



Archdiocese of Brisbane

Safeguarding Audit Report November 2025

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:



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](https://www.acsltd.org.au).

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Foreword

Safeguarding certification by ACSL is an independent recognition that a religious entity and its ministries meet the requirements of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. Certification achievement is measured against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards set by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference 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 Archdiocese of Brisbane performance against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. The report includes compliance level ratings for each standard, criteria, and indicator, and includes explanatory notes for key findings.

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

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

TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

Opinion

ACSL has undertaken a safeguarding audit of a sample of parish and ministry (including Centacare, Brisbane Catholic Education and Catholic Early Education) activities of Archdiocese of Brisbane. This audit comprises an analysis of their NCSS Self-Assessment, interviews with Archdiocesan personnel and follow up conversations. ACSL considers that the audit evidence obtained from Archdiocese of Brisbane is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for this opinion.

In ACSL's opinion, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Audit Report for the Archdiocese of Brisbane offers a true and fair view of the Archdiocese's safeguarding policies, procedures and processes as at 30 September 2025 and of its performance against the NCSS for the period ended on that date.

ACSL is independent of the Archdiocese of Brisbane in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to this audit. The professional obligations and ethical requirements imposed on members are based on the five fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour in the Code.

Disclaimer

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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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November 2025

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 \(acsltd.org.au\)](https://acsltd.org.au).

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

1.2 Background

The Archdiocese of Brisbane is a large and diverse Church Authority with more than 93 parishes, 146 schools, and numerous centres providing religious and community services. The Archdiocese employs more than 12,000 employees. A snapshot of the Archdiocese based in the 2021 National Census data shows a population of 684,423 people from amongst a total Queensland population of 3,815,443, approximately 18% of the population. Amongst this cohort there were 285,557 Catholic families, as well as 63,483 Catholics who lived alone. A total of 170,485 Catholics were born overseas and 16.7% (approx. 28,470 Catholics) were born in a non-English speaking country. There are 16,474 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics in the Archdiocese. The medium age of a Catholic within the Archdiocese was 43 years.

Collectively the agencies of the archdiocese provide:

- Education to 76,000 students in Brisbane Catholic Education schools
- Early learning and care to 28,950 children in Catholic Early Ed Care
- 206 million hours of support to people with disability and aged care clients
- Support to 28,265 people affected by domestic and family violence
- Ministry to thousands in prisons, hospital and seafarer communities
- Help to 1,289 people living with (or at risk of developing) mental illness

- Support to 8,008 seniors to live well in their home and community
- Home maintenance and modification services to 11, 864 older Queenslanders and people with disabilities.

The Archdiocese of Brisbane has had a significant history of sexual abuse by clergy and provided evidence to the Royal Commission. It was first audited by Catholic Professional Standards Limited (CPSL) in 2019 and assessed compliance with NCSS Edition 1, focusing on child safeguarding. This review audit, undertaken by ACSL, is against NCSS Edition 2, which includes consideration of adults at risk, and involved a sample of ministries in parishes, Episcopal Office, Catholic Education, Early Education and Centacare.

1.3 Audit classification

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

Our assessment of the Archdiocese of Brisbane maturity in implementing the NCSS is detailed in Section 2 of this report. Our recommendations for improvement, including the Archdiocese of Brisbane management responses, are included in Section 3 of this report.

The full audit report is also publicly available on the Publications and Reports page of the [ACSL website](#).

1.4 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. The four capability groupings and how they work together holistically are represented below:



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

This audit was conducted jointly by ACSL and Integroe Partners. Integroe Partners specialises in the provision of safeguarding and professional standards services to a variety of sectors including education, health, welfare and aged care services. The firm has a breadth of experience in developing and implementing bespoke safeguarding frameworks, policies and procedures that are developed specific to organisations and their needs, and which are informed by relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, as well as principles of best practice. This is further supported by Integroe Partners' development and facilitation of professional development training regarding safeguarding within Dioceses and Catholic organisations. Integroe has partnered with ACSL through an engagement agreement which is compliant with ASAE 3100 (produced by the Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards Board).

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 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 therefore 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 Archdiocese of Brisbane was assessed against Edition 2 of the NCSS, covering both children and adults at risk. In June and July 2025, ACSL completed a desktop review of the Archdiocese of Brisbane NCSS Self-Assessment, which the Archdiocese of Brisbane completed to present evidence of their congruency with the NCSS. Fieldwork was conducted from Monday August 4 until Friday August 15, 2025. Fifteen parishes, three Out of School Hours Care centres; five Kindergartens, ten schools and five Centacare centres were chosen as site visits by ACSL. The Auditors also interviewed senior personnel and leadership teams in the Chancery. This report was finalised in November 2025.

The audit scope included:

- Audit activities at the Archdiocesan administrative centre.
- Interviews, observations, and enquiry with the Archdiocesan leadership, including their key personnel in Safeguarding, Education and Centacare.
- A review of key safeguarding documents, policies, and procedures.
- Assessment of the design and testing of the operation of safeguarding controls implemented by the Archdiocese.
- Site visits to:
 - Parishes: Beaudesert, Bracken Ridge/Bald Hills, Burleigh Heads, Cleveland, Corinda/Graceville, Darra/Jindalee, Gatton/Laidley, Geebung, Ipswich, Moorooka/Salisbury, Nambour, Regents Park/Crestmead, Southport, Springfield, Stafford.
 - Catholic Early Education Care – Graceville, Mango Hill, Beaudesert, Gatton, Cleveland.
 - Schools - St John Fisher College, Bracken Ridge; St Francis College, Crestmead; St Kevins Primary, Geebung; St Augustine’s College, Augustine Heights; Our Lady of Good Counsel Primary School, Gatton; St Mary’s College, Ipswich; St Mary’s Primary School, Beaudesert; Marymount College, Burleigh Waters; St Benedict’s College, Mango Hill; Star of the Sea Primary School, Cleveland.
 - Centacare – Aged Services, Disability Services and Family & Relationship Centres.
- Interviews with over 150 personnel – inclusive of clergy, people in paid roles, volunteers, parishioners, school students and parents.

The audit scope excluded the Holy Spirit Seminary, Banyo.

2. Overarching findings

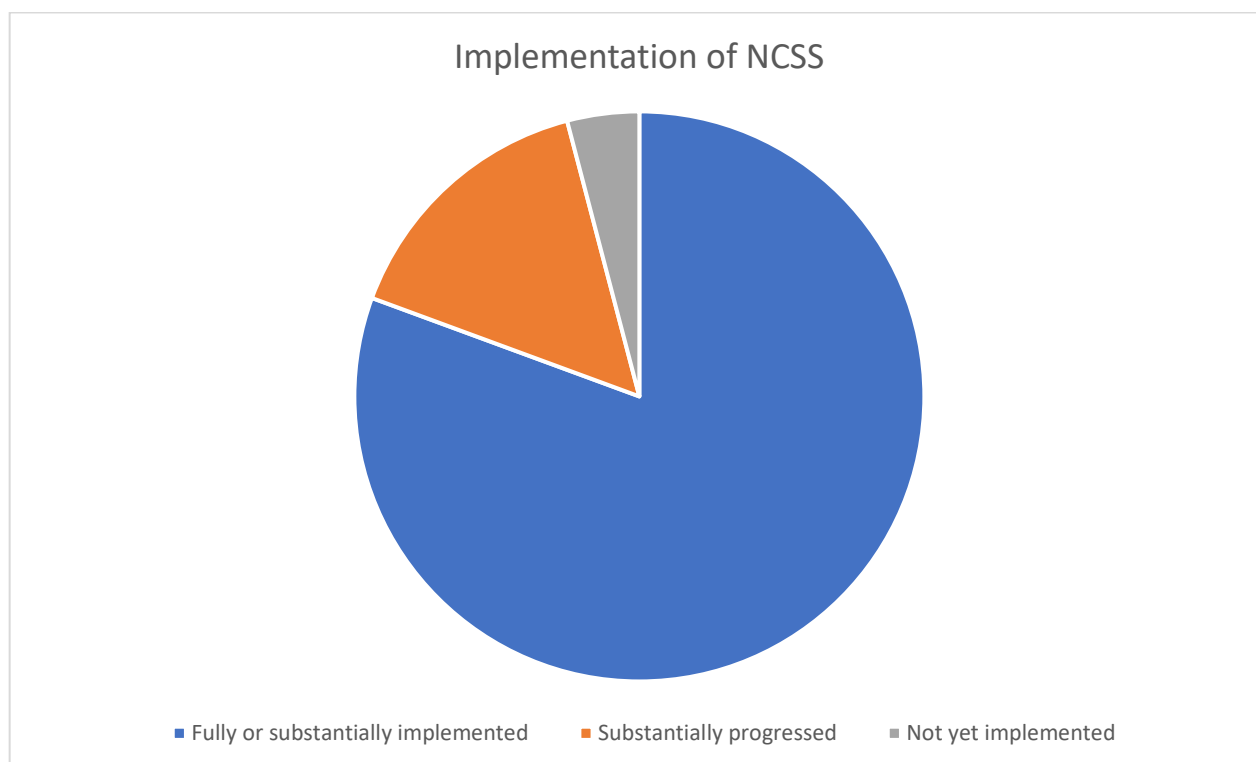
This Safeguarding Audit of the Archdiocese of Brisbane indicates that the Archdiocese is successfully implementing and embedding a culture of safeguarding throughout its organisation and is compliant with Queensland and National legislation and regulation relating to safeguarding children and adults at risk.

Our assessment indicates that the Archdiocese of Brisbane has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 94 (96%) of the relevant indicators to their operations. Assessment for each maturity scale is as follows:

- 79 indicators are developed and embedded.
- 15 indicators are substantially progressed.
- 4 indicators are the initial stages of implementation.

Of the 104 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church Authorities, 6 of these are not relevant to the Archdiocese of Brisbane operations, as the Holy Spirit Seminary Banyo was excluded from the audit.

ACSL assessment of the implementation of NCSS indicators by a Church Authority has been determined using a four-point maturity scale¹.



Note on scoring the four-point maturity scale:

- 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**.

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

The key findings from the audit are summarised by NCSS capability areas below.

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



There is strong leadership across the Archdiocese in promoting a safeguarding culture. This has been actively promoted by the Archbishop, Chancery, Safeguarding Services and key leaders within the Archdiocese.

The focus in Standards 1 and 9 is on how the Archdiocesan leadership influences and implements a positive safeguarding culture across its ministries. Archdiocesan key personnel are expected to display strong leadership within their ministry activities, including through an accountable and transparent governance structure. The audit assessed safeguarding policies, procedures and processes in different settings 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.

There is an overt commitment by the Archdiocesan leadership to safeguarding and zero tolerance to abuse. This is evidenced through signage, website and parish bulletin messages throughout the Archdiocese. The Archdiocesan Code of Conduct had been fully adopted and adapted to suit individual ministry needs. The Archdiocesan Safeguarding Commitment is on display in all sites visited. Parishes Safeguarding Committees reported strong support from the Office for Safeguarding to help meet requirements with practical resources, procedures and policies. The Office for Safeguarding has adopted a strengths-based approach including governance and risk management processes, the appointment of senior safeguarding personnel, dedicated safeguarding resources, the parish safeguarding audit program and annual external parish safeguarding audits to provide safeguarding oversight by the Office for Safeguarding.

The audit acknowledged the Archdiocese has established a volunteer Local Safeguarding Representative role to assist parishes and ministries to implement and manage safeguarding practices. At the time of the audit, 113 Local Safeguarding Representatives were serving across parishes and ministries, which was identified as a significant strength. However, a small number of parishes, did not have an appointed Local Safeguarding Representative, and in some instances, arrangements were not in place to ensure coverage of the role and responsibilities during periods of absence. The role of the designated Local Safeguarding Representative in agencies of the Archdiocese should be clearly defined, and each agency should have a Local Safeguarding Representative.

While information on the Integrity in Our Common Mission Code of Conduct has been widely disseminated to parishes, and training has been provided to clergy, it is important to ensure the employee and volunteer Codes of Conduct are aligned with IIOCM.

Where parishes are without a pastoral council, finance council or ministry team to support the parish priest, a parish council is recommended to enhance governance. A parish council would enhance governance of the parish and promote accountability and transparency, including in respect to safeguarding.

Several new IT platforms, including *Flocknote* and the Arch e-Learn online training system, are currently being rolled out and the work of integrating safeguarding obligations within these platforms is ongoing.

When policies are reviewed and amended or updated, it is important that personnel are advised of the changes and any implications.

The Archdiocese has implemented parish Sacristy Registers to record ministries undertaken by clergy, which also support safeguarding practices. While the Registers were generally completed diligently, it was noted that some visiting clergy did not record their Australian Catholic Ministry Register number.

Parish personnel requested feedback on their safeguarding reports and a regular forum to connect with others, collaborate on the roll out of new policies, procedures and processes and provide feedback to the Office for Safeguarding.

In the regulated sectors of education and aged care attention to safeguarding children and vulnerable people is embedded in practices and policies.



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

The documentation provided by the Archdiocese of Brisbane for the desktop assessment recognises that every person has the right to be protected from harm, to be listened to, to be taken seriously, and to have a say in matters that affect them.

In interviews and visits, the audit team confirmed that in regulated agencies and people-facing roles, the voices and views of children and adults at risk are listened to and included in ministry or service delivery processes. The organisational design and practices in regulated Archdiocesan agencies are informed by academic research findings. They draw on these findings in their ministry activities to engage children and adults at risk with greater vulnerability than their peers. Thus, their approach to ministry is trauma-informed and empathetic.

There are schools and parishes that have yet to demonstrate active engagement with families and parents in shaping the direction of their governance and activities. Such schools and parishes should be encouraged to ensure greater engagement by parent bodies and pastoral councils respectively.

Parishes are commended for their acknowledgement and celebration of culturally diverse groups, including music ministries, celebration of patron saints, provision of audiovisual supports and inclusive spaces for people living with disabilities and small children.

In one Centacare ministry adults at risk and their carers were observed to be actively engaged in providing their views on the activities being organised. This is evidence of an embedded safeguarding culture where adults and their carers feel safe and can contribute to safeguarding approaches. This approach will help to ensure the decision by the Archdiocese to transition from disability services by the end of 2025 meets their needs.

In a pastoral care ministry provided through Centacare, interviews with personnel revealed their commitment to providing gentle ministry and skilfully offering support to adults at risk in a non-judgemental and sensitive manner. This ministry is highly regarded by both government and non-government agencies, with personnel who readily acknowledge the contribution of their predecessors in building the ministry on solid foundations – as one person stated, *“the ministry stands on the shoulders of giants”*.

In settings with active youth ministries, measures have been implemented to ensure appropriate separation between activities for children and young people under 18 and adult ministries/activities, promoting safe and age-appropriate engagement. Supervision ratios are well understood, and risk assessments have been prepared for activities. All Youth Ministry volunteers hold current Blue Cards. Youth Coordinators sought advice on how to respond to issues such as online bullying, digital safety and peer-on-peer abuse.



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 Archdiocesan mission – a community strong in faith and committed to the common good. In meeting this capability area, the Archdiocese strives to recruit appropriately skilled people to the right role to implement their ministry.

The audit assessment of Standard 5 revealed that Archdiocesan employment practices are underpinned by a strong safeguarding culture. Overall, there is consistency between current employment relations and best practice HR processes. The audit findings also show an emphasis on safe recruitment, professional development, ongoing support, and supervision of personnel, which enhances risk mitigation. Centacare agencies specifically offer counselling and psychosocial services, and staff attend regular clinical supervision. This includes, 1:1 supervision; team/group supervision; access to senior practitioners and line management support, combined with the Employment Assistance Program.

The current safeguarding training module addresses the nature and indicators of abuse, and: action to be taken in response to concerns, disclosures and incidents. It is noted that the Queensland Reportable Conduct Scheme comes into legal effect on 1 July 2026 for all sectors. Information on the Reportable Conduct Scheme has been incorporated into safeguarding training modules and disseminated to personnel across parishes, ministries, services, and agencies. Additional communications and dedicated training on the Scheme are planned to ensure ongoing awareness and compliance. The emergence of contemporary issues including peer-on-peer abuse should be addressed in training updates. Burnout and compliance fatigue were often mentioned during field visits, particularly relating to pastoral and safeguarding duties.

Professional supervision of clergy is not consistent throughout the Archdiocese. The value of professional supervision within the clergy cohort is not universally acknowledged, and safeguarding is then considered in terms of regulatory compliance, rather than strengthening culture. The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards reflect the recommendation of the Royal Commission that all clergy participate in recommended supervision arrangements, and that these are recorded and reported upon annually.

There was limited evidence that annual performance appraisals for lay personnel incorporate a focus on safeguarding responsibilities or that Parish Secretaries were afforded annual performance reviews.



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

The Archdiocesan processes for raising concerns and complaints are understood and accessible. Parish Local Safeguarding Representatives promote these processes to children, adults, families, carers, communities and personnel. Processes are formally documented in the Archdiocesan policies and procedures, and they are made publicly available. Most personnel commend the Guardian database for registering incidents and complaints and for record keeping requirements. The introduction of the *Flocknote* platform for parishes will improve data management and privacy considerations for parish records.

Where employees are the subject of a complaint or allegation, support is to be provided to ensure consistency and procedural fairness for all parties involved.

For Standard 8, the audit focused on strategies implemented to minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur in both physical and online environments. However, during site visits it was noted that there are several shared spaces that require the attention of the Archdiocese. Where Schools/OHSC/Kindergartens are co-located with parishes a safeguarding/site management plan is required to restrict movement of the public,

parishioners, school students, visitors and personnel to and from each other's centres. Access to external parish toilet facilities also present risks if not managed safely.

It is recommended that parish offices be located separately from presbyteries, wherever possible. If offices are currently adjoined or situated within the presbytery, measures should be taken to ensure separation from the priest's private residence.

There are churches within the Archdiocese where the design of confessionals does not meet the contemporary requirements of distance between the priest and the penitent. Where physical modifications to improve safety are not feasible, the Sacrament of Reconciliation should instead be conducted in an open area of the church within sight of others, particularly when celebrated with children.

The Archdiocese has invested in robust cyber security systems and has implemented the Essential Eight mitigation plan to protect against cyber threats, with continuous monitoring for attacks. Access within the online environment is monitored, and all personnel must use an Archdiocese domain name address to access systems and when representing the Archdiocese.

Where it is known that a person of concern resides adjacent to a parish school, a joint risk management plan should be developed, and responsibility for implementing and monitoring the plan assigned to an authorised school representative. The plan may include mitigation measures such as increased supervision during school hours, CCTV monitoring, and the installation of boundary fencing to minimise opportunities for interaction with students.

Across the Archdiocese there is generally a strong awareness of managing risks associated with third parties, contractors, and external use of facilities. However, the third-party training module required to be completed prior to the audit field work focused on work health and safety and should include specific information about contractors' responsibilities and commitment to safeguarding.

It is unclear that there is coordination between Centacare, schools, and parishes regarding the engagement of third-party contractors, such as cleaners, who are on site during out of school hours. No evidence was provided that any individual or role has responsibility for maintaining oversight of which contractors attend school premises, with reliance instead on contractual arrangements and third-party declarations. As a result, safeguarding risks remain when contract or agency staff are engaged at short notice and may not have completed the required safeguarding orientation.

The Archdiocese's Safeguarding Implementation Plan should specifically name the designated position with responsibility and carriage of the managing safeguarding incidents within agencies.

Standard 10 assesses how the Archdiocese of Brisbane's safeguarding policies and procedures are well documented, managed and implemented. It is evident that in this large Archdiocese, the priority for the Safeguarding Services Unit continues to be on ensuring compliance with regulatory standards and statutory obligations, while the leadership in strengthening safeguarding culture comes from within the Chancery and Executive team.

This review audit brings into focus the progress made since the first audit in 2019. ACSL acknowledges that there is a strong commitment to meeting regulatory obligations and the challenges of embedding culture across such a large, growing and diverse Archdiocese. The auditors witnessed examples of great safeguarding commitment, and others where attitudes of clericalism prevail. The audit team has brought together significantly different perspectives in the interests of supporting the Archdiocese in its safeguarding journey.

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	10	6	-	-
2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate	6	-	6	-	-	-
3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6	-	5	1	-	-
4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected	4	-	2	2	-	-
5: Robust human resource management	22	5	13	1	3	-
6: Effective complaints management	19	-	18	1	-	-
7: Ongoing training & education	11	-	9	2	-	-
8: Safe physical and online environments	7	-	4	2	1	-
9: Continuous improvement	6	-	6	-	-	-
10: Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults	6	-	5	1	-	-
TOTAL	104	6	79	17	4	-
	98		96 %		4 %	

3. Summary of recommendations

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

No.	Indicator	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	1.2.3	Ensure Safeguarding Coordinators are appointed to all ministry roles that engage with children and vulnerable people. This role should be clearly notified to everyone in the ministry.
	1.2.3	Ensure Parish/ministries notify the Safeguarding Service of significant Local Safeguarding Representative absences and ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to cover roles and responsibilities.
	1.3.1	The Archdiocese consider mandating parish pastoral councils be established in each parish to enhance parish governance and safeguarding measures in each parish.
	1.5.1 & 1.5.2	Ensure the Risk Management Plan in all ministries includes safeguarding issues for adults at risk.
	1.6.1. & 1.6.2	Provide regular updates to parishes on the rollout out of the IT recoding system acknowledging the system will take some time to fully implement.
Recommendation 2	3.2.1	Parishes and schools that do not yet have formalised processes for involving families, carers and community members in discussions about safeguarding approaches should develop and embed regular engagement practices.
Recommendation 3	4.1.1 & 4.1.2	The Archdiocese develop new offerings in trauma-informed care, neurodiversity, psychosocial and power imbalance issues as they relate to safeguarding within the community.
Recommendation 4	5.4.1 & 5.5.5	Ensure all performance appraisals include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities. Provide parish-based lay personnel and volunteers with the opportunity for annual performance reviews.
	5.5.4	That the Archdiocese continue to promote professional supervision for clergy.
	5.7.1	Request all visiting clergy provide their ACMR registration number.
Recommendation 5	7.2.1 & 7.4.3	Develop new training offerings on the Queensland Reportable Conduct Scheme and emerging risks such as peer-on-peer abuse.

No.	Indicator	Recommendation
Recommendation 6	8.1.1	Undertake an assessment of sites where a school, OSHC, or kindergarten are co-located with a parish to identify potential access risks and develop site management plans where required.
		Where there is no separation between the presbytery and parish office, a separate entry to the presbytery is required. ?
		Review churches where confessionals are not designed for safety.
	8.1.1	Review coordination of responses to serious safeguarding-related incidents that present cross-cutting issues between a parish, school, outside school hours care centre, or kindergarten.
	8.3.1	Where a person of concern lives next to a school, develop an agreed strategy between the school, parish and Archdiocese so that the responsibility is delegated to an appropriate person who has clear authority to manage the situation.
	8.4.1	Review the BCE third-party contractor management processes to ensure all external providers, including cleaning contractors, fully meet safeguarding and compliance requirements.
		Enhance the BCE third-party training module to include specific responsibilities for safeguarding children by third party providers and personnel whilst working in an Archdiocesan entity.
Recommendation 7	10.4.1	Where relevant, ensure safeguarding (or related) training includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the underpinning theology of the NCSS; • principles for safeguarding children; and • principles for safeguarding adults-at-risk.

Audit recommendations are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation².

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

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

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

4. Assessment of compliance with NCSS indicators

Standard 1		Committed leadership, governance and culture			
The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture					
Criterion 1.1 – There is a public commitment to safeguarding that takes a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.1.1	The Safeguarding Policy is approved and endorsed by the Church Authority and/or relevant leadership body and is publicly available.	✓			
1.1.2	The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, widely displayed, and made publicly available.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.2 - A culture of safeguarding children and adults is championed and modelled at all levels of the Church Authority from the top down and bottom up.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.2.1	A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority and leaders by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone.• emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and• actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management.	✓			
1.2.2	A Safeguarding Committee is appointed at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices, policies, and procedures.	✓			
1.2.3	A Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) is appointed with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.		✓		
1.2.4	Personnel understand that good safeguarding practices are everyone's responsibility and are empowered to contribute to the organisation's safeguarding practices.	✓			
Observations:					
1.2.3 A small number of parishes and some Centacare ministries did not have an appointed Local Safeguarding Representative, and in some instances, arrangements were not in place to ensure coverage of the role and responsibilities during periods of absence. Contact details for Local Safeguarding Representatives should be displayed. Refer recommendation #1.					
1.2.3 The role of the designated Local Safeguarding Representative in agencies of the Archdiocese should be clearly defined and each agency should have a Local Safeguarding Representative. 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, considering cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.	Not relevant to current activities			
Observations: 1.3.1 Where parishes are without a parish pastoral council or another effectively operating council to support the parish priest, a parish council would enhance governance of the parish and promote accountability and transparency, including in respect to safeguarding. Refer recommendation #1. 1.3.1 Many parish secretaries suggested that a regular forum to engage in safeguarding discussions and consultation would benefit them in their roles.					
Criterion 1.4 – The entity's Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural standards towards children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.4.1	The Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour.	✓			
1.4.2	The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, families, and carers.	✓			
1.4.3	The Code of Conduct considers the needs of all children and adults at risk, paying particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Nations people.• individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are at risk of abuse';• individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.• children in out of home care, or are homeless; and,• children and adults of diverse sexuality.	✓			
1.4.4	The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.5 - The entity's risk management plan focuses on preventing, identifying, and mitigating safeguarding risks to children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.5.1	The Risk Management Plan considers the needs of children and adults with diminished capacity, and how and when adults at risk make informed choices (dignity of risk).		✓		

1.5.2	The Risk Management Plan incorporates procedures to assess, evaluate, review, and oversee safeguarding of children and adults at risk within its ministry and/or service.		✓		
1.5.3	There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report, and review risks.	✓			
Observations: The Risk Management Plans should include mitigating safeguarding issues for adults at risk in all agencies across the Archdiocese. Refer recommendation #1.					
Criterion 1.6 - Personnel understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping for safeguarding and professional standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.6.1	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures are documented and communicated to personnel.		✓		
1.6.2	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures align with best practice.		✓		
Observations: Some parish personnel expressed concerns about inaccuracies between Archdiocesan records and local parishes as part of the rollout of IT system. Refer recommendation #1.					

Standard 2		Children and adults are safe, informed and participate			
Children and adults are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously					
Criterion 2.1 – Children and adults at risk engaged in an entity’s ministry and/or services are informed about their rights, including safety, decision making, participation and how a complaint will be managed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.1.1	Age-appropriate strategies are used to engaged children, seek their views about what makes them feel safe, and enable them to participate in decisions that affect them.	✓			
2.1.2	Adults at risk (or carers where appropriate) are engaged to provide their views about decisions which affect them, what makes them feel safe and to contribute to safeguarding approaches.	✓			
2.1.3	The organisation makes children and adults at risk aware of their rights, including their right to be safe from abuse, and who to contact if they are concerned about their safety or the safety of others.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
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: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement are noted.					
Criterion 2.4 – Where relevant to the setting or context, children and families are offered access to abuse prevention programs and related information that is age appropriate.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.4.1	Children and families are provided with information, access and/or referral to abuse prevention programs, appropriate to the child's age, development, ability, and level of understanding.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 3		Partnering with families, carers and communities			
Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults.					
Criterion 3.1 – Parents, carers and/or guardians participate in decisions affecting their child, or adults with diminished capacity.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.1.1	The entity encourages parents, carers and/or guardians to take an active role in monitoring the safety of those engaged in the ministry and/or service.	✓			
Observations					
Requirements of the indicators 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:					
3.2.1 There are parishes and schools that have not formalised a process of engaging parents, carers and/or guardians in helping to make decisions about safeguarding matters. Refer recommendation #2.					
Criterion 3.3 - Families, carers and communities are informed about the Church Authority's operations and governance; and have an opportunity to have a say in the safeguarding policies and practices.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.3.1	Processes are in place to engage families, carers and communities about their views on safeguarding policies and practices.	✓			
3.3.2	Families, carers and communities are aware of the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services directly to children and adults at risk.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 3.4 – The entity raises community awareness of the dignity and rights of all children and adults		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.4.1	The entity promotes and/or participates in activities which raise awareness of abuse prevention and the rights and dignity of children and adults at risk.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 4		Equity is promoted and diversity is respected			
Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice					
Criterion 4.1 - The diverse circumstances and backgrounds of children and adults at risk are acknowledged and accommodated by providing appropriate support.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.1.1	The Safeguarding Policy and procedures demonstrate an understanding, and awareness of the diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse.		✓		
4.1.2	The Complaints Handling Policy and practices address barriers that may prevent a disclosure of abuse being made and that hinders personnel from recognising and responding appropriately.		✓		
Observations					
4.1 & 4.2 There is widespread understanding of cultural diversity, with requests for support to better understand neurodiversity, trauma, psycho-social issues and power imbalances as they impact safeguarding responsibilities. Refer recommendation #3.					
Criterion 4.2 – Children and adults have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that promote inclusion, are culturally safe, and accessible.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

4.2.1	Information about company processes and supports are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 4.3 - The diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those living with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and adults who are unable to live at home, and those of diverse sexuality, are acknowledged.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.3.1	The Safeguarding Policy and procedures empower children and adults by reflecting attitudes and behaviours that respect their inherent dignity, are inclusive and are responsive to diverse needs.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvements are 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: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.2 – Personnel have current clearances (for example, working with children checks) and/or equivalent background checks relevant to their role.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.2.1	All personnel are required to have a background check or clearance (as relevant to their role).	✓			
5.2.2	As required by legislation, personnel must have a current working with children check (or working with vulnerable people check) and/or NDIS Worker Screening Check prior to working with children and adults at risk.	✓			

5.2.3	Records of all checks are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation, for all personnel	✓			
Observations:					
5.2.1 The Safeguarding Matrix is a valuable tool which could be simplified or clarified in its application.					
Criterion 5.3 - Personnel complete appropriate induction and are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities including reporting obligations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.3.1	All personnel participate in a safeguarding induction program, which occurs as soon as possible after commencement.	✓			
5.3.2	All Church Authorities and their leadership team undertake the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 5.4 - Ongoing supervision and people management includes an emphasis on safeguarding responsibilities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.			✓	
Observations:					
All performance appraisals need to include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities. There was limited evidence that parish secretaries were afforded annual performance reviews. 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.	Not applicable			
5.5.2	Seminary and initial formation programs have robust screening processes for candidates for religious ministry, including external psychological and psychosexual assessments.	Not applicable			
5.5.3	Ongoing integrated formation for clergy and religious addresses both the canonical and civil safeguarding requirements. For priests, this would include supporting their fidelity to the Church's teaching regarding the Sacrament of	✓			

	Reconciliation and the inviolability of the Sacramental Seal.				
5.5.4	All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.			✓	
5.5.5	All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals			✓	
5.5.6	All newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least five years post ordination or final profession.	✓			
Observations: 5.5.4 Professional supervision for clergy is made available to all Archdiocesan clergy and is accessed by most, not all clergy. 5.5.5 All performance appraisals for clergy need to include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities. 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.	Not applicable			
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.	Not applicable			
5.6.3	Seminary and initial formation programs identify how to avoid abuse of power and the development and/or reinforcement of clericalist attitudes and behaviours.	Not applicable			
Observations: N/A.					
Criterion 5.7 – The movement and credentialling of those in active ministry is appropriately managed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.7.1	A system to assess the safeguarding credentials and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy, religious and lay ministries between different seminaries, formation programs and other Church entities is in place.		✓		
Observations: 5.7.1 While the Sacristy register was consistently used for clergy visiting parishes, some personnel did not know the ACMR process, requiring all visiting clergy to provide their ACMR registration number. All Parishes are encouraged to check the ACMR of visiting clergy, and when clergy apply to minister within the Archdiocese they are reminded to provide details of their ACMR to the local parish. 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 Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					

Standard 6		Effective complaints management			
<i>Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities and personnel.</i>					
Criterion 6.1 - The entity's Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.1.1	Policies and procedures address mandatory reporting obligations.	✓			
6.1.2	There are clear procedures that provide step-by-step responses and action to be taken for different types of complaints, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• breaches of Code of Conduct.• disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child.• an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and• an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult.	✓			
6.1.3	The Complaint Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflict of interests are managed.	✓			
6.1.4	The Complaint Handling Policy acknowledges that power imbalances exist between the complainant and respondent and has strategies in place to address this.	✓			
6.1.5	The Complaint Handling Policy spells out who has responsibilities in relation to handling complaints and when procedures are enacted.	✓			

6.1.6	All abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referral are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are 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 Indicator are in place. No recommendations are 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 Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 6.4 - The Complaints Handling Policy includes the process of reporting complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, requiring cooperation with any statutory or contractual processes.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.4.1	<p>The Complaints Handling Policy requires that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> concerns and complaints of child abuse occurring within the entity be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities, in accordance with regulations. any concerns and/or complaints of a criminal against adults be reported to statutory authorities; and personnel cooperate with law enforcement procedures and directives. 	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 6.5 – The Church Authority ensures mechanisms are in place to support complainants of child and adult sexual abuse.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.5.1	Appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are 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: Parishes requested advice to support the pastoral needs of a respondent within the community.					

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Code of Conduct.• safeguarding risk management.• Safeguarding Policy and procedures.• Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.• reporting obligations; and• e-safety training.	✓			
7.1.3	Records are maintained to ensure all personnel attend induction training and participate in refresher safeguarding training at least every three years.	✓			
7.1.4	All personnel with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive ongoing support and professional development to their role.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand the nature and impact of child abuse.• understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse.• identify risk factors, such as grooming behaviours; and• understand, identify, and respond to abusive behaviours by a child towards another child.		✓		
Observations: 7.2.1 Personnel requested ongoing training on emerging risks such as peer-on-peer abuse, and e-safety concerns. Refer recommendation #5.					
Criterion 7.3 – Personnel are supported to recognise the factors that contribute to adult abuse, with a focus on adults at risk.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

7.3.1	<p>Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the nature and impact of adult abuse. • understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse. • identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation. • recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including power imbalances can be exploited; and • understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse. 	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are 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	<p>Education and training programs equip relevant personnel to appropriately respond to and support anyone bringing forward concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.</p>	✓			
7.4.2	<p>Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.</p>	✓			
7.4.3	<p>Personnel receive training on reporting obligations under Commonwealth/State/Territory legislative and canon law, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reporting suspected criminal behaviour to police. • mandatory reporting to child protection authorities. • Reportable Conduct Scheme. • reporting to other regulatory authorities or government departments; and • Canonical reporting requirements. 		✓		
Observations: 7.4.3 The Queensland Reportable Conduct Scheme legislation takes effect on 1 July 2026 providing an opportunity to inform personnel and the wider community on the new requirements. Further changes to be implemented by the State Attorneys General Council will require further updates to training. Refer recommendation #5.					
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	<p>Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create, culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p>	✓			
7.5.2	<p>Training is provided to relevant personnel to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of</p>	✓			

	diverse cultural backgrounds and how to create safe environments for people from these groups.				
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child;ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction and mentoring;potential physical contact between the penitent and the confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated;one-to-one interaction with adults at risk;child-to-child interactions.adult-to-child interactions.adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); andthe nature of physical spaces. Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.		✓		
8.1.2	The entity’s policies require the safe use of online applications for children and adults to learn, communicate and seek help.	✓			
8.1.3	Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults.	✓			
Observations:					
8.1.1 Where schools/OHSC/Kindergartens are co-located with parishes, access to school areas by the public and or parishioners should be restricted by fencing or similar eg keyed boom gates. Toilets facilities should be signed and access delineated. In parishes where there is no separation between the presbytery and parish office, a separate entry to private quarters should be in place. Where confessionals do not meet NCSS safety guidelines these should be modified, or cease being used for sacramental purposes Refer recommendation #6.					
Criterion 8.2 - The online environment is used in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policy.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.2.1	Personnel access and use online environments in line with the entity’s Code of Conduct, Privacy Act and relevant communication protocols.	✓			

8.2.2	The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary, or other relevant policies and reported to the leadership.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are 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
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: 8.3.1 Where a person of concern lives next to a school, the school requires fencing to minimise the ability of the tenant to engage with students. An agreed strategy between the school, parish and Archdiocese is required so that the responsibility is delegated to an appropriate person who has clear authority to manage the situation. Refer recommendation #6.					
Criterion 8.4 – Where facilities and services are contracted to and from third parties, contractual arrangements specify safeguarding considerations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.4.1	If a third party provides services or uses the organisations facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.			✓	
Observations: 8.4.1 The Archdiocese engages external cleaning contractors. However, there was no evidence that all cleaning contractors had completed the BCE Third Party Registration & Declaration Form, or whether all cleaning personnel were appropriately authorised, and had undergone the required background checks. The effectiveness of the BCE Third Party training module should be enhanced to include the specific responsibilities for safeguarding children by third party providers and personnel. Refer recommendation #6.					

Standard 9		Continuous improvement			
Entities regularly review and improve implementation of their systems for keeping children and adults safe.					
Criterion 9.1 - The safeguarding practices for the protection of children and adults at risk are regularly reviewed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.1.1	The Safeguarding Implementation Plan outlines how safeguarding practices are monitored and reviewed, and how this information is reported.	✓			
9.1.2	The Church Authority monitors the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and co-ordinates annual local self-assessment checks.	✓			

9.1.3	The Safeguarding Policy is subject to review at least every three years and outcomes of this review are documented.	✓			
Observations: 9.1.1 The Safeguarding Implementation Plan should ensure that primary responsibility is allocated to a role to lead and manage a serious incident to resolution. Several new IT platforms, Flocknote and the Arch e-learn online training system, are currently being rolled out and will need to further integrate safeguarding obligations and incorporated into the overarching Safeguarding Implementation Plan.					
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 Indicator are in place. No recommendations are 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 be reported to stakeholders.	✓			
9.3.2	The findings of audits or reviews undertaken or validated by ACSL are made public.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted					

Standard 10		Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults			
<i>Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.</i>					
Criterion 10.1 - Policies and procedures address the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.1.1	All relevant policies and procedures reference appropriate safeguarding approaches, requirements and responsibilities.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 10.2 - Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

10.2.1	The policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding are readily available and accessible to all personnel.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 10.3 - Best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development and review of policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.3.1	There are processes in place to monitor how safeguarding policies and procedures are being implemented.	✓			
10.3.2	There is a process in place to develop and review safeguarding policies and procedures.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 10.4 - Church leaders champion and model best practice implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.4.1	The Church Authority and leaders promote the NCSS and enact all policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding.		✓		
Observations: To highlight the importance of the Archdiocese's commitment to the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards we encourage the display of the Standards in the education and OSHC sectors. This could be further enhanced by inclusion of the underpinning theology of the NCSS in training modules. Refer Recommendation #7.					
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 Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					

5. Detailed findings and Recommendations

Recommendation #1		Priority 3
Indicator No.	Indicator	
1.2.3	A Safeguarding Co-Ordinator(s) is appointed with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.	
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.	
1.5.1	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.	
1.6.1	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 practices.	
Details of finding	<p>A small number of parishes and Centacare ministries did not have an appointed Local Safeguarding Representative, and in some instances, arrangements were not in place to ensure coverage of the role and responsibilities during periods of absence.</p> <p>The role of the designated Local Safeguarding Representative in agencies of the Archdiocese should be clearly defined, and each agency should have a Local Safeguarding Representative.</p> <p>Where parishes are without a parish pastoral council or another effectively operating council to support the parish priest, a parish council would enhance governance of the parish and promotes accountability and transparency, and fosters the active participation of lay members in parish life, including in safeguarding</p> <p>The Risk Management Plans should include mitigating safeguarding issues for adults at risk in all agencies across the Archdiocese.</p> <p>Some parish personnel expressed concerns about inaccuracies between Archdiocesan records and local parishes as part of the rollout of IT system.</p>	

Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure Safeguarding Coordinators are appointed to all ministry roles that engage with children and vulnerable people. This role should be clearly notified to everyone in the ministry. 2. Ensure Parish/ministries notify the Safeguarding Service of significant Local Safeguarding Representative absences and ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to cover roles and responsibilities. 3. The Archdiocese consider mandating parish pastoral councils be established in each parish to enhance parish governance and safeguarding measures in each parish. 4. Ensure the Risk Management Plan in all ministries includes safeguarding issues for adults at risk. 5. Provide regular updates to parishes on the rollout out of the IT recoding system acknowledging the system will take some time to fully implement.
Agreed Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake an annual review of the appointment of Local Safeguarding Representatives at parishes/ministries and in the ministries of the Archdiocese. 2. Develop a process for notification to the Safeguarding Service of significant Local Safeguarding Representative absences and arrangements in place to cover the roles and responsibilities. 3. The Archbishop consider mandating pastoral councils for parishes as provided for under c.536 §1 4. Ensure risk management plans in all ministries include safeguarding issues for adults at risk. 5. In consultation with IT, provide regular (monthly) updates to parishes on the roll out of <i>Flocknote</i>.
Responsibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safeguarding Service 2. Safeguarding Service 3. Episcopal Office 4. Relevant ministry 5. Flocknote Project Manager
Due date	June 2026 and ongoing

Recommendation #2		Priority 3
Indicator No.	Indicator	
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.	
Details of finding	There are some parishes and schools that do not yet have formal regular families, carers and community involvement in safeguarding matters.	
Recommendation	Parishes and schools that do not yet have formalised processes for involving families, carers and community members in discussions about safeguarding approaches should develop and embed regular engagement practices.	
Agreed Action	Where active safeguarding engagement strategies are not yet in place in parishes and schools they should be encouraged to formalise the process of engaging parents, carers and/or guardians in helping to make decisions about safeguarding matters.	
Responsibility	Safeguarding Service	

Due date	Mid 2026
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Recommendation #3		Priority 3
Indicator No.	Indicator	
4.1.1	The diverse circumstances and backgrounds of children and adults at risk are acknowledged and accommodated by providing appropriate support.	
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.	
Details of finding	In such a culturally diverse Archdiocese, there is widespread understanding of cultural diversity. However, personnel requested support to better understand issues such as power imbalances, neurodiversity, trauma, psycho-social issues as they impact safeguarding responsibilities.	
Recommendation	The Archdiocese develop new offerings in trauma-informed care, neurodiversity, psychosocial and power imbalance issues as they relate to safeguarding within the community.	
Agreed Action	Archdiocese to identify opportunities and offerings to meet emerging training needs and provide ongoing training in these areas.	
Responsibility	People & Culture Brisbane Catholic Education Centacare	
Due date	December 2026	

Recommendation #4		Priority 3
Indicator No.	Indicator	
5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.	
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.	
5.7.1	The movement and credentialling of those in ministry is appropriately managed.	

Details of finding	<p>ACSL noted that professional supervision of clergy is not consistent throughout the Archdiocese. The value of professional supervision within the clergy cohort is not universally acknowledged, and safeguarding is then considered only in terms of regulatory compliance, rather than strengthening culture. The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards reflect the recommendation of the Royal Commission that all clergy participate in recommended supervision arrangements, and that these are recorded and reported upon annually. There was also limited evidence that annual performance appraisals for lay personnel incorporate a focus on safeguarding responsibilities or that parish secretaries were afforded annual performance reviews.</p> <p>All Parishes are encouraged to check the ACMR of visiting clergy, and when clergy apply to minister within the Archdiocese, they are reminded to provide details of their ACMR to the local parish. While the Sacristy register was consistently used for clergy visiting parishes, some personnel did not know the ACMR process, requiring all visiting clergy provide their ACMR registration number.</p>
Recommendation	<p>That the Archdiocese continue to promote professional supervision for clergy.</p> <p>Provide parish-based lay personnel and volunteers with the opportunity for annual performance reviews.</p> <p>Ensure all performance appraisals include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities</p> <p>Request all visiting clergy provide their ACMR registration number.</p>
Agreed Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include safeguarding-related criteria within annual performance appraisals for relevant parish-based lay personnel, including Parish Secretaries. 2. Review annual performance appraisal processes for parish volunteer roles with significant safeguarding-related responsibilities. 3. Ensure all visiting clergy are requested to provide their ACMR registration number.
Responsibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Episcopal Office 2. People & Culture 3. Parishes
Due date	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 & 2. September 2026 3. Ongoing.

Recommendation #5		Priority 3
Indicator No.	Indicator	
7.2.1	<p>Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place children at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the nature and impact of child abuse; • understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse; • identify risk factors, such as grooming behaviours; and • understand, identify, and respond to abusive behaviours by a child towards another child. 	

7.4.3	<p>Personnel receive training on reporting obligations under Commonwealth, State/Territory legislative and canon law, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reporting suspected criminal behaviour to police; • mandatory reporting to child protection authorities; • Reportable Conduct Scheme; • reporting to other regulatory authorities or government departments; and, • Canonical reporting requirements. 	
Details of finding	<p>The current safeguarding training program addresses the nature and indicators of abuse, and action to be taken. The introduction of the Queensland Reportable Conduct Scheme, taking effect on 1 July 2026, and the recently announced changes to its rollout, will require training to equip personnel with knowledge to fulfill their responsibilities. The Archdiocese has taken steps to support implementation, including incorporating the Scheme into the current safeguarding training module and distributing information to personnel across parishes, ministries, services, and agencies. Further changes to be implemented by the State Attorneys General Council will require further updates to training.</p> <p>The emergence of contemporary issues including peer-on-peer abuse should be addressed in training updates. Burnout and compliance fatigue were often mentioned during field visits, particularly relating to pastoral and safeguarding duties. There was a request for additional training relating to dealing with mental health issues and diversity within parishes.</p>	
Recommendation	Develop new training offerings on the Queensland Reportable Conduct Scheme and emerging risks such as peer-on-peer abuse.	
Agreed Action	<p>Develop and deliver training on the Queensland Reportable Conduct Scheme prior to the Scheme coming into legal effect.</p> <p>Develop peer-on-peer/child-on-child abuse training for relevant personnel.</p>	
Responsibility	<p>People & Culture</p> <p>Safeguarding Service</p> <p>Brisbane Catholic Education</p> <p>Centacare/Catholic Early EdCare</p>	
Due date	<p>Legal compliance dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 July 2026 (child disability & early childhood services) - 1 January 2027 (education services) - 1 July 2027 (religious bodies) 	

Recommendation #6		Priority 2
Indicator No.	Indicator	
8.1.1	<p>Both physical and online risks are addressed withing the provision of ministry and/or services, including risks arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child; • ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction, and mentoring. • potential physical contact between the penitent and the Confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated. • one-to-one interactions with adults at risk. • child-to-child interactions. • adult-to-child interactions. • adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration of power Imbalances); and • the nature of physical spaces. <p>Where possible, these interactions are to be conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.</p>	
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.	
8.4.1	If a third party provides services or uses the organisations facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices in place.	
Details of finding	<p>There are significant safeguarding risks where there are shared services. Where Schools/OSHC/Kindergartens are co-located with parishes, a safeguarding/site management plan is required to restrict movement of the public and/or parishioners and/or school students/visitors/personnel to and from each other's centres.</p> <p>Where toilet facilities are co-located authorised access and signage should be clearly defined.</p> <p>The Archdiocese engages external cleaning contractors. However, there was no evidence that all cleaning contractors had completed the BCE Third Party Registration & Declaration Form, or whether all cleaning personnel were appropriately authorised, and had undergone the required background checks. The effectiveness of the BCE Third Party training module should be enhanced to include the specific responsibilities for safeguarding children by third party providers and personnel.</p>	

Recommendation	<p>Undertake an assessment of sites where a school, OSHC, or kindergarten are co-located with a parish to identify potential access risks and develop site management plans where required. Where there is no separation between the presbytery and parish office, a separate entry to the presbytery is required.</p> <p>Review churches where confessionals are not designed for safety.</p> <p>Where a person of concern lives next to a school, ensures there is an agreed strategy between the school, parish and Archdiocese so that the responsibility is delegated to an appropriate person who has clear authority to manage the situation.</p> <p>Review coordination of responses to serious safeguarding-related incidents that present cross-cutting issues between a parish, school, outside school hours care centre, or kindergarten.</p> <p>Review the BCE third-party contractor management processes to ensure all external providers, including cleaning contractors, fully meet safeguarding and compliance requirements.</p> <p>Enhance the BCE third-party training module to include specific responsibilities for safeguarding children by third party providers and personnel whilst working in an Archdiocesan entity.</p>
Agreed Action	<p>Undertake an assessment of sites where a school, OSHC, or kindergarten are co-located with a parish to identify potential access risks and develop appropriate risk mitigation strategies. This includes the formal strategy between the school, parish and Archdiocese for managing situations where a person of concern lives next to a school.</p> <p>Review policies and procedures to strengthen coordination of responses to serious safeguarding-related incidents that present cross-cutting issues between a parish, school, outside school hours care centre, or kindergarten.</p> <p>Review the BCE third-party contractor management processes to ensure safeguarding and compliance requirements are being met.</p> <p>Review the BCE third-party training module to include specific responsibilities for safeguarding children by third party providers and personnel whilst working in an Archdiocesan entity.</p>
Responsibility	<p>Safeguarding Services</p> <p>Property & Building Services</p> <p>Brisbane Catholic Education</p> <p>Centacare/Catholic Early EdCare</p>
Due date	April 2026

Recommendation #7		Priority 3
Indicator No.	Indicator	
10.4.1	The Church Authority and leaders promote the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and enact all policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding.	
Details of finding	Some parish and school personnel had a limited appreciation of the NCSS. While all sites visited had the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Commitment clearly displayed, many parishes and Brisbane Catholic Education agencies, to highlight the importance of the Archdiocese’s commitment to the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards we encourage the display of the Standards in parishes and the education and OSHC sectors.	

Recommendation	<p>Where relevant, ensure safeguarding (or related) training includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the underpinning theology of the NCSS. • principles for safeguarding children; and • principles for safeguarding adults-at-risk.
Agreed Action	<p>Review and update safeguarding (or related) training to address the following topics as relevant to each agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the underpinning theology of the NCSS. • principles for safeguarding children; and • principles for safeguarding adults-at-risk.
Responsibility	<p>Safeguarding Service People & Culture Brisbane Catholic Education Centacare</p>
Due date	July 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • siloed; and/or • undocumented; and/or • inconsistent; and/or • lack clarity. 	Personnel capabilities vary across the entity and resources and responsibility are not formally assigned. This will be addressed in the Standards Action Plan.
Developed	Our entity is addressing the indicator and is in the process of implementing its requirements. The gaps will be highlighted and addressed through the Standards Action Plan.	Relevant processes and systems have been defined and developed but are yet to be implemented across the full operations of the entity. A plan is being developed to fully implement processes and systems.	Resources have been assigned and responsibilities defined, however there is no formal training or communication of standard procedures, and it is unlikely that deviations will be detected. This will be remediated through the Standards Action Plan.
Developed & embedded	The entity can demonstrate that indicator requirements are formally embedded. Processes are operating effectively, and opportunities provided for continuous improvement.	Relevant processes are integrated and coordinated, including remote operations and reviews/audits of activities.	Personnel are trained to detect and report on deviations or break downs in processes. Resources have been assigned to monitor and address requirements.

Appendix B – Audit Finding Priorities

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

Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
<p>Gaps or control weaknesses have been identified resulting in non-compliance with the indicator.</p> <p>Mitigation actions are required to be developed and initiated as soon as practicable but no later than 30 days from the issuance of this report, with expected resolution within 3 months.</p>	<p>Progress has been made with respect to implementation of the required indicator, however full compliance is yet to be achieved.</p> <p>Mitigation actions are required to be developed and initiated within 3 months or earlier from the issuance of this report, with expected resolution within 6-9 months.</p>	<p>Issues have been identified which represent minor procedural weaknesses or improvement opportunities with respect to the operation of the indicator.</p> <p>Expected resolution is within 12 months or earlier from the issuance of this report.</p>

Appendix C - Glossary

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

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

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual abuse* • Physical abuse* • Emotional/psychological abuse* • Neglect* • Elder abuse* • Financial abuse* • Exploitation* <p>Within the context of the Catholic church and faith-based entities, it is also important to recognise spiritual abuse* as an additional subtype of abuse.</p>
Adult at risk	<p>means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who are elderly. • with a disability. • who suffer from mental illness. • who have diminished capacity. • who have cognitive impairment. • who have suffered previous abuse. • who are experiencing transient risks. • who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance. • who are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background/ • who are of diverse sexuality/ • who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse.
Allegation	means a complaint, still to be verified, claiming, or asserting that someone has committed an act of abuse against a child or adult. The term is used interchangeably and in combination with “complaint”.
Audit	means a mechanism to assess how a Church Authority, ministry or entity governed by a Church Authority, is implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference	means the assembly of Bishops of Australia exercising together certain pastoral offices for the Catholics of Australia.
Bishop	means a diocesan bishop or archbishop, the ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of the Eastern Churches.
Canon law	means the revised code of canon law promulgated by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in 1983 and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches as promulgated in 1990 and any other universal or legislation promulgated by the competent ecclesiastical authority.
Canonical Offence	<p>means canonical crimes¹ of sexual abuse committed by clerics and religious are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts. • performing sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person. • the production, exhibition, possession, or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions. <p>¹ The canonical crimes/delicts/offences committed by clerics or religious as stated in Art. 1 §1 a) of <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i>.</p> <p>² Definition of vulnerable person as stated in Art. 1 §2 b) of <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i>: “means: any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their</p>

	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	<p>There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Definition sourced from the Australian Institute of Family Studies: https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect</p> <p>Child abuse refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission. Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical abuse. • emotional/psychological abuse. • neglect. • sexual abuse. • exposure to family violence.
Church Authority	<p>means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a diocesan bishop or archbishop, an ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of an eparchy of an Eastern Church. • the competent authority, howsoever titled, exercising the ministry of governance for religious institutes in Australia in accordance with their Constitutions; or • for ministerial PJPS the competent authority in accordance with the statutes. • for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organization in accordance with its rules.
Church Protocols	means official procedures or system of rules which govern the affairs of the Catholic Church in Australia, for example, Vos Estis Lux Mundi and the National Response Protocol.
Civil Standard	the most common standard of proof relates to civil proceedings, which is the balance of probabilities (incorporating the principles from Briginshaw v Briginshaw) – which means it is more probable than not that what the person says happened is true (in criminal cases, the standard is proof beyond reasonable doubt).
Clergy	includes bishops, priests and deacons.
Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia	means any cleric or member of a religious institute who is specifically recruited or welcomed from overseas by a Church Authority or entity.
Cleric	a member of the clergy.
Clericalist/ism	means an attitude toward clergy/religious characterised by an excessive deference and an assumption of their moral superiority. Pope Francis has said that it occurs when “clerics feel they are superior, [and when] they are far from the people.” It can be “fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons”.
Cognitive impairment	means when a person has trouble remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions that affect their everyday life, because of

	<p>their condition. Some causes of long-term or permanent cognitive impairment include dementia, stroke, or brain injury.</p> <p>For further information see: https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment</p>
Complainant	<p>means any person who makes a complaint that may include any allegation, suspicion, concern, or report of a breach of the entity's Code of Conduct. A complaint may also include disclosures made to an institution that may be about, or relate to, abuse in the entity's context.</p>
Conflicts of interest	<p>means situations (perceived or actual) where a conflict arises between a person's official duties and their private interests, which could influence the performance of those official duties. Such conflict generally involves opposing principles or incompatible wishes or needs and may occur when personnel function in multiple roles.</p>
Consecrated Life/Institute of Consecrated Life	<p>is an association of faithful in the Catholic Church erected by canon law whose members profess the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience by vows or other sacred bonds (as defined in the Code of Canon Law under canons 573–730).</p> <p>Apart from being a member of an institute, consecrated life may also be lived individually; the Catholic Church recognises, as forms of individual consecrated life that are not members of institutes, namely that of hermits and consecrated virgins.</p>
Cultural safety	<p>means an environment that is safe for people of all ethnicities and cultural identities: where there is no assault, challenge, or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.</p>
Dicastery	<p>means a department of the Roman Curia.</p>
Dignity or Right to Risk	<p>refers to enabling individuals the right (or dignity) to take reasonable risks. It recognises that restricting this right can stifle the individual's growth, self-esteem and the overall quality of life:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">‘Given that an individual's personal dignity is manifested, in part, by their ability to remain autonomous, and being autonomous engenders risk-taking. Inhibiting an individual's ability to take risks erodes their dignity. Dignity of risk is therefore the principle of allowing an individual the dignity afforded by risk-taking, subsequently enhancing their personal growth and quality of life.’</p> <p>(Joseph E Ibrahim and Marie-Claire Davis, ‘Impediments to Applying the “Dignity of Risk” Principle in Residential Aged Care Services: “Dignity of Risk” in Residential Aged Care’, <i>Australasian Journal on Ageing</i> 32, no. 3 (September 2013): 188–93)</p>
Diminished capacity	<p>means if an adult needs to make a decision and is unable to carry out any part of this process (as listed below), they have impaired decision-making capacity. There are three elements to making a decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding the nature and effect of the decision; • freely and voluntarily deciding; and • communicating the decision in some way.
Diocese	<p>means a diocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelature of the Latin Church and an eparchy of an Eastern Church.</p>
Disability (persons with)	<p>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.)</p>

Diversity	means a range of people who have various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests.
Diverse sexuality	refers to all the diversities of sex characteristics, sexual orientations, and gender identities, without the need to specify each of the identities, behaviours, or characteristics that form this plurality.
Elder abuse	means a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.
Emotional abuse (adults)	is a common form of abuse that occurs in close relationships. Emotional abuse is defined as abuse that occurs when a person is subjected to behaviours or actions aimed at preventing or controlling their behaviour, with the intent to cause them emotional harm or fear, through manipulation, isolation, or intimidation.
Emotional abuse (children)	Emotional abuse of children refers to a parent or caregiver's inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts towards a child and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurturing and emotional availability. Such acts of commission or omission are likely to damage a child's self-esteem or social competence.
Entity	means a diocese, religious institute, ministerial PJP (including their agencies) or association recognised as Catholic in accord with canon law.
Exploitation	is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person. It is taking advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain.
Exposure to family violence	is generally considered to be a form of psychologically abusive behaviour, where a child is present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse, or psychological maltreatment, or is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member's violent behaviour.
Financial abuse	involves the illegal or improper use or mismanagement of a person's money, property or resources. Stealing, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, forced changes to a will, inappropriate removal of a resident's decision-making powers and misuse of power of attorney are all forms of financial abuse or exploitation.
Formation/program	means a program preparing individuals for ordination or profession of vows and a life-long journey to the invitation of Christ to proclaim and live the Gospel message, within the life of the Church.
Good Standing	A person in good standing is regarded as having complied with all their safeguarding obligations, and is not subject to any form of allegation, disciplinary process, sanction suspension.
Grooming (child)	refers to a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging a child as a precursor to sexual abuse. It includes establishing a 'special' friendship/relationship with the child. Grooming can include the conditioning of parents and other adults to think that the relationship with the child is 'normal' and positive.
Grooming (adult)	is the predatory act of manoeuvring another individual into a position that makes them more isolated, dependent, likely to trust, and more vulnerable to abusive behaviour.
Guardian	refers to the person(s) who has the legal authority to care for the personal and property interests of another person.
Institutional abuse	means abuse or poor care within an institution or specific care setting. Possible causes of institutional abuse include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a “closed” culture within an organisation where transparency is discouraged. • lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service. • failure to properly check the backgrounds and interview staff. • inadequate training. • lack of safeguarding policies and procedures. • lack of support of staff by management. • poor supervision; and • poor standards of care.
Lay/lay person	means members of the Catholic Church and Church personnel other than bishops, priests, deacons and religious.
Leaders	means personnel who are responsible for important governance decisions within a Church entity and/or who lead and coordinate Church improvement initiatives.
Mentor	means an experienced and trusted advisor or a person who gives a younger or less experienced person help and advice over a period.
Ministerial PJP	means a legal entity which is constituted a public juridic person in canon law and carries on its mission in the name of the Church, in accordance with its statutes approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority.
Ministry	means any activity within, or conducted by, an entity, that is authorised by formal appointment and designed to carry out the apostolic and charitable works of the Catholic Church.
NDIS Worker Screening Check	<p>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.</p> <p>For further information see https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/ndis-worker-screening-check</p>
Neglect (adult)	is the failure of a carer to provide the necessities of life to a person for whom they are caring.
Neglect (child)	refers to a failure by a caregiver to provide the basic requirements for meeting the physical and emotional developmental needs of a child. Physically neglectful behaviours include a failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene or medical attention.
Offender	means a person who has admitted abuse or whose responsibility for abuse has been determined by a court of law (criminal or civil), statutory or Church procedure.
Organisation	means a ministry and/or service operating under the governance of a recognised authority (such as a legal entity) and/or a Church Authority.
Pastoral care	means when one person has responsibility for the wellbeing of another or for a faith community. It includes the provision of spiritual advice and support, education, counselling, medical care, and assistance in times of need. All work involving the supervision or education of children and young people is a work of pastoral care.
Personnel (Church personnel)	means a cleric, religious or other person who is employed by the entity or engaged on a contract, subcontract, voluntary or unpaid basis.
Physical abuse	is a non-accidental physically aggressive act which results in physical pain or injury, and which may include physical coercion and physical restraint. Physical abuse may be intentional or may be the inadvertent result of physical punishment.
Professional/pastoral supervision	means a professional activity in which personnel are engaged in reflection and learning, under the guidance of a supervisor. Supervision assists personnel in

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

Safeguarding Co-ordinator	means an individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
Safeguarding Implementation Plan	means a documented plan which articulates actions to be taken across the entity to ensure safeguarding practices are in place. It includes actions, strategies, responsibilities, delegations, and accountabilities, and tracks review and progress. It is overseen by the Safeguarding Committee.
Safeguarding policies and procedures	means any policies or procedures of the entity that address elements of safeguarding children and adults. For example, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment. • risk management. • complaint handling; and • acceptable use of online applications.
Seminarian	a student in a theological formation and education centre preparing for ordination as a priest.
Seminary	means a centre for the formation and education of students preparing for ordination.
Sexual abuse (adult)	Sexual abuse is a form of sexual assault. Sexual abuse includes rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment, and sexual interference. Sexual activity with an adult who is incapacitated by a mental or physical condition (such as dementia) that impairs his or her ability to grant informed consent, is defined as sexual assault/abuse. Sexual assault/abuse includes where through force, threats or abuse of authority, an individual commits a canonical offence or forces someone to perform or submit to sexual acts. Sexual assault is a crime.
Sexual abuse (child)	refers to exposing a child to any form of sexual activity. This may or may not involve physical contact. This may take the form of taking sexually explicit photographs or videos of children, forcing children to watch or take part in sexual acts and forcing or coercing children to have sex or engage in sexual acts with other children or adults.
Spiritual abuse	means abuse of a person that invokes a person's religious beliefs and faith to perpetrate harm. Spiritual abuse can occur as a secondary experience of abuse when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of spiritual authority and trust within the Church a
Substantiated complaint	means under the civil standard of proof an allegation of abuse for which the investigator finds that sufficient evidence exists to believe that the alleged conduct more likely than not occurred.
Third parties	means any individual, group or legal entity outside the Church entity who contract services and facilities to or from the Church entity.
Transient Risk	means short-term risk, experienced by people at different stages in their life: e.g. when someone is vulnerable due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grief • bereavement • relationship breakdown • homelessness • unemployment • financial hardship
Trauma-informed and victim-centred support	is a strengths-based framework which is founded on five core principles – safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Trauma-informed services do no harm: they do not re-traumatise or blame victims for their efforts to manage their traumatic reactions, and they embrace a message of hope and optimism that recovery is possible. In trauma-informed services, trauma

	survivors are seen as unique individuals who have managed their responses to the experiences as best that they could.
Validation	means an assessment by ACSL of any self-assessment, review or audit, undertaken to achieve ACSL Certification status.
Working With Children Check	means generic term used in the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards to denote the statutory screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. There is not yet a single national framework setting out requirements for 'working with children' checks. Each State/Territory in Australia has its own system. They are one part of a Church entity's recruitment, selection, and screening practices.
Working with Vulnerable People Check	means the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 in the Australian Capital Territory which requires those working with children (and other vulnerable groups) to complete a Working with Vulnerable People Check and be registered before they can commence employment. Tasmania has a 'Working with Vulnerable People Check' which requires all employees and volunteers aged 16 and over working in childcare services or other child-related services to apply for a WWVP check. To date, only the ACT and Tasmania have this requirement.