for use of facilities by other Church Authorities. Refer recommendation #5.

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

		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:

Safeguarding Implementation Plans are monitored and reviewed at a ministry/parish level. Improved oversight would be achieved with the creation of an entity wide safeguarding implementation plan. Refer recommendation #1.

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

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

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.	✓			

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 indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.

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

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

The audit team note that safeguarding policies and procedures were under a review process during the audit period. Refer recommendation #1.

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

Capability Area: Leadership, monitoring and improvement (Standards 1 and 9)

Recommendation #1		
1.1.1	The Safeguarding Policy is approved and endorsed by the Church Authority and/or relevant leadership body and is publicly available.	**Priority 2**
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.	
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.	
1.4.1	The Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour.	
1.4.2	The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, families, and carers.	
1.4.3	The Code of Conduct considers the needs of all children and adults at risk, paying particular attention to: • First Nations people. • individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are considered to be at risk of abuse'; • individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. • children in out of home care, or are homeless; and, • children and adults of diverse sexuality.	
1.4.4	The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.	
1.5.3	There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report, and review risks.	
1.6.1	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures are documented and communicated to personnel.	
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.	

7.4.2	Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.	
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.	

Details of finding	The following points were noted: **1.1.1** The Provincial Safeguarding Policy is under review and the draft has been circulated within the congregation for consultation before endorsement. This process was nearing completion during the NCSS audit process. **1.2.2 to 1.2.4** The Church Authority is currently in a period of transition. Recruitment processes for a Safeguarding Manager at the Provincial level are underway. The role will focus on the priorities that the Province has identified it needs going into the future. **1.3.1, 1.3.2** Governance arrangements are under review and consultation prior to endorsement. The implementation of the NCSS in ministries in Vietnam is being addressed by local clergy. MSC will continue to implement appropriate safeguarding processes, including completing a Safeguarding Handbook at the Provincial level. **1.4.1 to 1.4.4** The Provincial Code of Conduct is in process of being reviewed, updated and endorsed. **1.5.3** Safeguarding Risk Management Plans are conducted at a ministry/activity level rather than at a whole of entity level. All risk management plans would benefit from the addition of a greater safeguarding lens. **1.6.1** At the parish level, the recordkeeping policy needs further communication with personnel. **7.4.2** Additional training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures could be offered to parish personnel. **4.1.1** The Safeguarding Policy and procedures are under the final stages of review, in the consultation phase prior to endorsement. **9.1.1 & 9.1.2** Safeguarding Implementation Plans are monitored and reviewed at a ministry/parish level. Improved oversight would be achieved with the creation of an entity wide safeguarding implementation plan.
Recommendation	1. Complete the endorsement and adoption of Provincial Safeguarding policy. 2. Complete recruitment of Provincial Safeguarding Manager. 3. Complete the review, modifications and adoption of the Provincial Safeguarding Handbook. 4. Complete the endorsement and adoption of Provincial Code of Conduct. 5. Compile a whole of entity Safeguarding Implementation Plan which includes safeguarding risk management plans with greater safeguarding focus. 6. Continue to provide training to personnel on record keeping policies.
Agreed Action	As per recommendations
Responsibility	Church Authority
Due date	1 August 2026

Capability Area: Engaging with children, adults, families and communities (Standards 2, 3 and 4)

Recommendation #2		Priority 2
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.	
2.3.1	Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.	
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.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: **2.1.1 & 2.1.2** One parish will develop a strategy to engage the youth who have recently joined the parish. There are limited formal mechanisms in place to engage with adults at risk who are part of parish communities. **2.3.1** More information could be displayed focused on the behaviours and expectations for safe and respectful relationships. **2.4.1** There are some new families in one parish who are new to Australia and the safeguarding materials that are on display may not be appropriate to their literacy requirements.	
Recommendation	1. Develop and encourage formal mechanisms for engaging with adults at risk who are part of parish communities. 2. Provide additional resources supporting behaviours and expectations for safe and respectful relationships. 3. Develop and provide additional appropriate resources for parishes for community members who are new to Australia.	
Agreed Action	As per recommendations	
Responsibility	Church Authority	
Due date	1 August 2026	

Recommendation #3		Priority 2
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.	
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.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: **3.2.1** There are no formal mechanisms to engage with the new families and youth who have joined one parish.	

	3.4.1 As an entity, MSC could develop a strategy to support its parish ministries to promote community awareness of the dignity and human rights of all children and adults.
Recommendation	1. Encourage the creation of formal mechanisms to engage with the new families and youth who have joined parishes within the Congregation. 2. Develop a strategy to support parish ministries to promote community awareness of the dignity and human rights of all children and adults.
Agreed Action	As per recommendations
Responsibility	Church Authority
Due date	1 August 2026

Capability Area: Right people, right role, right knowledge (Standards 5 and 7)

Recommendation #4		**Priority 2**
5.1.3	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children/adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.	
5.3.1	All personnel participate in a safeguarding induction program, which occurs as soon as possible after commencement.	
5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.	
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.	
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.	
Details of finding	The following points were noted: **5.1.3** At a parish level, additional clarity about position's level of contact with children and adults at risk could be documented and shared with the community. **5.3.1** Volunteers should consistently be offered a safeguarding induction program as soon as possible after commencement.	

	5.4.1 Annual performance reviews of clergy and volunteers should be conducted consistently and regularly. **5.5.3 to 5.5.6** The draft Safeguarding Handbook references these criteria with plans to ensure they are consistently adopted in the future. There are also plans to include safeguarding as components of appraisals. As supervisors retire, it can take time to find appropriate replacements – forward planning could minimise the disruption. **5.7.1** There is a system in place for clergy movement in parishes and a Provincial level recommended system for movement – we recommend further adoption of this system for clergy movement in the other ministries.
Recommendation	1. Include within position descriptions details about the expected level of contact with children/adults at risk and share this with parish communities. 2. Volunteers to be consistently offered a safeguarding induction program as soon as possible after commencement. 3. Annual performance reviews of clergy and volunteers to be conducted consistently and regularly and ensure safeguarding is a topic within such. 4. Continue efforts and plans to ensure safeguarding requirements are addressed within ongoing integrated formation, all clergy and religious participate in ongoing professional/pastoral supervision and newly ordained clergy are supported with a suitable mentor. 5. In ministries other than parishes, ensure the Provincial system for clergy movement is adopted.

Agreed Action	As per recommendations
Responsibility	Church Authority
Due date	1 August 2026

Capability Area: Systems, Policies and Procedures (Standards 6, 8 and 10)

Recommendation #5		
8.1.1	Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services including risks arising from: • one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child; • ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction and mentoring; • potential physical contact between the penitent and the confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated; • one-to-one interaction with adults at risk; • child-to-child interactions. • adult-to-child interactions; • adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); and • the nature of physical spaces. Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.	**Priority 2**
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.	
8.4.1	If a third party provides services or uses the organisations facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.	

Details of finding	The following points were noted: **8.1.1 to 8.1.3** Risk assessments tend to focus on activities and events rather than whole of entity risks. Accordingly, ACSL recommends the development of entity wide risk registers. Physical spaces are being reconfigured through local consultation – temporary measures are in place until more permanent changes are adopted. Risk management plans would improve, and safeguarding would benefit, from greater involvement of a range of personnel. **8.4.1** Agreements are being revised, reviewed and formalised for use of facilities by other Church Authorities.
Recommendation	1. Develop entity wide risk registers. 2. Continue with the reconfiguration of physical spaces. 3. Involve a greater range of personnel in the development of risk management plans. 4. Complete the revision, review and formalise agreements for use of facilities by other Church Authorities.
Agreed Action	As per recommendations
Responsibility	Church Authority
Due date	1 August 2026

Appendix A

Compliance Assessment

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

Appendix B

Audit finding priorities

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

Priority 1	**Priority 2**	**Priority 3**
Gaps or control weaknesses have been identified resulting in non-compliance with the indicator.	Progress has been made with respect to implementation of the required indicator, however full compliance is yet to be achieved.	Issues have been identified which represent minor procedural weaknesses or improvement opportunities with respect to the operation of the indicator.
Mitigation actions are required to be developed and initiated as soon as practicable but no later than 60 days from the issuance of this report, with expected resolution within 6 months.	Mitigation actions are required to be developed and initiated within 3 months or earlier from the issuance of this report, with expected resolution within 9-12 months.	Expected resolution is within 18 months or earlier from the issuance of this report.

Appendix C

Glossary

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

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

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

Adult at risk	means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people: • who are elderly. • with a disability. • who suffer from mental illness. • who have diminished capacity. • who have cognitive impairmen.t • who have suffered previous abuse. • who are experiencing transient risks. • who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance. • who are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background/ • who are of diverse sexuality/ • who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse.
Allegation	means a complaint, still to be verified, claiming, or asserting that someone has committed an act of abuse against a child or adult. The term is used interchangeably and in combination with "complaint".
Audit	means a mechanism to assess how a Church Authority, ministry or entity governed by a Church Authority, is implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference	means the assembly of Bishops of Australia exercising together certain pastoral offices for the Catholics of Australia.
Bishop	means a diocesan bishop or archbishop, the ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of the Eastern Churches
Canon law	means the revised code of canon law promulgated by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in 1983 and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches as promulgated in 1990 and any other universal or legislation promulgated by the competent ecclesiastical authority.
Canonical Offence	means canonical crimes[1] of sexual abuse committed by clerics and religious are: • forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts. • performing sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person. • the production, exhibition, possession, or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions. [1] The canonical crimes/delicts/offences committed by clerics or religious as stated in Art. 1 §1 a) of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi.* [2] Definition of vulnerable person as stated in Art. 1 §2 b) of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*: "means: any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand

	or to want or otherwise resist the offence". This definition is captured by the term 'Adult at risk' within the NCSS.
Catholic Religious Australia	CRA is the conference of major superiors comprising leaders of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life within the Catholic Church in Australia.
Certification	means the act of giving official authority or approval and certification of the implementation of the NCSS and permission to use the ACSL Certification symbol.
Child/ren	means individuals under 18 years of age.
Child abuse	There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Definition sourced from the Australian Institute of Family Studies: https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect Child abuse refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission. Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes: • physical abuse • emotional/psychological abuse • neglect • sexual abuse • exposure to family violence
Church Authority	means: • a diocesan bishop or archbishop, an ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of an eparchy of an Eastern Church. • the competent authority, howsoever titled, exercising the ministry of governance for religious institutes in Australia in accordance with their Constitutions; or • for ministerial PJPS the competent authority in accordance with the statutes. • for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organisation in accordance with its rules.
Church Protocols	means official procedures or system of rules which govern the affairs of the Catholic Church in Australia, for example, Vos Estis Lux Mundi and the National Response Protocol.
Civil Standard	the most common standard of proof relates to civil proceedings, which is the balance of probabilities (incorporating the principles from Briginshaw v Briginshaw) – which means it is more probable than not that what the person says happened is true (in criminal cases, the standard is proof beyond reasonable doubt).
Clergy	includes bishops, priests and deacons.
Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia	means any cleric or member of a religious institute who is specifically recruited or welcomed from overseas by a Church Authority or entity.
Cleric	a member of the clergy.

Clericalist/ism	means an attitude toward clergy/religious characterised by an excessive deference and an assumption of their moral superiority. Pope Francis has said that it occurs when "clerics feel they are superior, [and when] they are far from the people." It can be "fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons".
Cognitive impairment	means when a person has trouble remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions that affect their everyday life, because of their condition. Some causes of long-term or permanent cognitive impairment include dementia, stroke, or brain injury. For further information see: https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment
Complainant	means any person who makes a complaint that may include any allegation, suspicion, concern, or report of a breach of the entity's Code of Conduct. A complaint may also include disclosures made to an institution that may be about, or relate to, abuse in the entity's context.
Conflicts of interest	means situations (perceived or actual) where a conflict arises between a person's official duties and their private interests, which could influence the performance of those official duties. Such conflict generally involves opposing principles or incompatible wishes or needs and may occur when personnel function in multiple roles.
Consecrated Life/Institute of Consecrated Life	is an association of faithful in the Catholic Church erected by canon law whose members profess the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience by vows or other sacred bonds (as defined in the Code of Canon Law under canons 573–730). Apart from being a member of an institute, consecrated life may also be lived individually; the Catholic Church recognises, as forms of individual consecrated life that are not members of institutes, namely that of hermits and consecrated virgins.
Cultural safety	means an environment that is safe for people of all ethnicities and cultural identities: where there is no assault, challenge, or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.
Dicastery	means a department of the Roman Curia.
Dignity or Right to Risk	refers to enabling individuals the right (or dignity) to take reasonable risks. It recognises that restricting this right can stifle the individual's growth, self-esteem and the overall quality of life: 'Given that an individual's personal dignity is manifested, in part, by their ability to remain autonomous, and being autonomous engenders risk-taking. Inhibiting an individual's ability to take risks erodes their dignity. Dignity of risk is therefore the principle of allowing an individual the dignity afforded by risk-taking, subsequently enhancing their personal growth and quality of life.'

	(Joseph E Ibrahim and Marie-Claire Davis, 'Impediments to Applying the "Dignity of Risk" Principle in Residential Aged Care Services: "Dignity of Risk" in Residential Aged Care', Australasian Journal on Ageing 32, no. 3 (September 2013): 188–93)
Diminished capacity	means if an adult needs to decide and is unable to carry out any part of this process (as listed below), they have impaired decision-making capacity. There are three elements to deciding: - understanding the nature and effect of the decision; - freely and voluntarily deciding; and - communicating the decision in some way.
Diocese	means a diocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelature of the Latin Church and an eparchy of an Eastern Church.
Disability (persons with)	means those who have physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (Article 2, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.)
Diversity	means a range of people who have various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests.
Diverse sexuality	refers to all the diversities of sex characteristics, sexual orientations, and gender identities, without the need to specify each of the identities, behaviours, or characteristics that form this plurality.
Elder abuse	means a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.
Emotional abuse (adults)	is a common form of abuse that occurs in close relationships. Emotional abuse is defined as abuse that occurs when a person is subjected to behaviours or actions aimed at preventing or controlling their behaviour, with the intent to cause them emotional harm or fear, through manipulation, isolation, or intimidation.
Emotional abuse (children)	Emotional abuse of children refers to a parent or caregiver's inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts towards a child and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurturing and emotional availability. Such acts of commission or omission are likely to damage a child's self-esteem or social competence.
Entity	means a diocese, religious institute, ministerial PJP (including their agencies) or association recognised as Catholic in accord with canon law.
Exploitation	is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person. It is taking advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain.
Exposure to family violence	is generally considered to be a form of psychologically abusive behaviour, where a child is present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse, or

	psychological maltreatment, or is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member's violent behaviour.
Financial abuse	involves the illegal or improper use or mismanagement of a person's money, property or resources. Stealing, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, forced changes to a will, inappropriate removal of a resident's decision-making powers and misuse of power of attorney are all forms of financial abuse or exploitation.
Formation/program	means a program preparing individuals for ordination or profession of vows and a life-long journey to the invitation of Christ to proclaim and live the Gospel message, within the life of the Church.
Good Standing	A person in good standing is regarded as having complied with all their safeguarding obligations, and is not subject to any form of allegation, disciplinary process, sanction suspension.
Grooming (child)	refers to a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging a child as a precursor to sexual abuse. It includes establishing a 'special' friendship/relationship with the child. Grooming can include the conditioning of parents and other adults to think that the relationship with the child is 'normal' and positive.
Grooming (adult)	is the predatory act of manoeuvring another individual into a position that makes them more isolated, dependent, likely to trust, and more vulnerable to abusive behaviour.
Guardian	refers to the person(s) who has the legal authority to care for the personal and property interests of another person.
Institutional abuse	means abuse or poor care within an institution or specific care setting. Possible causes of institutional abuse include: • a "closed" culture within an organisation where transparency is discouraged. • lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service. • failure to properly check the backgrounds and interview staff. • inadequate training. • lack of safeguarding policies and procedures. • lack of support of staff by management. • poor supervision; and • poor standards of care.
Lay/lay person	means members of the Catholic Church and Church personnel other than bishops, priests, deacons and religious.
Leaders	means personnel who are responsible for important governance decisions within a Church entity and/or who lead and coordinate Church improvement initiatives.
Mentor	means an experienced and trusted advisor or a person who gives a younger or less experienced person help and advice over a period.
Ministerial PJP	means a legal entity which is constituted a public juridic person in canon law and carries on its mission in the name of the Church, in accordance with its statutes approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority.

Ministry	means any activity within, or conducted by, an entity, that is authorised by formal appointment and designed to carry out the apostolic and charitable works of the Catholic Church.
NDIS Worker Screening Check	The NDIS Worker Screening Check is an assessment of whether a person who works, or seeks to work, with people with disability poses a risk to them. The assessment determines whether a person is cleared or excluded from working in certain roles with people with disability. For further information see https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/ndis-worker-screening-check
Neglect (adult)	is the failure of a carer to provide the necessities of life to a person for whom they are caring.
Neglect (child)	refers to a failure by a caregiver to provide the basic requirements for meeting the physical and emotional developmental needs of a child. Physically neglectful behaviours include a failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene or medical attention.
Offender	means a person who has admitted abuse or whose responsibility for abuse has been determined by a court of law (criminal or civil), statutory or Church procedure.
Organisation	means a ministry and/or service operating under the governance of a recognised authority (such as a legal entity) and/or a Church Authority.
Pastoral care	means when one person has responsibility for the wellbeing of another or for a faith community. It includes the provision of spiritual advice and support, education, counselling, medical care, and assistance in times of need. All work involving the supervision or education of children and young people is a work of pastoral care.
Personnel (Church personnel)	means a cleric, religious or other person who is employed by the entity or engaged on a contract, subcontract, voluntary or unpaid basis.
Physical abuse	is a non-accidental physically aggressive act which results in physical pain or injury, and which may include physical coercion and physical restraint. Physical abuse may be intentional or may be the inadvertent result of physical punishment.
Professional/pastoral supervision	means a professional activity in which personnel are engaged in reflection and learning, under the guidance of a supervisor. Supervision assists personnel in their accountabilities for professional standards, defined competencies for their role and understanding and implementation of organisational policy and procedures. For clerics and religious, professional supervision assists in the maintenance of boundaries of the pastoral relationship and enhances the quality of their ministry.
Protective behaviours program	Is a type of abuse prevention program and means an age-appropriate structured education program to equip children and young people with the skills and knowledge to enhance their personal safety.
Reflective practice	is a professional development technique that involves thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying

	knowledge to practice. It is expected to be a continuous process, whereby an individual explores an experience to identify what happened and what their role in this experience was, including behaviour, thinking, and related emotions. Reflective practice enables potential changes in approaches to similar future events to be identified, with the aim of improved performance.
Religious institute	means an entity within the Catholic Church whose members commit themselves through religious vows to lead a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. Societies of apostolic life resemble religious institutes in that their members also live a life in common. They do not take religious vows but live out the apostolic purpose of the group. In these Standards, the term 'religious institutes' is used to include religious institutes, societies of apostolic life and secular institutes.
Religious	means a member of an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life.
Respondent	means a person against whom a complaint is made.
Review	means an internal self-assessment of an entity's implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. A review can also be an assessment that forms part of the process of continuous improvement which occurs when following up recommendations made during an audit.
Risk-based audit and Review Framework	means a framework for assessing the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards that reflects a proportionate response based on the risk profile of the Church Authority.
Risk Profile	means an assessment against key safeguarding risk factors.
Safeguarding	refers to proactive measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals. These measures allow children, young people and adults to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. Within the life of the Church, safeguarding includes pastoral, liturgical and spiritual responses through engagement in the Sacraments and the life of the Church.
Safeguarding Committee	means a committee established to advise and support the Church Authority on all matters relating to safeguarding, including the development and implementation of a Safeguarding Implementation Plan and coordinating annual self-audits at a local level. Committee members need relevant and varied professional expertise in relation to safeguarding, child protection, organisational culture and structure, policy development, etc. and include lay women and men.
Safeguarding Culture	means embedding safeguarding into everything an organisation does. In promoting this culture, young people and adults at risk will understand they will be listened to, supported, and known action will be taken on their behalf.
Safeguarding Commitment Statement	means a Commitment Statement describing an entity's commitment to keep children and adults safe from harm. It informs the entity's safeguarding culture.

Safeguarding Co-ordinator	means an individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
Safeguarding Implementation Plan	means a documented plan which articulates actions to be taken across the entity to ensure safeguarding practices are in place. It includes actions, strategies, responsibilities, delegations, and accountabilities, and tracks review and progress. It is overseen by the Safeguarding Committee.
Safeguarding policies and procedures	means any policies or procedures of the entity that address elements of safeguarding children and adults. For example, but not limited to: • recruitment. • risk management. • complaint handling; and • acceptable use of online applications.
Seminarian	a student in a theological formation and education centre preparing for ordination as a priest.
Seminary	means a centre for the formation and education of students preparing for ordination.
Sexual abuse (adult)	Sexual abuse is a form of sexual assault. Sexual abuse includes rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment, and sexual interference. Sexual activity with an adult who is incapacitated by a mental or physical condition (such as dementia) that impairs his or her ability to grant informed consent, is defined as sexual assault/abuse. Sexual assault/abuse includes where through force, threats or abuse of authority, an individual commits a canonical offence or forces someone to perform or submit to sexual acts. Sexual assault is a crime.
Sexual abuse (child)	refers to exposing a child to any form of sexual activity. This may or may not involve physical contact. This may take the form of taking sexually explicit photographs or videos of children, forcing children to watch or take part in sexual acts and forcing or coercing children to have sex or engage in sexual acts with other children or adults.
Spiritual abuse	means abuse of a person that invokes a person's religious beliefs and faith to perpetrate harm. Spiritual abuse can occur as a secondary experience of abuse when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of spiritual authority and trust within the Church a
Substantiated complaint	means under the civil standard of proof an allegation of abuse for which the investigator finds that sufficient evidence exists to believe that the alleged conduct more likely than not occurred.
Third parties	means any individual, group or legal entity outside the Church entity who contract services and facilities to or from the Church entity.
Transient Risk	means short-term risk, experienced by people at different stages in their life: e.g. when someone is vulnerable due to:

	- grief - bereavement - relationship breakdown - homelessness - unemployment - financial hardship
Trauma-informed and victim-centred support	is a strengths-based framework which is founded on five core principles – safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Trauma-informed services do no harm: they do not re-traumatise or blame victims for their efforts to manage their traumatic reactions, and they embrace a message of hope and optimism that recovery is possible. In trauma-informed services, trauma survivors are seen as unique individuals who have managed their responses to the experiences as best that they could.
Validation	means an assessment by ACSL of any self-assessment, review or audit, undertaken to achieve ACSL Certification status.
Working With Children Check	means generic term used in the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards to denote the statutory screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. There is not yet a single national framework setting out requirements for 'working with children' checks. Each State/Territory in Australia has its own system. They are one part of a Church entity's recruitment, selection, and screening practices.
Working with Vulnerable People Check	means the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 in the Australian Capital Territory which requires those working with children (and other vulnerable groups) to complete a Working with Vulnerable People Check and be registered before they can commence employment. Tasmania has a 'Working with Vulnerable People Check' which requires all employees and volunteers aged 16 and over working in childcare services or other child-related services to apply for a WWVP check. To date, only the ACT and Tasmania have this requirement.