Archdiocese of Hobart

Safeguarding Audit Report
October 2025

National Catholic
Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:

ACSL
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING LTD

A safe Church for everyone

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

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

Table of Contents

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 Hobart (ACSL entity identifier D004) 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 Hobart and its representatives at the time of the assessment and where applicable any further subsequent information the Diocese has supplied through the reporting process.

TO THE MEMBERS OF ARCHDIOCESE OF HOBART

Opinion

ACSL has undertaken a safeguarding audit of a sample of parish and Archdiocesan leadership and Safe Communities office activities of Archdiocese of Hobart. 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 Hobart 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 Hobart offers a true and fair view of the Archdiocese's safeguarding policies, procedures and processes as at 3 October 2025 and of its performance against the NCSS for the period ended on that date.

ACSL is independent of the Archdiocese of Hobart 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.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Context

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2 Background

The Archdiocese of Hobart covers Tasmania, Australia with 27 parishes and 8 agencies providing religious and community services. Established as a Diocese in 1842, St Mary's Cathedral is the seat of Archbishop Anthony Ireland, installed on the 12th of August, 2025. The 2021 Australian Census reported over 70,000 people identifying as Roman Catholic within Tasmania (so within the Archdiocese of Hobart).

The Archdiocese of Hobart established Safe Communities in 2019, an initiative designed to protect children and adults at risk, with a focus on creating and maintaining a safe community for all, leading to the name "Safe Communities". The Safe Communities office creates and maintains safeguarding policies, and ensures they are readily available to organisations and individuals and the broader Tasmanian community. The Safe Communities Office is staffed by paid personnel at the Archdiocese of Hobart and the Vicar General is very involved in all Office initiatives.

1.3 Audit classification

The Archdiocese of Hobart 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 Hobart compliance with the NCSS indicators is detailed in Section 2 of this report. Our recommendations for improvement, including the Archdiocese of Hobart 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 operating effectively. Therefore, this report provides a point-in-time assessment of the safeguarding practices implemented by the Archdiocese of Hobart and the extent to which they meet the requirements of the NCSS.

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

ACSL utilises an efficient risk assessment mechanism that permits its auditors to focus 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 Hobart was assessed against Edition 2 of the NCSS, covering both children and adults at risk. In September 2025, ACSL completed a desktop review of the Archdiocese of Hobart NCSS Self-Assessment, which the Archdiocese of Hobart completed to present evidence of their congruency with the NCSS. Fieldwork was conducted from Monday September 29 until Thursday October 2, 2025. Six parishes were chosen as site visits by ACSL. The Auditors also interviewed senior personnel and leadership teams in the Archdiocese including CatholicCare Tasmania, Catholic Education Tasmania, Loreto Community Housing, St Joseph Affordable Homes and Blueline Laundry. This report was completed in October 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.
- A review of key safeguarding documents, policies, and procedures.
- Assessment of the design and testing of the operation of safeguarding controls implemented by the Diocese.
- Discussions with leaders and safeguarding leaders from the following agencies:
    - CatholicCare Tasmania
    - Catholic Education Tasmania
    - Loreto Community Housing
    - St Joseph Affordable Homes
    - Blueline Laundry
- Site visits to:
    - Parishes: Bellerive, Cathedral, Claremont, Kings Meadow, Meander Valley and West Tamar.
    - Blueline Laundry.
- Interviews with over 35 personnel – inclusive of clergy, people in paid roles, safeguarding volunteers and parishioners.

Whilst discussions were held with the relevant leaders and safeguarding personnel, the audit scope excluded the Catholic agencies of the Archdiocese.

1.6 Disclaimer

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

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

Signed:

Dr Ursula Stephens
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd

Dr David Treanor
Director, Safeguarding and Compliance
Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd

2. Overarching findings

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

Our assessment indicates that the Archdiocese of Hobart has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 96 (97%) of the relevant indicators to their operations. Assessment for each maturity scale is as follows:

- 78 indicators are developed and embedded
- 18 indicators are substantially progressed.
- 3 indicators are in the initial stages of implementation.

Of the 104 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church Authorities, 5 of these are not relevant to the Archdiocese of Hobart operations.

ACSL assessment of the implementation of NCSS indicators by a Church Authority has been determined using a four-point maturity scale[1].

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**.

Implementation of NCSS

■ Fully or substantially implemented   ■ Not yet implemented

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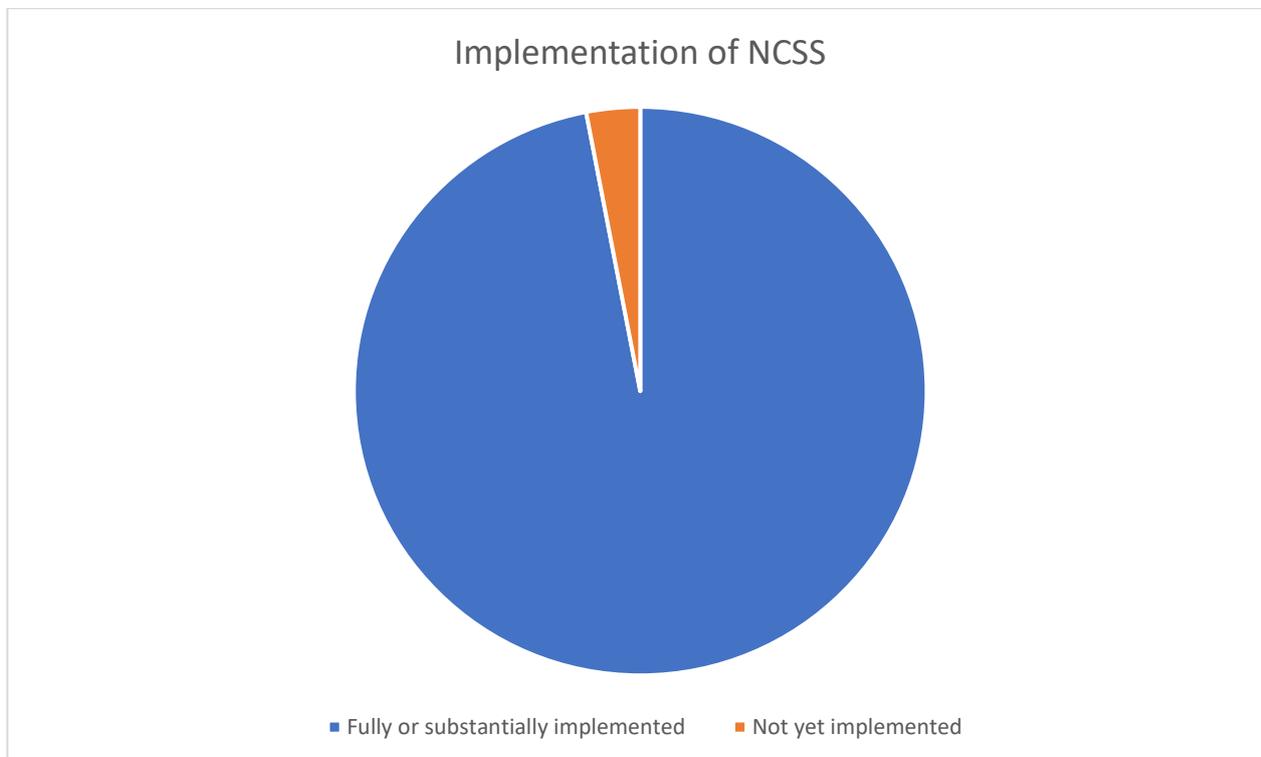
[1] Refer Appendix A for definitions of the maturity scale used for the Compliance Assessment.

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, the Vicar General, the Safe Communities office and key leaders within the Archdiocese. The new Archbishop is continuing and strengthening safeguarding practices in 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. This Code and the Safeguarding Commitment is on display in all sites visited. The Archdiocesan Safeguarding Commitment displayed during fieldwork was the old version, and in a positive move the new version was launched on 14 October which includes our recommendations to use the term "zero tolerance to abuse". This new Commitment statement is to be displayed in the Archdiocese of Hobart reception area and parish foyers.

The local priests in each parish include their name and signature on the Safeguarding Commitment Statement to highlight the local commitment to safeguarding. We recommended a minor improvement would be to include information about who to contact regarding concerns or complaints.

The inclusion and dedicated involvement of the Vicar General in Safe Communities strongly models the value of safeguarding within the Archdiocesan clergy and is to be highly commended. Personnel interviewed also commented on the significance of his involvement in supporting the implementation of safeguarding practices.

Parish Safeguarding personnel also reported strong support from the Safe Communities office to help meet requirements with practical resources, procedures and policies. The Safe Communities office has adopted a strengths-based approach including governance and risk management processes, the appointment of senior safeguarding personnel, the Vicar General, developing dedicated safeguarding resources, the parish safeguarding audit program and a minimum of annual parish safeguarding visits in place to provide safeguarding oversight by the Safe Communities team.

New parish risk assessment documentation has been recently rolled-out, and we encourage this to continue with minor modifications to forms and continued training based on feedback from the parishes. The Safe Communities team also has plans to collect and review the completed parish risk assessments and use these to create an overarching safeguarding risk management plan and register for the Archdiocese.

Throughout the Archdiocese, there is recognition that safeguarding is a journey and a positive culture of continuous improvement with many looking for ideas and recommendations, including minor modifications, throughout the audit.

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

The Archdiocese of Hobart aims to ensure families, carers and communities are actively engaged with its safeguarding approach. Fieldwork indicates that all parishes actively remind parents, carers and/or guardians that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. This engagement takes the form of reminders and posters throughout parishes and a QR code for feedback.

This QR code is a recent strategy adopted by the Archdiocese for feedback related to safeguarding matters; it is advertised in every parish and newsletters, encouraging children, adults at risk and families to contribute their voice to safeguarding initiatives.

The documentation provided by the Archdiocese of Hobart for their 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. Posters are also provided in child friendly language on the Safe Communities website, allowing all parishes to print and display. Posters providing information about adults at risk have recently been designed and distributed within parishes, and it is recommended that additional resources are created to address needs.

Information about external abuse prevention programs is displayed on most posters and included on the back of the Safe Communities office business cards which are placed within each parish.

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

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 safeguarding. 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 of workers, volunteers and clergy which enhances risk mitigation. The professional supervision of clergy is currently moving towards a one-on-one model to enhance the quality of pastoral and spiritual ministry of clergy. There is room for improvement in the annual reviews of volunteers to include focus on their safeguarding skills.

The current safeguarding training program addresses the nature and indicators of abuse, and action to be taken. The current training has been rolled out as in person training across all parishes and is widely applauded. The training has been delivered by Safe Communities staff which has contributed to the positive relationship between parishes and Safe Communities office leading to stronger safeguarding culture. There are plans to increase the breadth of training to ensure it covers topics within the NCSS indicators with roll-out occurring next year.

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

ACSL does not investigate any individual complaint during the audit process, the focus is on the system for managing complaints. The Archdiocesan processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood and accessible in parishes. Parish safeguarding officers 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. All personnel commend Safe Communities office on their responsiveness when seeking support and clarity.

For Standard 8, the audit focused on strategies implement to minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur in both physical and online environments. Within parishes, risk management strategies have been adopted to minimise the risk of harm. However, during site visits it was noted that there are critical physical environment areas of importance for the Archdiocese to consider in managing shared presbytery/office spaces.

It is recommended for priest's wellbeing, privacy and personal safeguarding, that where possible parish offices are not located within the presbytery. Where this currently is the situation, there should be a clear delineation and separate access to the priest's residence. This separation should be implemented as soon as possible.

In churches where the design of confessionals is not conducive to best safeguarding practice, where these cannot be modified (e.g. separate entries, line of sight, glass doors), it is recommended that parishes ensure additional risk control measures are in place, particularly for children and adults at risk.

The Archdiocese has invested in information technology and 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. This is a continual source of reminders between Safe Communities office and the parishes.

There is a strong understanding of how to manage the risks associated with third parties or contractors and the use of facilities by others. Safe Communities provides a template agreement which has been adopted throughout the parishes. During the site visits, ACSL made minor recommendations to improve this process.

Standard 10 assesses how the Archdiocese of Hobart's safeguarding policies and procedures are well documented, managed and implemented.

It was noted that, in this Archdiocese, the positive and encouraging relationships between Safe Communities office, the Vicar General and the parishes are paramount to both modelling and building the strong safeguarding culture. Through personal meetings of Safe Communities personnel and parishes, with encouragement and listening to parishes, safeguarding is promoted, and the policies and procedures are understood at a parish level and feedback provided. This feedback becomes part of the cycle for continuous improvement with regular reviews and modifications. The continual refrain that safeguarding is a journey throughout the Archdiocese offices and parishes was evidenced at every site visit.

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	9	6	1	
2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate	6		3	3		
3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6		6			
4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected	4		3	1		
5: Robust human resource management	22	3	16	2	1	
6: Effective complaints management	19		19			
7: Ongoing training & education	11		8	2	1	
8: Safe physical and online environments	7		4	3		
9: Continuous improvement	6	1	4	1		
10: Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults	6		6			
TOTAL	104	5	78	18	3	0
	99		97 %		3 %	

3. Summary of recommendations

- There are no Priority 1 (high rated) audit recommendations for the Archdiocese of Hobart.
- There are 5 Priority 2 (medium rated) recommendations.
- There is 2 Priority 3 (low rated) recommendation.

No.	Indicator(s)	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	1.2.1	ACSL recommends that the local Safeguarding Commitment Statements that are signed by local parish priest explicitly include complaint contact details.
	1.2.2	ACSL recommends that the Archbishop participates in, and is informed of the work of, the safeguarding committee.
	1.4.2	ACSL recommends that the Safe Communities Office create and distribute accessible versions of the Code of Conduct including a one page summary, an easy read version and versions in relevant community languages.
	1.4.4	ACSL recommends that the Safe Communities Office modify the code of conduct to outline the importance of recognising the impact of power imbalances as a safeguarding risk.
	1.5.1 to 1.5.3	ACSL recommends that the Safe Communities Office continue with the risk assessment roll out across parishes; continue with Safe Communities Office plans to review and improve risk assessments.
	9.1.1	ACSL recommends that the Safe Communities Office use the risk assessments collected from parishes, create an Archdiocesan wide safeguarding risk management plan, including a risk register, to support the Safeguarding Implementation Plan (currently referred to as the Safe Communities Business Unit plan).
Recommendation 2	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.3.1	ACSL recommends that the Safe Communities Office liaise with other Archdiocese ministries to develop additional strategies and resources to engage children and adults at risk and seek their view on safety decisions that affect them.
Recommendation 3	4.2.1	In the culturally diverse Archdiocese, ACSL recommends that additional resources are provided for adults at risk to ensure information about complaints processes and supports is available in accessible formats.
Recommendation 4	5.1.3	ACSL recommends that Safe Communities Office create templates to document the existing informal role information into duty statements for each of the common volunteer roles (eg reader, sacramental co-ordinator etc) and provides a risk assessment for contact with children and adults at risk within such.
	5.3.2	ACSL recommends that the Archdiocese leadership attend the ACSL Leaders and Leadership Team program in 2026.
	5.4.1	ACSL recommends that additional processes are put in place to ensure volunteers and parish workers receive appropriate annual performance reviews which include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities
Recommendation 5	7.4.2, 7.5.1, 7.5.2	ASCL recommends that the current plan for future Safe Communities 2025/2026 training address the gaps in these criteria, that all training is delivered as planned, reviewed and modified based on participant feedback.

No.	Indicator(s)	Recommendation
Recommendation 6	8.1.1. 8.1.3	Given the recent introduction of new parish risk assessment tools, ACSL recommends providing time to embed, review and refine the processes.
		Where confessionals are unable to be further modified, ensure additional risk control measures are in place, particularly for children and adults at risk.
		Attention needs to be paid ensuring there is a private-public division in presbytery areas.
		ACSL recommends the minor improvement of a number of risk related registers and processes, including a Church register, a home visit register and additional steps within the third-party agreement process.
	8.2.1	ACSL recommends that processes for this indicator require greater vigilance and additional efforts to embed across parishes.
	8.4.1	ACSL notes that parishes use a hire agreement form and relevant processes – suggestions were made to refine and enhance these processes

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

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

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

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[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:

1.1.2 The Archdiocese plans to update the Safeguarding Commitment statement to include the terms "zero tolerance to abuse" and be a statement from the new Archbishop by end of October. A good initiative noted was that the local Safeguarding Commitment Statements are signed by the local parish priest; ACSL recommends these also explicitly refer to safeguarding complaint contact details. Refer to Recommendation #1.

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

Observations:

1.2.2 The current Safeguarding Committee reports to the Archbishop. Refer to Recommendation #1.

Criterion 1.3 - Governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy across the entity's activities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.3.1	Governance arrangements are transparent and include safeguarding roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability for the safeguarding of	✓			

	children and adults is clear.				
1.3.2	Where the Church Authority's governance includes countries other than Australia, the NCSS are applied wherever possible, taking into account cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.	Not relevant to current activities			

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

1.4.2 Code of Conduct - accessible language versions are not currently available in writing but instead are explained and discussed.

1.4.4 Code of Conduct is comprehensive but does not outline the importance of power imbalances. Refer Recommendation #1.

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

Observations:

1.5.1-1.5.3 Risk Assessments are recently implemented across parishes and consider the safeguarding needs of children and adults at risk. There are plans to collect and review the individual risk management assessments to

create a whole of entity risk management plan and review the current process at an entity level. Refer to Recommendation #1.					

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

Observations:

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

Standard 2	Children and adults are safe, informed and participate

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

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

Observations:

2.1.1 – 2.1.2 Posters are provided to supply information for children and adults at risk and their families and carers, there are limited strategies in place to engage and seek their views. Fieldwork indicates that support material, resources and engagement with adults at risk requires additional attention. Refer to Recommendation #2.

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

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

2.3.1 The Archdiocese has created and supplied relevant posters for parishes, which are currently being rolled-out. Fieldwork indicates that support material, resources and engagement with adults at risk requires additional attention. Refer to Recommendation #2.

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

Observations:

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

Standard 3	Partnering with families, carers and communities

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

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

Observations

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

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

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

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

Standard 4	Equity is promoted and diversity is respected

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Criterion 4.1 - The diverse circumstances and backgrounds of children and adults at risk are acknowledged and accommodated by providing appropriate support.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.1.1	The Safeguarding Policy and procedures demonstrate an understanding, and awareness of the diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse.	✓			
4.1.2	The Complaints Handling Policy and practices address barriers that may prevent a disclosure of abuse being made and that hinders personnel from recognising and responding appropriately.	✓			

Observations

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

Criterion 4.2 – Children and adults have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that promote inclusion, are culturally safe, and accessible.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.2.1	Information about company processes and supports are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.		✓		

Observations:

4.2.1 Information is provided in a limited range of easy-to-understand formats for children. Additional resources also

need to be created in accessible and culturally safe ways for adults at risk to access. Refer to Recommendation #3.

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:

5.1.3 Employee positions are assessed and documented; there is a gap in the documented assessment of volunteer roles within parishes. Refer to Recommendation #4.

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

Observations:

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

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

Observations:

5.3.2 There is a new Archbishop in the Archdiocese and fieldwork investigations indicate that there is a commitment to completing the training, but additional time is required for completion. Refer recommendation #4

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

Observations:

5.4.1 All performance reviews need to include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities and occur annually. Fieldwork investigations indicate ongoing supervision and people management policies are in place and actively encouraged, but the implementation needs additional time and resources. 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.	✓			
5.5.2	Seminary and initial formation programs have robust screening processes for candidates for religious ministry, including external psychological and psychosexual assessments.	✓			
5.5.3	Ongoing integrated formation for clergy and religious addresses both the canonical and civil safeguarding requirements. For priests, this would include supporting their fidelity to the Church's teaching regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the inviolability of the Sacramental Seal.	✓			
5.5.4	All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and	✓			

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
	religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.				
5.5.5	All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals	✓			
5.5.6	All newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least five years post ordination or final profession.	✓			

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

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
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.

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

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

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
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			
Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities and personnel.					
Criterion 6.1 - The entity's Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.1.1	Policies and procedures address mandatory reporting obligations.	✓			
6.1.2	There are clear procedures that provide step-by-step responses and action to be taken for different types of complaints, including: • breaches of Code of Conduct. • disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child. • an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and • an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult.	✓			
6.1.3	The Complaint Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflict of interests are managed.	✓			
6.1.4	The Complaint Handling Policy acknowledges that power imbalances exist between the complainant and respondent and has strategies in place to address this.	✓			
6.1.5	The Complaint Handling Policy spells out who has responsibilities in relation to handling complaints and when procedures are enacted.	✓			
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	✓			

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
	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 ay statutory or contractual processes.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.4.1	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that:	✓			

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
• 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:

Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.

Standard 7	**Ongoing education and training**

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

Criterion 7.1 - Personnel are trained and supported to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.1.1	Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.	✓			
7.1.2	The entity's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must as a minimum cover: • Code of Conduct. • safeguarding risk management.	✓			

		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
	• 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: • understand the nature and impact of child abuse. • understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse. • identify risk factors, such as grooming behaviours; and • understand, identify, and respond to abusive behaviours by a child towards another child.	✓			

Observations:

Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted

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

Observations:

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

Observations:
7.4.2 Upcoming 2025/2026 training plans to address gaps in these areas. Refer to 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	Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create, culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.			✓	
7.5.2	Training is provided to relevant personnel to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds and how to create safe environments for people from these groups.		✓		

Observations:
7.5.1-7.5.2 Upcoming 2025/2026 training plans to address gaps in these areas .Refer to Recommendation #5.

Standard 8	Safe physical and online environments

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

Criterion 8.1 – The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy addresses both physical and online risks, without compromising the individual's right to privacy or wellbeing.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.1.1	Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services including risks arising from:		✓		

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

Observations:

8.1.1 & 8.1.3 Parish Risk assessments are being rolled out and need further time to embed, review and refine the processes. In addition, attention needs to be paid to refining some of the confessionals and presbytery private-public divisions. Refer recommendation #6.

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

Observations:

8.2.1 This indicator requires greater vigilance and additional efforts to embed across parishes. Refer to Recommendation #6.

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

Observations:

Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.

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

Observations:

8.4.1 Parishes use a hire agreement form and relevant processes – suggestions were made to refine and enhance these processes. 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 An entity risk management plan is a core component of a Safeguarding Implementation Plan. Refer to Recommendation #1.

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

Observations

Requirements of the 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 are reported to stakeholders.	✓			
9.3.2	The findings of audits or reviews undertaken or validated by ACSL are made public.	Not applicable – first audit			

Observations:
Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted

Standard 10	Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults
Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.	

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

Observations:
Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations 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:
Refer recommendation #1

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

Observations:
Requirements of the 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:
Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.

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

Observations:

Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.

5. Detailed findings and Recommendations

Recommendation #1		
Indicator No.	**Indicator**	
1.1.2	The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, widely displayed, and made publicly available.	
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.	
1.4.2	The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, families, and carers.	
1.4.4	The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.	
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.	**Priority 2**
9.1.1	The Safeguarding Implementation Plan outlines how safeguarding practices are monitored and reviewed, and how this information is reported.	
Details of finding	1.1.2 The Archdiocese plans to update the Safeguarding Commitment statement to include the terms "zero tolerance to abuse" and be a statement from the new Archbishop by end of October. A good initiative noted was that the local Safeguarding Commitment Statements are signed by the local parish priest; ACSL recommends these also explicitly refer to safeguarding complaint contact details. 1.2.2 The current Safeguarding Committee does not include the Archbishop. 1.4.2 The Code of Conduct is a long and complex document, accessible language versions are not currently available but instead are explained and discussed 1.4.4 Code of Conduct is comprehensive but does not outline the importance of power imbalances. 1.5.1-1.5.3 Risk Assessments are recently implemented across parishes and consider the safeguarding needs of children and adults at risk. There are plans to collect and review the individual risk management assessments to create a whole of entity risk management plan and review the current process at an entity level. 9.1.1 An entity risk management plan (including an Archdiocesan risk register) is a core component of a Safeguarding Implementation Plan	

Recommendation	1.1.2 ACSL recommends that local Safeguarding Commitment Statements that are signed by local parish priest explicitly include complaint contact details.
	1.2.2 ACSL recommends that the Archbishop participates in, and is informed of the work of, the safeguarding committee.
	1.4.2 ACSL recommends that the Safe Communities Office create and distribute accessible versions of the Code of Conduct including a one page summary, an easy read version and versions in relevant community languages.
	1.4.4 ACSL recommends that the Safe Communities Office modify the code of conduct to outline the importance of recognising the impact of power imbalances as a safeguarding risk.
	1.5.1 to 1.5.3 ACSL recommends that the Safe Communities Office continue with the risk assessment roll out across parishes; continue with Safe Communities Office plans to review and improve risk assessments.
	9.1.1 ACSL recommends that the Safe Communities Office use the risk assessments collected from parishes, create an Archdiocesan wide safeguarding risk management plan, including a risk register, to support the Safeguarding Implementation Plan (currently referred to as the Safe Communities Business Unit plan).

Agreed Actions		
	Local Safeguarding Commitment Statements that are signed by local parish priest will explicitly include complaint contact details.	
	The Archbishop will participate in, and be informed of the work of, the safeguarding committee.	
	The Safe Communities Office will create and distribute accessible versions of the Code of Conduct including a one page summary, an easy read version and versions in relevant community languages.	
	The Safe Communities Office will modify the code of conduct to outline the importance of recognising the impact of power imbalances as a safeguarding risk.	
	The Safe Communities Office will continue with the risk assessment roll out across parishes; continue with Safe Communities Office plans to review and improve risk assessments.	
	The Safe Communities Office will use the risk assessments collected from parishes, to create an Archdiocesan wide safeguarding risk management plan, including a risk register, to support the Safeguarding Implementation Plan (currently referred to as the Safe Communities Business Unit plan).	
Responsibility	Safe Communities Office	
Due date	1 July 2026	

Recommendation #2		
Indicator No.	**Indicator**	
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.	**Priority 2**
2.1.2	Adults at risk (or carers where appropriate) are engaged to provide their views about decisions which affect them, what makes them feel safe and to contribute to safeguarding approaches.	
2.3.1	Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.	
Details of finding	2.1.1 – 2.1.2 Posters are provided to supply information for children and adults at risk and their families and carers, there are limited strategies in place to engage and seek their views. Fieldwork indicates that support material, resources and engagement with adults at risk requires additional attention. 2.3.1 The Archdiocese has created and supplied relevant posters for parishes, which are currently being rolled-out. Fieldwork indicates that support material, resources and engagement with adults at risk requires additional attention.	
Recommendation	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.3.1 ACSL recommends that the Safe Communities Office liaise with other Archdiocese ministries to develop additional strategies and resources to engage children and adults at risk and seek their view on safety decisions that affect them.	
Agreed Action	The Safe Communities Office will liaise with other ministries to develop additional strategies and resources to engage children and adults at risk and seek their view on safety decisions that affect them.	
Responsibility	Safe Communities Office	
Due date	1 July 2026	

Recommendation #3		Priority 3
Indicator No.	**Indicator**	
4.2.1	Information about company processes and supports are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.	
Details of finding	4.2.1 Information is provided in a limited range of easy-to-understand formats for children. Additional resources also need to be created in accessible and culturally safe ways for adults at risk to access.	
Recommendation	4.2.1 In the culturally diverse Archdiocese, ACSL recommends that additional resources are provided for adults at risk to ensure information about complaints processes and supports is available in accessible formats.	
Agreed Action	Additional resources will be provided for adults at risk to ensure information about complaints processes and supports is available in accessible formats.	
Responsibility	Safe Communities Office	
Due date	1 November 2026	

Recommendation #4		Priority 2
Indicator No.	**Indicator**	
5.1.3	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children/adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.	
5.3.2	All Church Authorities and their leadership team undertake the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders.	
5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.	
Details of finding	5.1.3 Employee positions are assessed and documented; there is a gap in the documented assessment of volunteer roles within parishes. 5.3.2 There is a new Archbishop in the Archdiocese and fieldwork investigations indicate that there is a commitment to completing the training, but additional time is required for completion. 5.4.1 All performance reviews need to include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities and occur annually. Fieldwork investigations indicate ongoing supervision and people management policies are in place and actively encouraged, but the implementation needs additional time and resources.	

Recommendation	5.1.3 ACSL recommends that Safe Communities Office create templates to document the existing informal role information into duty statements for each of the common volunteer roles (eg reader, sacramental co-ordinator etc) and provides a risk assessment for contact with children and adults at risk within such 5.3.2 ACSL recommends that the Archdiocese continue with plans for leadership to attend the ACSL Leaders and Leadership Team program in 2026. 5.4.1 ACSL recommends that additional processes are put in place to ensure volunteers and parish workers receive annual performance reviews which include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.
Agreed Action	The Safe Communities Office will create templates to document the existing informal role information into duty statements for each of the common volunteer roles (eg reader, sacramental co-ordinator etc) and provides a risk assessment for contact with children and adults at risk within such The Archdiocese will continue with plans for leadership to attend the ACSL Leaders and Leadership Team program in 2026. Additional processes will be put in place to ensure volunteers and parish workers receive annual performance reviews which include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities
Responsibility	Safe Communities Office
Due date	1 July 2026

Recommendation #5		
Indicator No.	**Indicator**	**Priority 3**
7.4.2	Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.	
7.5.1	Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create, culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	
7.5.2	Training is provided to relevant personnel to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds and how to create safe environments for people from these groups.	
Details of finding	7.4.2; 7.5.1-7.5.2 ACSL notes that Safe Communities Office has provided volunteer training to more than 1300 volunteers in the previous 12 months. Upcoming 2025/2026 training plans to address gaps in these areas	
Recommendation	7.4.2, 7.5.1, 7.5.2 ASCL recommends that the current plan for future Safe Communities 2025/2026 training address the gaps in these criteria, that all training is delivered as planned, reviewed and modified based on participant feedback.	
Agreed Action	The current plan for future Safe Communities 2025/2026 training address the gaps in these criteria, that all training is delivered as planned, reviewed and modified based on participant feedback.	
Responsibility	Safe Communities Office	
Due date	1 November 2026	

Recommendation #6		
Indicator No.	**Indicator**	
8.1.1	Both physical and online risks are addressed withing the provision of ministry and/or services, including risks arising from: • one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child; • ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction, and mentoring; • potential physical contact between the penitent and the Confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated; • one-to-one 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. Where possible, these interactions are to be conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.	**Priority 2**
8.1.3	Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults.	
8.2.1	Personnel access and use online environments in line with the entity's Code of Conduct, Privacy Act and relevant communication protocols.	
8.3.1	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 are in place.	
Details of finding	8.1.1 & 8.1.3 Parish Risk assessments are being rolled out and need further time to embed, review and refine the processes In addition, attention needs to be paid to refining some of the confessionals and presbytery private-public divisions. 8.2.1 This indicator requires greater vigilance and additional efforts to embed across parishes. 8.4.1 Parishes use a hire agreement form and relevant processes – suggestions were made to refine and enhance these processes	

Recommendation	8.1.1. 8.1.3 Given the recent introduction of new parish risk assessment tools, ACSL recommends providing time to embed, review and refine the processes. Where confessionals are unable to be further modified, ensure additional risk control measures are in place, particularly for children and adults at risk. Attention needs to be paid ensuring there is a private-public division in presbytery areas. ACSL recommends the minor improvement of a number of risk related registers and processes, including a Church register, a home visit register and additional steps within the third-party agreement process. 8.2.1 ACSL recommends that processes for this indicator require greater vigilance and additional efforts to embed across parishes. 8.4.1 ACSL notes that parishes use a hire agreement form and relevant processes – suggestions were made to refine and enhance these processes.
Agreed Action	Time will be provided to embed, review and refine the parish risk assessment processes. Where confessionals are unable to be further modified, additional risk control measures will be put in place, particularly for children and adults at risk. Attention will be paid ensuring there is a private-public division in presbytery areas. A number of minor improvement to risk related registers and processes, including a Church register, a home visit register will be made. Processes for this indicator (8.2.1) will have greater vigilance and additional efforts to embed across parishes. Suggestions to refine and enhance the hire agreement processes will be adopted.
Responsibility	Safe Communities Office
Due date	1 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: • 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
Gaps or control weaknesses have been identified resulting in non-compliance with the indicator. Mitigation actions are required to be developed and initiated as soon as practicable but no later than 30 days from the issuance of this report, with expected resolution within 3 months.	Progress has been made with respect to implementation of the required indicator, however full compliance is yet to be achieved. Mitigation actions are required to be developed and initiated within 3 months or earlier from the issuance	Issues have been identified which represent minor procedural weaknesses or improvement opportunities with respect to the operation of the indicator. Expected resolution is within 12 months or earlier from the issuance of this report.

	of this report, with expected resolution within 6-9 months.	

Appendix C - Glossary

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

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

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

	- who are elderly. - with a disability. - who suffer from mental illness. - who have diminished capacity. - who have cognitive impairmen.t - who have suffered previous abuse. - who are experiencing transient risks. - who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance. - who are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background/ - who are of diverse sexuality/ - who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse.
Allegation	means a complaint, still to be verified, claiming, or asserting that someone has committed an act of abuse against a child or adult. The term is used interchangeably and in combination with "complaint".
Audit	means a mechanism to assess how a Church Authority, ministry or entity governed by a Church Authority, is implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference	means the assembly of Bishops of Australia exercising together certain pastoral offices for the Catholics of Australia.
Bishop	means a diocesan bishop or archbishop, the ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of the Eastern Churches
Canon law	means the revised code of canon law promulgated by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in 1983 and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches as promulgated in 1990 and any other universal or legislation promulgated by the competent ecclesiastical authority.
Canonical Offence	means canonical crimes[1] of sexual abuse committed by clerics and religious are: - forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts. - performing sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person. - the production, exhibition, possession, or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions. [1] The canonical crimes/delicts/offences committed by clerics or religious as stated in Art. 1 §1 a) of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi.* [2] Definition of vulnerable person as stated in Art. 1 §2 b) of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*: "means: any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence". This definition is captured by the term 'Adult at risk' within the NCSS.
Catholic Religious Australia	CRA is the conference of major superiors comprising leaders of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life within the Catholic Church in Australia.
Certification	means the act of giving official authority or approval and certification of the implementation of the NCSS and permission to use the ACSL Certification symbol.
Child/ren	means individuals under 18 years of age.
Child abuse	There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Definition sourced from the Australian Institute of Family Studies: https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect

	Child abuse refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission. Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes: • physical abuse • emotional/psychological abuse • neglect • sexual abuse • exposure to family violence
Church Authority	means: • a diocesan bishop or archbishop, an ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of an eparchy of an Eastern Church. • the competent authority, howsoever titled, exercising the ministry of governance for religious institutes in Australia in accordance with their Constitutions; or • for ministerial PJPS the competent authority in accordance with the statutes. • for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organization in accordance with its rules.
Church Protocols	means official procedures or system of rules which govern the affairs of the Catholic Church in Australia, for example, Vos Estis Lux Mundi and the National Response Protocol.
Civil Standard	the most common standard of proof relates to civil proceedings, which is the balance of probabilities (incorporating the principles from Briginshaw v Briginshaw) – which means it is more probable than not that what the person says happened is true (in criminal cases, the standard is proof beyond reasonable doubt).
Clergy	includes bishops, priests and deacons.
Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia	means any cleric or member of a religious institute who is specifically recruited or welcomed from overseas by a Church Authority or entity.
Cleric	a member of the clergy.
Clericalist/ism	means an attitude toward clergy/religious characterised by an excessive deference and an assumption of their moral superiority. Pope Francis has said that it occurs when "clerics feel they are superior, [and when] they are far from the people." It can be "fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons".
Cognitive impairment	means when a person has trouble remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions that affect their everyday life, because of their condition. Some causes of long-term or permanent cognitive impairment include dementia, stroke, or brain injury. For further information see: https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment
Complainant	means any person who makes a complaint that may include any allegation, suspicion, concern, or report of a breach of the entity's Code of Conduct. A complaint may also include disclosures made to an institution that may be about, or relate to, abuse in the entity's context.

Conflicts of interest	means situations (perceived or actual) where a conflict arises between a person's official duties and their private interests, which could influence the performance of those official duties. Such conflict generally involves opposing principles or incompatible wishes or needs and may occur when personnel function in multiple roles.
Consecrated Life/Institute of Consecrated Life	is an association of faithful in the Catholic Church erected by canon law whose members profess the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience by vows or other sacred bonds (as defined in the Code of Canon Law under canons 573–730). Apart from being a member of an institute, consecrated life may also be lived individually; the Catholic Church recognises, as forms of individual consecrated life that are not members of institutes, namely that of hermits and consecrated virgins.
Cultural safety	means an environment that is safe for people of all ethnicities and cultural identities: where there is no assault, challenge, or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge, and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.
Dicastery	means a department of the Roman Curia.
Dignity or Right to Risk	refers to enabling individuals the right (or dignity) to take reasonable risks. It recognises that restricting this right can stifle the individual's growth, self-esteem and the overall quality of life: 'Given that an individual's personal dignity is manifested, in part, by their ability to remain autonomous, and being autonomous engenders risk-taking. Inhibiting an individual's ability to take risks erodes their dignity. Dignity of risk is therefore the principle of allowing an individual the dignity afforded by risk-taking, subsequently enhancing their personal growth and quality of life.' (Joseph E Ibrahim and Marie-Claire Davis, 'Impediments to Applying the "Dignity of Risk" Principle in Residential Aged Care Services: "Dignity of Risk" in Residential Aged Care', Australasian Journal on Ageing 32, no. 3 (September 2013): 188–93)
Diminished capacity	means if an adult needs to make a decision and is unable to carry out any part of this process (as listed below), they have impaired decision-making capacity. There are three elements to making a decision: • understanding the nature and effect of the decision; • freely and voluntarily deciding; and • communicating the decision in some way.
Diocese	means a diocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelature of the Latin Church and an eparchy of an Eastern Church.
Disability (persons with)	means those who have physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (Article 2, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.)
Diversity	means a range of people who have various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests.
Diverse sexuality	refers to all the diversities of sex characteristics, sexual orientations, and gender identities, without the need to specify each of the identities, behaviours, or characteristics that form this plurality.
Elder abuse	means a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.

Emotional abuse (adults)	is a common form of abuse that occurs in close relationships. Emotional abuse is defined as abuse that occurs when a person is subjected to behaviours or actions aimed at preventing or controlling their behaviour, with the intent to cause them emotional harm or fear, through manipulation, isolation, or intimidation.
Emotional abuse (children)	Emotional abuse of children refers to a parent or caregiver's inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts towards a child and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurturing and emotional availability. Such acts of commission or omission are likely to damage a child's self-esteem or social competence.
Entity	means a diocese, religious institute, ministerial PJP (including their agencies) or association recognised as Catholic in accord with canon law.
Exploitation	is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person. It is taking advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain.
Exposure to family violence	is generally considered to be a form of psychologically abusive behaviour, where a child is present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse, or psychological maltreatment, or is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member's violent behaviour.
Financial abuse	involves the illegal or improper use or mismanagement of a person's money, property or resources. Stealing, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, forced changes to a will, inappropriate removal of a resident's decision-making powers and misuse of power of attorney are all forms of financial abuse or exploitation.
Formation/program	means a program preparing individuals for ordination or profession of vows and a life-long journey to the invitation of Christ to proclaim and live the Gospel message, within the life of the Church.
Good Standing	A person in good standing is regarded as having complied with all their safeguarding obligations, and is not subject to any form of allegation, disciplinary process, sanction suspension.
Grooming (child)	refers to a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging a child as a precursor to sexual abuse. It includes establishing a 'special' friendship/relationship with the child. Grooming can include the conditioning of parents and other adults to think that the relationship with the child is 'normal' and positive.
Grooming (adult)	is the predatory act of manoeuvring another individual into a position that makes them more isolated, dependent, likely to trust, and more vulnerable to abusive behaviour.
Guardian	refers to the person(s) who has the legal authority to care for the personal and property interests of another person.
Institutional abuse	means abuse or poor care within an institution or specific care setting. Possible causes of institutional abuse include: • a "closed" culture within an organisation where transparency is discouraged. • lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service. • failure to properly check the backgrounds and interview staff. • inadequate training. • lack of safeguarding policies and procedures. • lack of support of staff by management. • poor supervision; and • poor standards of care.
Lay/lay person	means members of the Catholic Church and Church personnel other than bishops, priests, deacons and religious.

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

	thinking, and related emotions. Reflective practice enables potential changes in approaches to similar future events to be identified, with the aim of improved performance.
Registration to Work with Vulnerable People	the Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tasmanian Legislation) requires people who work or volunteer with vulnerable people, including children to hold a registration.
Religious institute	means an entity within the Catholic Church whose members commit themselves through religious vows to lead a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. Societies of apostolic life resemble religious institutes in that their members also live a life in common. They do not take religious vows but live out the apostolic purpose of the group. In these Standards, the term 'religious institutes' is used to include religious institutes, societies of apostolic life and secular institutes.
Religious	means a member of an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life.
Respondent	means a person against whom a complaint is made.
Review	means an internal self-assessment of an entity's implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. A review can also be an assessment that forms part of the process of continuous improvement which occurs when following up recommendations made during an audit.
Risk-based audit and Review Framework	means a framework for assessing the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards that reflects a proportionate response based on the risk profile of the Church Authority.
Risk Profile	means an assessment against key safeguarding risk factors.
Safeguarding	refers to proactive measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals. These measures allow children, young people and adults to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. Within the life of the Church, safeguarding includes pastoral, liturgical and spiritual responses through engagement in the Sacraments and the life of the Church.
Safeguarding Committee	means a committee established to advise and support the Church Authority on all matters relating to safeguarding, including the development and implementation of a Safeguarding Implementation Plan and coordinating annual self-audits at a local level. Committee members need relevant and varied professional expertise in relation to safeguarding, child protection, organisational culture and structure, policy development, etc. and include lay women and men.
Safeguarding Culture	means embedding safeguarding into everything an organisation does. In promoting this culture, young people and adults at risk will understand they will be listened to, supported, and known action will be taken on their behalf.
Safeguarding Commitment Statement	means a Commitment Statement describing an entity's commitment to keep children and adults safe from harm. It informs the entity's safeguarding culture.
Safeguarding Co-ordinator	means an individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
Safeguarding Implementation Plan	means a documented plan which articulates actions to be taken across the entity to ensure safeguarding practices are in place. It includes actions, strategies, responsibilities, delegations, and accountabilities, and tracks review and progress. It is overseen by the Safeguarding Committee.
Safeguarding policies and procedures	means any policies or procedures of the entity that address elements of safeguarding children and adults. For example, but not limited to:

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

Working with Vulnerable People Check	means the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 in the Australian Capital Territory which requires those working with children (and other vulnerable groups) to complete a Working with Vulnerable People Check and be registered before they can commence employment.
	Tasmania has a 'Working with Vulnerable People Check' which requires all employees and volunteers aged 16 and over working in childcare services or other child-related services to apply for a WWVP check.
	To date, only the ACT and Tasmania have this requirement.