



Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Safeguarding Audit Report

March 2026

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:



A safe Church for everyone

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

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

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

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Foreword

Safeguarding certification by ACSL is an independent recognition that a religious entity and its ministries meet the requirements of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. Certification achievement is measured against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards set by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference 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.
- Increase 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 Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne 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 Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and its representatives at the time of the assessment and where applicable any further subsequent information the Diocese has supplied through the reporting process.

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

TO THE CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE

Opinion

ACSL has undertaken a safeguarding audit of a sample of parish and Archdiocesan leadership and the Safeguarding Unit office activities of Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. This audit comprises an analysis of the NCSS Self-Assessment, interviews with Archdiocesan personnel and follow up conversations. ACSL considers that the audit evidence obtained from Archdiocese of Melbourne is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for this opinion.

In ACSL's opinion, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Audit Report for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne offers a true and fair view of the Archdiocese's safeguarding policies, procedures and processes as of 18 October 2025 and of its performance against the NCSS for the period ended on that date.

At the request of the Archdiocese, ACSL invited three Auditors – Prolegis, Safeguarding Central and Workplace Resolutions Services, Independent Auditors, to work with ACSL in auditing the Archdiocese. These auditors provided additional external and independent oversight of the safeguarding compliance.


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

Disclaimer

The information contained in this report is based on evidence provided by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and its representatives at the time of the assessment and, where applicable, any subsequent information the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne has supplied through the reporting process. ACSL thank CAM for the cooperation and support during the audit process.

Certification issued by ACSL and/or its accredited auditors is based on sampling the Archdiocese ministries at a point in time. It therefore does not guarantee the ongoing safety or quality of the organisation, its future services or programs.

Signed:



Dr Ursula Stephens
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd



Dr David Treanor
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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Context

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) was established in 2020, to bring together the work of Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, 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 NCSS align directly with the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards. The Victorian Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People has advised the Archdiocese that under Victoria regulation, parishes are deemed to be governing bodies, subject to all requirements of the Victorian legislation and cannot delegate their safeguarding responsibilities to the Archdiocesan office. This fits with the Catholic social teaching principle of subsidiarity, and defines the role of the Safeguarding Unit as one of oversight and support, rather than full accountability.

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

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

1.2 Background

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne consists of over 200 parishes and faith communities, nearly 300 schools (some Catholic schools located within the Archdiocese are governed by Religious Congregations and MPJPS, and therefore outside the scope of this audit) and a wide range of organisations and agencies that assist in caring for each other and the wider Melbourne community. The Catholic community in Melbourne is a rich tapestry of people across all ages, cultures and backgrounds from the greater Melbourne area. Although coming from different walks of life, they are united by faith and their love for God and neighbour. The community strives to live according to the way of Jesus Christ in their homes, their workplaces and throughout the wider community.

The Archdiocesan is strengthened by their parish communities and the ministries that strive to live out the Gospel message.

1.3 Audit classification

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM) has been assessed by ACSL as a Church entity needing to undertake a comprehensive 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 CAM compliance with the NCSS indicators is detailed in Section 2 of this report. Our recommendations for improvement, including the CAM 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 help 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 Melbourne 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.

ASCL uses 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.

ASCL 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.” ASCL can therefore provide objective assurance that the Church Authority is complying with the risk management components of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS).

At the request of the Archdiocese, ASCL invited three Auditors from the NCSS Audit Register to work with ASCL in auditing CAM. Prolegis Lawyers is a specialist law firm that exclusively advises clients

across Australia and overseas in relation to the charity, not-for-profit and philanthropic sectors. Prolegis is recognised by Chambers and Partners as a 'Band 1' firm in charity law. Safeguarding Central provides advisory and training services to ensure organisations are doing all that it can to protect children from abuse and exploitation. Safeguarding Central has expertise in working with profit, not-for-profit and church-based organisations to strengthen their safeguarding systems, policies and practices. Workplace Resolutions Services specialise in helping organisations resolve disputes and move forward with clarity and peace of mind. Their team provides a comprehensive range of investigations consultancy and direct dispute resolution and a range of support services to clients. These auditors provided additional external and independent oversight of the safeguarding compliance. The different lenses which the auditors brought to audit has provided valuable insight into how the Archdiocese is implementing safeguarding practices across the widespread ministries.

1.5 In scope assessment

In this audit, the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM) was assessed against Edition 2 of the NCSS, which considers the safety and protection of both children and adults at risk. This is in keeping with canonical requirements and the role of the Catholic Church in the spiritual and pastoral life of communities. In September 2025, ACSL undertook a desktop review of CAM NCSS Self-Assessment, through which the Archdiocese presented evidence of their congruency with the NCSS. Site visits were conducted from Thursday October 2 until Friday October 14, 2025. Twenty-six (26) parishes were visited and assessed during the audit. The Auditors also interviewed personnel involved 12 ministries within the Archdiocese. The Auditors held meetings with the Archbishop, Vicar General and senior personnel to sight evidence and verify information provided in the self-assessment report. This report was completed in December 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:
 - Office of the Archbishop, Clergy, Life & Ministry; Executive Manager Governance; IT Department; Legal Counsel; Office of the Permanent Diaconate; Pathways Victoria; PROCLAIM -Office for Evangelisation; Property & Infrastructure Office, Safeguarding Unit; Vicar General Office and Vocations Team.
- Visits to:
 - Parishes: St Patrick's Cathedral; Blackburn North; Burwood; Camberwell East; Croydon; Lara (part of Corio Lara Catholic Parish) ; Craigieburn; Dandenong; Doncaster; Brighton (part of Emmaus Parish); Endeavour Hills; Fitzroy; Greensborough; Personal Parish of St John Henry Newman, Caulfield Nth; Hoppers Crossing; Keilor Downs (part of St Mary of the Assumption Parish, Keilor Downs and Kealba); Mill Park; Montmorency (part of the Risen Christ Parish Eltham and Montmorency); Mornington; Noble Park North; Norlane; Parkville; Rowville; Sunbury, and Werribee.
- Interviews with over 120 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 CatholicCare Victoria and Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS).

2. Overarching findings

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

Our assessment indicates that the Archdiocese of Melbourne has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 89 (91%) of the criteria and indicators relevant to their operations. Assessment for each maturity scale is as follows:

- 62 indicators are developed and embedded.
- 27 indicators are substantially progressed.
- 9 indicators are in the initial stages of implementation.

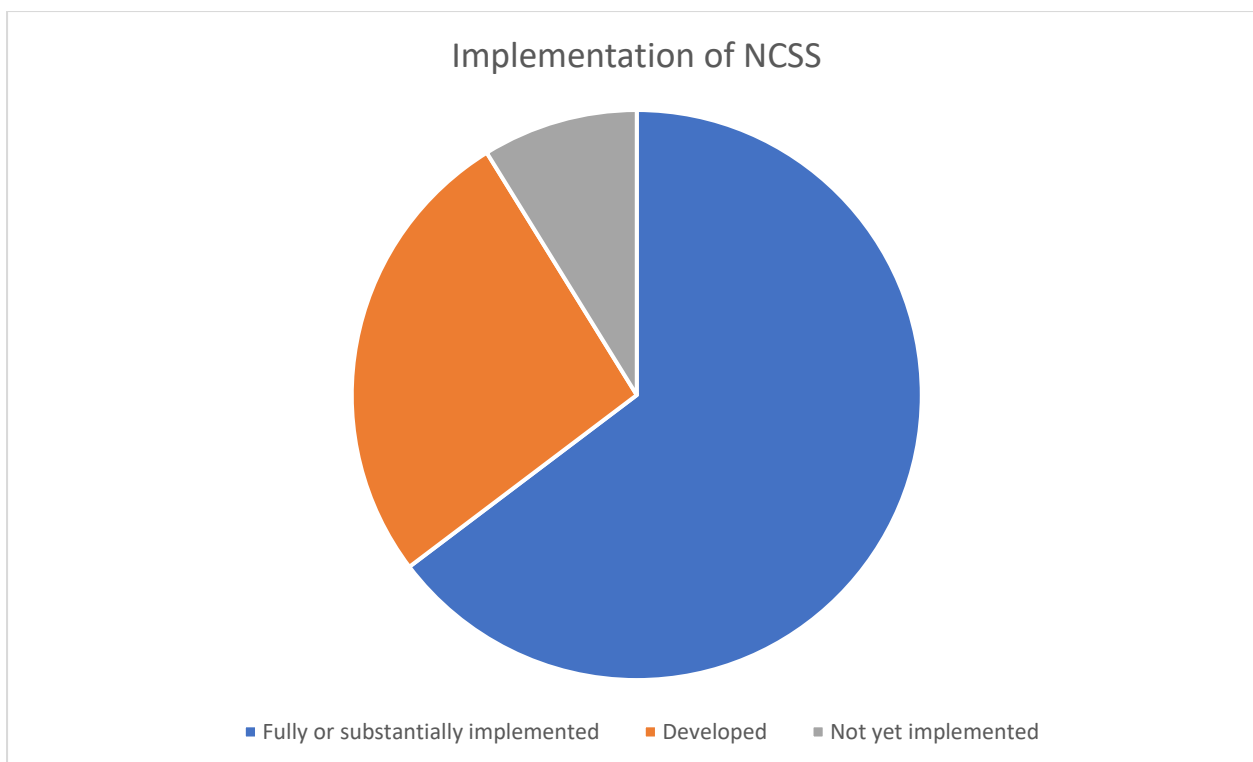
Of the 104 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church Authorities, 6 of these are not relevant to the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne operations. These indicators relate to the seminary recruitment and formation programs, which were outside the scope of the audit.

ACSL assesses the implementation of NCSS indicators by a Church Authority using a four-point maturity scale¹.

Note on scoring the four-point maturity scale:

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

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



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



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

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

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

There is an overt commitment by the Archdiocesan leadership to safeguarding and zero tolerance to abuse. This is evidenced through signage, website and parish bulletin messages throughout the Archdiocese. The audit team noticed the following strengths:

- Parishes have safeguarding information available on websites, use and display of child friendly and other safeguarding materials. Of the parishes visited, one was missing this display.
- Clear roles for safeguarding committee and safeguarding officers, although in some cases these are yet to be formalised. Parishes that did not previously have Safeguarding Committees are engaged in creating Committees and refining their safeguarding approach.

- Committed, dedicated volunteers on Safeguarding Committees are working hard to understand, apply and implement safeguarding standards. Committees are meeting regularly, with structured agendas and work plans. Committee strength relies on the existing skills and competencies of volunteers. Clergy attend meetings where available noting that varying levels of engagement were observed.
- Several parishes have developed creative and child friendly resources, including a range of posters and promotional material as well as videos, featuring children and young people, raising awareness about child safeguarding.
- With the recent incorporation of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Limited (MACS) parishes generally have a clear understanding of the change in practice. Parishes with developed approaches to safeguarding have been successful in establishing strong school relationships and increasing the engagement of children and young people in the parish.
- Some parishes shared the findings of their Parish Self-Assessment before Mass and in the parish newsletter.

The audit team noted the following areas for improvement:

- All parishes should have the Safeguarding Policy and Commitment Statement easily visible and accessible on their websites, available in hard copy at parishes, and regularly promoted in posters and newsletters. Subject to the resources and governance of CAM and the parishes, it could be beneficial to implement a project to examine and update each parish website and create a safeguarding page containing key information and safeguarding policies so that all parishes have consistent minimal information. The CAM Safeguarding Unit could develop the necessary content.
- Some information could be more child -friendly and age appropriate, ideally developed with children and young people.
- All parishes should have a designated safeguarding role and the terms of references for parish safeguarding committees and officers should be formalised.
- Some committees rely on specific skills and competencies of a small number of volunteers who also undertake other roles. This creates a risk for sustainability. The Safeguarding Unit could provide additional and bespoke training and support opportunities for Safeguarding Committee volunteers and safeguarding officers.
- The Safeguarding Unit has been working consistently with parishes to assist them implement and refine their approach to safeguarding. It is evident that several parishes are struggling with some aspects, particularly risk assessments, and it is recommended that these parishes require a structured set of objectives and achievable timeframes to increase their maturity level.
- Parishes with structured and organised approaches to implementing standards demonstrated more safeguarding maturity. While the SU has developed an online portal, it may be more practical to create a template parish Safeguarding Manual that shares the range of implementation plans, tools, processes and documents so that the parish can contextualise as required whilst noting items that must be completed.
- Consider buddying parishes that have demonstrable safeguarding maturity with parishes that are yet to develop and encourage the parish priests to also discuss these aspects.

- All third-party arrangements should be formalised through third party agreements or contracts. While this is occurring in many parishes, using templates provided by the Archdiocese, practice is inconsistent.
- Results of parish self-assessments should be transitioned into safeguarding quality improvement plans, which serve as the implementation and continuous monitoring plans for parishes. The Safeguarding Unit is focussed on building strengths and capacity across parishes, and feedback from some parishes involved in the audit was that the self-assessment process, while challenging, helped to highlight both strengths and gaps. The Safeguarding Unit should consider completing internal audits, with a sample size of parishes each year and provide a yearly guide for safeguarding focus areas including how to commence the safeguarding implementation process.
- The current Code of Conduct was found by some volunteers to be overly detailed and deterred volunteers. Consideration be given to developing a 1–2-page Volunteer Code of Conduct which addresses key areas. The guidance within this summary Code could be supplemented with targeted Fact Sheets. For example, a Fact Sheet with examples relating only to physical interactions with children, young people and adult vulnerable persons could be provided.
- The Safeguarding CAM Unit further refine Safeguarding Implementation Plans for each parish and develop a clear Safeguarding Action Plan which outlines key deliverables for each year on a three yearly review basis.
- Consideration be given to adjusting the structure of the CAM Unit whereby 1-2 staff members work only with parishes at the beginning of their safeguarding journey to assist them embed the safeguarding approach using an evidenced based framework. This will further increase the consistency of all parishes as the Safeguarding CAM Unit staff will be continually working with parishes at similar levels of maturity.
- Consideration be given to several members of the clergy at different stages of their vocation being nominated to support the Safeguarding CAM Unit in their contextual operation, training and development of policies, procedures and information resources.



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

The focus of this capability area is on ensuring every person is protected from harm, listened to, taken seriously, and able to have a say in matters that affect them. Safeguarding research confirms that some children and some adults experience greater vulnerability than others. The NCSS examines how these needs are met and how a Church Authority strives to uphold the dignity of all people and provide safe environments in which everyone can thrive.

The NCSS expects children and adults in ministries to be able to contribute to decisions that affect them. This is an integral part of every safe organisation. Connecting with families, carers and communities is also important, so that everyone can understand how and why decisions are made, where to go for information and help, and how to raise concerns. Recognising people's diverse needs and circumstances is essential to building a safeguarding culture where ministries and services are provided in culturally safe and inclusive ways, facilitating self-determination.

The audit team noted CAM aims to ensure families, carers and communities are actively engaged with its safeguarding approach, while different ministries are at various stages of implementation. We note the following strengths:

- The parishes visited participate in Safeguarding Sunday and otherwise promoted awareness through newsletters and other events, including Cybersecurity Month. One parish had developed a series of videos to play at the start of every mass to raise awareness of the rights of children. These videos are presented by, and developed in consultation with, children from the Catholic primary schools connected with the parish.
- Many parishes celebrate NAIDOC Week, give acknowledgements of country at appropriate events, and have a message stick on display. One parish is actively consulting how to introduce Indigenous concepts into the liturgy.
- The Archdiocese has many different cultural groups engaged in ministry and these groups celebrate liturgies in community languages. Safeguarding information is provided in community languages by the Human Rights Commission.
- All but one parish displayed or have publicly available (i.e. on website and in the parish newsletter) easy to read/understand safeguarding information within the Church.

The audit team also noted the following areas of improvement:

- The Safeguarding Unit in CAM to complete and distribute translated safeguarding resources.
- Parishes leaders should find easy ways to engage with all parishioners, including children, young people, adults at risk, and their families and carers about safeguarding in their community. Some may be apprehensive about consultation and engagement for fear of getting it wrong. It would be useful for the CAM Safeguarding Unit to provide a list of resources to support parishes to better engage with children and their families on safeguarding processes. This engagement should include an ongoing opportunity to provide safeguarding feedback on the parish website and newsletters.
- Parishes should be encouraged to support parents, guardians and families to take an active role in monitoring the safety of children or adults at risk, for example, by making parental attendance at sacramental preparation programs. parents and proactive engagement of families for home communion programs.
- The Safeguarding Unit should help parishes with guidance on how to include children with diverse needs, adults at risk and vulnerable families in parish life.

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



These standards are focused on personnel who are engaged in ministry. These people, and their capacity to fulfill their ministry and be formed to do so, are critical to the success of implementing safeguarding. In meeting this capability area, CAM strives to recruit appropriately skilled people to the right role to implement their ministry. In general, CAM recognises the training and support needs associated with specific roles and provides appropriate safeguarding training activities.

- 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 personnel including, volunteers and clergy which enhances risk mitigation. An assessment of compliance with WWCC obligations was not undertaken for each parish. WWCC are monitored using an online database across the Archdiocese. The auditors observed a high level of consistency of screening steps across each parish and good recordkeeping of soft and hardcopy documents.

CAM's current safeguarding training program addresses the nature and indicators of abuse, and action to be taken in response to concerns. There has been good uptake and completion rates for Safeguarding Essentials.

The audit team noted the following areas for improvement:

- All CAM staff in leadership roles should complete ACSL safeguarding leadership training.
- There are data challenges within PACEM. These relate to reliability of screening and training data. Concern about reliability is causing some parishes to duplicate records in spreadsheets. It is important for the Safeguarding Unit to have visibility of this system.
- The Safeguarding Unit should introduce and support parish staff and volunteers and CAM staff to complete Cultural Awareness and Safety training.
- Ensure there is a systemised or documented approach to all personnel (including clergy) performance review and supervision.
- Continued focus by the CAM Safeguarding Unit on the importance of the recruitment and induction of volunteers and the continued refinement of resources to support this process.
- CAM examine the current safeguarding training provided to the clergy and identify whether there can be further training in understanding and responding to trauma, protective behaviours, complaint management and the principles of risk management.
- The interaction between the Safeguarding Unit and the unit responsible for overseeing the movement of clergy (ACMR) has now been reviewed and clarified. The Safeguarding Unit is alerted to any change of status, of either incardinated or congregational clergy, and potential safeguarding responses required.
- In keeping with national changes to WWCC, CAM may revisit its policy position of requiring all active volunteers to hold a WWCC in the future.
- The CAM training program covered the essential safeguarding information however some parishes did not demonstrate a mature understanding of how safeguarding applied to vulnerable adults.
- Parishes generally lacked confidence in articulating how they address the requirements of *Vic Standard 1 Culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children*. The SU is recommended to provide training for this specific standard using the resources developed by the CCYP.



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

ACSL does not investigate any individual complaint during a safeguarding audit. Instead, the focus is on the system being implemented to managing concerns or allegations of abuse. CAM processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood and accessible in parishes. Parish safeguarding officers promote these processes widely. Processes are formally documented in CAM policies and procedures and are made publicly available.

For Standard 8, the audit focused on risk management strategies implemented and how this results in minimising opportunities for abuse to occur in both physical and online environments.

Standard 10 assesses how effectively the Archdiocese of Melbourne's safeguarding policies and procedures are being documented, managed and implemented.

We noted the following strengths:

- The CAM Safeguarding Unit provides Safeguarding Risk Management Training to support parishes to complete risk management processes. This support is highly regarded by parishes. Where this training was provided, risk management plans demonstrated mature risk assessment.
- Comprehensive Parish Risk Management Plans include safeguarding risks, assessments and mitigations. In most cases, Risk Management Plans exist for each ministry within the parish.
- Most parishes have a clear understanding of reporting pathways and obligations within the parish, outlined through the reporting flow charts which are on display. Some parishes have posters with their safeguarding committee photographs and names promoted.
- The Archdiocese's connection with Pathways, provides external/independent reporting and investigations process, which is well understood.
- Parishes involved in the audit all **self-report** using only CAM email addresses and CAM SharePoint locations for electronic filing. This is best practice for all parishes and a standard requirement that staff members and clergy be required to use a CAM email address for CAM related matters.
- There was generally a good understanding of persons of concern and what to do in the event of a person of concern coming to the attention of the parish.
- Policies and procedures were easily accessible on parish websites, although parish websites are not consistent across the Archdiocese.

The following areas are noted for improvement:

- CAM and Pathways should agree to a principle- based standard operating procedure for completing safeguarding investigations, that takes a survivor centred and trauma informed approach.
- Introduce training or other education/support to improve parish understanding of mandatory reporting and reportable conduct schemes.

- All Parishes should adhere to the Safe Programs Guide for the use and management of CCTV and live broadcasting.
- Where volunteers, staff and clergy work alone or in isolation, sole worker guidelines should be in place and included into risk management plans.
- Parishes should consistently implement third party agreements for any third parties that use Church facilities or provide external ministries (e.g youth ministries). The CAM Safeguarding Unit, with the Property/Infrastructure Unit, should ensure that template agreements are made available which include clear safeguarding terms and conditions.

Table 1: Summary of NCSS Assessment

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

National Catholic Safeguarding Standard	# NCSS indicators	Not Relevant	Assessment of Implementation			
			Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1: Committed leadership, governance & culture	17	1	5	9	2	-
2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate	6	-	-	4	2	-
3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6	-	3	2	1	-
4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected	4	-	3	1	-	-
5: Robust human resource management	22	4	12	3	3	-
6: Effective complaints management	19	-	18	1	-	-
7: Ongoing training & education	11	-	10	1	-	-
8: Safe physical and online environments	7	-	3	4	-	-
9: Continuous improvement	6	1	5	-	-	-
10: Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults	6	-	3	2	1	-
TOTAL	104	6	62	27	9	
			91 %		9%	

3. Summary of recommendations

- There are no Priority 1 (high rated) audit recommendations.
- There are 4 Priority 2 (medium rated) recommendations.
- There is no Priority 3 (low rated) recommendation.

No.	Indicator(s)	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	1.2	ACSL recommends Safeguarding roles are present in all parishes and a deeper culture of collaboration with the Safeguarding Unit (SU) is fostered. Where there are limited safeguarding resources in parishes, ACSL recommends develop a realistic Action Plan with these parishes to focus on implementing immediate safeguarding practices.
	1.3.1	ACSL recommends CAM clarify the roles and coordinating issues between key internal stakeholders and clarify safeguarding roles and responsibilities.
	1.4.2	ACSL recommends that CAM summarise the Code of Conduct in more accessible language to everyone.
	1.5	ACSL recommends the Safeguarding Unit work with all parishes to deepen their understanding of risk assessment and risk management.
	1.6	ACSL recommends the Information sharing and record keeping policies are developed and CAM need to ensure they are understood and rolled out across the Archdiocese.
Recommendation 2	2.1	ACSL recommends Safeguarding Unit (SU) further support parishes to engage their children and adults at risk. This includes informing such person of their rights, including safety, decision making and participation and how a compliant will be managed
	2.2.1	ACSL recommends SU to work with all parishes and provide information on respectful relationships.
	2.3.1	ACSL recommends parishes are provided with resources in understanding boundaries about safe and respectful relationships
	2.4.1.	ACSL recommends that all parishes have a variety of safeguarding support and referral information publicly available.
	3.2.1	3.2.1 ACSL recommends works with all parishes to publicly display appropriate safeguarding materials including safeguarding committee members.
	3.3	ACSL recommends SU work will help all parishes to further develop how parishes meaningfully engage with families, carers and communities in safeguarding.
	4.2.1	ACSL recommends the Code of Conduct is presented in more accessible forms, offer training on cultural diversity and engaging with neurodiverse individuals.
	5.1.3	5.1.3 ACSL recommends that all parishes have role descriptions that assess the risks of individual roles and apply safeguarding requirements to these roles.

No.	Indicator(s)	Recommendation
Recommendation 3	5.3	5.3 ACSL recommends all personnel engaged in ministry should participate in safeguarding induction as soon as possible after commencement in their role. All those in senior CAM leadership roles should undertake the NCSST Introductions Session for Leaders.
	5.4.1	ACSL recommends all clergy and religious engage in at least six hours professional/pastoral supervision and undertake regular appraisal.
	5.5.4 & 5.5.5	ACSL recommends all clergy and religious engage in at least six hours professional/pastoral supervision and undertake regular appraisal.
	7.1.4	ACSL recommends that SU provide struggling Parishes with in-person training .
Recommendation 4	6.1.2	6.1.2 ACSL recommends some parishes would benefit from further training or other education/support to improve Parish understanding of mandatory reporting and reportable conduct schemes.
	8.1.1	ACSL recommends CAM complete an audit of their physical environments to ensure all safeguarding risks are managed in their physical environments.
	8.2	ACSL recommends CAM provide advice and support to all parishes to manage their online risks.
	8.4.1	ACSL recommends a simplified approach to managing third-party agreements when an internal CAM unit wishes to hire another CAM facility. Further all tennis groups legal status need to be reviewed to understand who holds safeguarding responsibilities,
	10.3	ACSL recommends CAM implements best practices consultation models which includes all stakeholders to inform the latter of CAM safeguarding practices.
	10.5.1	ACSL recommends that CAM develop forums and/or processes to enable personnel to reflect upon their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback.

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

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

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

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

4. Assessment of compliance with NCSS indicators

Assessment of compliance with NCSS indicators

Standard 1		Committed leadership, governance and culture			
<i>The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture</i>					
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 Archdiocese and/or relevant leadership body and is publicly available.	✓			
1.1.2	The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, widely displayed, and made publicly available.	✓			
Observations:					
The audit team noted that one parish attended during fieldwork did not publicise the statement. Refer recommendation #1.					
Criterion 1.2 - A culture of safeguarding children and adults is championed and modelled at all levels of the Archdiocese from the top down and bottom up.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.2.1	A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority and leaders by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone. • emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and • actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management. 		✓		
1.2.2	A Safeguarding Committee is appointed at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices, policies, and procedures.		✓		
1.2.3	A Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) is appointed with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.		✓		
1.2.4	Personnel understand that good safeguarding practices are everyone's responsibility and are empowered to contribute to the organisation's safeguarding practices.		✓		
Observations:					
1.2 At a leadership level we observe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong commitment amongst those involved with safeguarding to equip and resource parishes and business units; • safeguarding roles are encouraged within every parish, with regional offices providing support, and a skilled central team; • there are varying but increasing levels of co-operation between the central team and parishes and business units (albeit this appears to be more recent for some parishes); • the consequences for parishes failing to comply, or to provide evidence of complying, is not clear; and • there are some role clarity issues, and co-ordination issues, between the key stakeholders at the CAM leadership level; • there is a potential for partnership with parishes that had a mature understanding of safeguarding practices, with those that were at a 'developing' or 'yet to developed' stage, or were under resourced in their pool of volunteers; 					

- some parishes were less resourced than others and these would benefit from assistance from the Safeguarding Unit to develop a realistic action plan that focus on initial steps to implement safeguarding practices in a practical and effective manner.

Refer recommendation #1.

Criterion 1.3 - Governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy across the entity's activities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.3.1	Governance arrangements are transparent and include safeguarding roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability for the safeguarding of children and adults is clear.		✓		
1.3.2	Where the Church Authority's governance includes countries other than Australia, the NCSS are applied wherever possible, taking into account cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.	Not relevant			

Observations:

1.3.1 to 1.3.2 The role clarity and co-ordination issues, between the key stakeholders at the CAM leadership level contributes to a lack of transparency in safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Refer recommendation #1.

Criterion 1.4 – The entity's Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural standards towards children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.4.1	The Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour.	✓			
1.4.2	The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, families, and carers.		✓		
1.4.3	The Code of Conduct considers the needs of all children and adults at risk, paying particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations people. • individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are considered to be at risk of abuse'; • individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. • children in out of home care, or are homeless; and, • children and adults of diverse sexuality. 	✓			
1.4.4	The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.	✓			

Observations:

1.4.2 The audit team received feedback from some personnel finding that the Code of Conduct is lengthy and could be written in more accessible language. 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 to 1.5.3 There were some parishes that had a mature understanding of risk and excelled in their risk assessment and risk management practices. However, many of the parishes had an introductory understanding of risk assessment and risk management. Refer recommendation #1.					
Criterion 1.6 - Personnel understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping for safeguarding and professional standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.6.1	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures are documented and communicated to personnel.		✓		
1.6.2	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures align with best practice.		✓		
Observations:					
1.6.1 to 1.6.2 The appropriate policies are developed, and CAM need to ensure they are understood and rolled out across the Archdiocese. Refer recommendation #1.					

Standard 2		Children and adults are safe, informed and participate			
<i>Children and adults are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously</i>					
Criterion 2.1 – Children and adults at risk engaged in the Archdiocese re 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 to 2.1.3 A few practical examples were provided at a parish level, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suggestion boxes; • email feedback; • brochures about other referral services; • play areas for children and sections in the library for children that include books on safety and autonomy; • adjustments that had been made for specific vulnerable people to be able to attend and participate, for example, wheelchair access and other accessibility changes; and • codes of conduct and other material are accessible and include notice of their right to be safe from abuse and who to contact if they feel unsafe. <p>Most parishes acknowledged that implementing age-appropriate strategies to engage children was difficult and that they are yet to take active steps to ensure their participation in decisions that affect them.</p> <p>Some parishes had a limited understanding of adults being adults at risk or vulnerable persons, and consequently, limited application of developing safe practices in relation to vulnerable persons. Refer recommendation #2.</p>					

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:					
2.2.1 Many of the descriptions of parish life were grounded in ideas of friendship and community. One larger parish had a program that included information about respectful relationships. Refer recommendation #2.					
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 Most parishes visited could articulate the importance of friendship and connections for adults at risk though some parishes need support in understanding boundaries and their role in safe and respectful relationships. Refer recommendation #2.					
Criterion 2.4 – Where relevant to the setting or context, children and families are offered access to abuse prevention programs and related information that is age appropriate.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.4.1	Children and families are provided with information, access and/or referral to abuse prevention programs, appropriate to the child's age, development, ability, and level of understanding.		✓		
Observations:					
2.4.1 The Safeguarding Unit has developed relationships with other child protection authorities and had relevant information to support the necessary referrals. Parishes had limited information available to parishioners – generally information was available by way of posters in the foyer and newsletters. One parish had developed a magnet for families that provided useful information. Refer recommendation #2.					

Standard 3		Partnering with families, carers and communities			
<i>Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults.</i>					
Criterion 3.1 – Parents, carers and/or guardians participate in decisions affecting their child, or adults with diminished capacity.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.1.1	The entity encourages parents, carers and/or guardians to take an active role in monitoring the safety of those engaged in the ministry and/or service.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 3.2 – Families, carers and communities are engaged with and are provided information about the Archdiocese's approach to safeguarding.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to		✓		

	contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.				
3.2.2	Safeguarding information is provided and widely available, including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinators.	✓			
Observations:					
3.2.1 See comment at 2.1. Some parishes display the information of all safeguarding committee members with contact details and photographs so that they are identified – this is a helpful approach, particularly in large parishes. Refer recommendation #2.					
Criterion 3.3 - Families, carers and communities are informed about the Archdiocese’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:					
3.3.1 and 3.3.2 See comment at 2.1. There was an emerging theme that engagement of families and children in safeguarding is still developing. Parishes would benefit from assistance in practically implementing this standard. Refer recommendation #2.					
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			
<i>Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice</i>					
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 entities processes and supports are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.		✓		
Observations:					
4.2.1 Codes of Conduct and other policy documents include information about children and adults from diverse backgrounds. Most parishes do not yet have copies of materials in LOTE relevant to their parishioners. There was feedback from parishes to provide training on engaging with individuals with neurodiversity, noting that we observed ad hoc practices of helpfully engaging with families in that respect. Refer recommendation #2.					
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 indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted					

Standard 5		Robust human resource management			
<i>People working with children and adults at risk are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice</i>					
Criterion 5.1 – A strong commitment to safeguarding underpins the Archdiocese'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 At a central level, the HR processes were mature and included advertising that referred to safeguarding, screening and interview questions relating to safeguarding, and an induction process that informed the applicant of the policy and procedure approach of CAM. At a parish level, some parishes have role descriptions that assess the risks of individual roles, however most parishes apply safeguarding requirements uniformly to all volunteering roles. Refer recommendation #3.					
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: Please note the commentary we made on page 16. Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.3 - Personnel complete appropriate induction and are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities including reporting obligations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.3.1	All personnel participate in a safeguarding induction program, which occurs as soon as possible after commencement.		✓		
5.3.2	All Church Authorities and their leadership team undertake the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders.			✓	
Observations: 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 All personnel engaged in ministry should participate in safeguarding induction as soon as possible after commencement in their role. Further all those in senior CAM leadership roles should undertake the ACSL NCSS Introduction Session for Leaders. Refer recommendation #3.					
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 We observed that some parish priests are not under professional supervision but participate in a form of mentoring (such as having a Spiritual Director). Volunteers holding roles with significant safeguarding responsibility received ad hoc supervision from the parish priest. A parish visited had instituted a program of supervision from the parish council by 'accompanying' all ministries to children, which involves regular visits to be a designated parish council member to the programs to provide feedback and support, and to ensure that safeguarding decision makers have a sufficient understanding of the ministry being undertaken. Refer recommendation #3.					
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.	N/A			

5.5.3	Ongoing integrated formation for clergy and religious addresses both the canonical and civil safeguarding requirements. For priests, this would include supporting their fidelity to the Church's teaching regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the inviolability of the Sacramental Seal.	✓			
5.5.4	All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.			✓	
5.5.5	All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals			✓	
5.5.6	All newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least five years post ordination or final profession.	✓			
Observations:					
5.5.4 & 5.5.5 All clergy and religious are yet to engaged in at least six hours professional/pastoral supervision and undertake regular appraisal. Refer recommendation #3.					
Criterion 5.6 - The curriculum for seminary and formation programs for clergy and religious includes safeguarding knowledge and skills development of candidates to understand and lead initiatives for safeguarding children and adults.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.6.1	Seminary and initial formation programs build candidates' knowledge and skills in a range of areas to support safeguarding children and adults.	Not applicable			
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.	Not applicable			
5.6.3	Seminary and initial formation programs identify how to avoid abuse of power and the development and/or reinforcement of clericalist attitudes and behaviours.	Not applicable			
Observations:					
N/A					
Criterion 5.7 – The movement and credentialling of those in active ministry is appropriately managed.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.7.1	A system to assess the safeguarding credentials and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy, religious and lay ministries between different seminaries, formation programs and other Church entities is in place.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.8 – Where clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are recruited to ministry, programs are in place to support their cultural awareness, screening, induction, professional supervision and development.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.8.1	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia recruited to ministry, are screened and verification information is sought from the international Church	✓			

	Authority.				
5.8.2	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia participate in a safeguarding induction program which is documented and occurs as soon as possible after commencement of ministry.	✓			
5.8.3	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are supported with a suitable mentor for at least the first two years of their time in Australia.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 6		Effective complaints management			
<i>Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities and personnel.</i>					
Criterion 6.1 - The Archdiocese's Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.1.1	Policies and procedures address mandatory reporting obligations.	✓			
6.1.2	There are clear procedures that provide step-by-step responses and action to be taken for different types of complaints, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> breaches of Code of Conduct. disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child. an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult. 		✓		
6.1.3	The Complaint Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflict of interests are managed.	✓			
6.1.4	The Complaint Handling Policy acknowledges that power imbalances exist between the complainant and respondent and has strategies in place to address this.	✓			
6.1.5	The Complaint Handling Policy spells out who has responsibilities in relation to handling complaints and when procedures are enacted.	✓			
6.1.6	All abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referral are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years.	✓			
Observations:					
6.1.2 Some parishes would benefit from further training or other education/support to improve parish understanding of mandatory reporting and reportable conduct schemes. Refer recommendation #4.					
Criterion 6.2 - The Complaint Handling Policy is understood by children, adults, families, carers, and personnel, and focuses on the rights of children and adults at risk.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

6.2.1	The Complaint Handling Policy and procedures demonstrate how the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk are prioritised.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.3 - Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.3.1	The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned, and operates in conjunction, with the Code of Conduct, HR and other policies.	✓			
6.3.2	The Complaints Handling Policy commits to an initial risk assessment if a complaint of abuse is received, to identify and minimise any risk to children or adults. Ongoing risk assessments are conducted throughout investigation processes.	✓			
6.3.3	Complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.	✓			
6.3.4	Trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced abuse.	✓			
6.3.5	Sharing information relating to complaints adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant legislation.	✓			
6.3.6	The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures empower and support personnel to raise, in good faith, concerns and allegations about unacceptable behaviour towards children and adults by other personnel.	✓			
6.3.7	Where a complaint related to the sexual abuse of a child or adult against clergy or religious is substantiated under a civil standard, the Church Authority undertakes a risk management process to determine the appropriate action, in keeping with Church protocols.	✓			
6.3.8	Where a clergy or religious is convicted of a canonical offence relating to child sexual abuse, the respondent is to be prohibited from the exercise of ministry until such times as the process for imposing a penalty is completed by the relevant dicastery.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.4 - The Complaints Handling Policy includes the process of reporting complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, requiring cooperation with any statutory or contractual processes.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.4.1	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> concerns and complaints of child abuse occurring within the entity be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities, in accordance with regulations. 	✓			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any concerns and/or complaints of a criminal against adults be reported to statutory authorities; and personnel cooperate with law enforcement procedures and directives. 				
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.5 – The Archdiocese ensures mechanisms are in place to support complainants of child and adult sexual abuse.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.5.1	Appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.6 - The Archdiocese ensures respondents facing allegations are supported and monitored.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.6.1	Appropriately trained personnel engaged in consultation with the respondents to counsel and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent.	✓			
6.6.2	Arrangements are in place to monitor, supervise and support a respondent, where there is a complaint, until (and if) the Church Authority no longer has this responsibility.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 7		Ongoing education and training			
<i>Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and adults safe through information, ongoing education and training.</i>					
Criterion 7.1 - Personnel are trained and supported to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.1.1	Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.	✓			
7.1.2	The entity's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must as a minimum cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of Conduct. safeguarding risk management. Safeguarding Policy and procedures. Complaints Handling Policy and procedures. reporting obligations; and e-safety training. 	✓			
7.1.3	Records are maintained to ensure all personnel attend induction training and participate in refresher safeguarding training at least every three years.	✓			
7.1.4	All personnel with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive ongoing support and professional development to their role.		✓		

Observations:					
7.1.4 The training program is well established, and personnel have knowledge of their requirement to undertake the training every three years. The training program covers introductory material relating to safeguarding, including information around the code of conduct, receiving disclosures, and complaint handling and reporting. The safeguarding team offers tailored training to parishes on specific issues, for example, on cultural safety.					
Parishes expressed an interest in the Safeguarding Unit providing in-person training. Some parishes are sufficiently equipped to be able to run their own in-person training sessions. Refer recommendation #3.					
Criterion 7.2 - Personnel are supported to recognise the nature and indicators of child abuse, including harmful behaviours by a child towards another child.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.2.1	Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place children at risk of abuse, building knowledge to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the nature and impact of child abuse. • understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse. • identify risk factors, such as grooming behaviours; and • understand, identify, and respond to abusive behaviours by a child towards another child. 	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 7.3 – Personnel are supported to recognise the factors that contribute to adult abuse, with a focus on adults at risk.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.3.1	Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, building knowledge to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the nature and impact of adult abuse. • understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse. • identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation. • recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including power imbalances can be exploited; and • understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse. 	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 7.4 - Personnel have the information and skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.4.1	Education and training programs equip relevant personnel to appropriately respond to and support anyone bringing forward concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.	✓			
7.4.2	Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.	✓			
7.4.3	Personnel receive training on reporting obligations under Commonwealth/State/Territory legislative and	✓			

	<p>canon law, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reporting suspected criminal behaviour to police. mandatory reporting to child protection authorities. Reportable Conduct Scheme. reporting to other regulatory authorities or government departments; and Canonical reporting requirements. 				
<p>Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.</p>					
<p>Criterion 7.5 - Personnel receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and adults.</p>		<p>Developed & Embedded</p>	<p>Developed</p>	<p>Developing</p>	<p>Yet to Develop</p>
7.5.1	<p>Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create, culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p>	<p>✓</p>			
7.5.2	<p>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.</p>	<p>✓</p>			
<p>Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.</p>					

<p>Standard 8</p>		<p>Safe physical and online environments</p>			
<p><i>Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed.</i></p>					
<p>Criterion 8.1 – The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy addresses both physical and online risks, without compromising the individual’s right to privacy or wellbeing.</p>		<p>Developed & Embedded</p>	<p>Developed</p>	<p>Developing</p>	<p>Yet to Develop</p>
8.1.1	<p>Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services including risks arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child; ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction and mentoring; 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. <p>Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.</p>		<p>✓</p>		
8.1.2	<p>The entity’s policies require the safe use of online applications for children and adults to learn, communicate and seek help.</p>	<p>✓</p>			

8.1.3	Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults.	✓			
<p>Observations:</p> <p>8.1.1 Many of the physical spaces required further thought around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> line of sight and supervision, including in the confessional room and sacristy; and delineation between parish property and school property, especially where unfettered access to the school was available through the parish property. <p>Despite there being some further changes required, there was generally strong awareness of the importance of supervision and which areas of the property were higher risk.</p> <p>Many of the services to children were provided in areas with good line of sight, enabling passive parental supervision. Refer recommendation #4.</p>					
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.		✓		
<p>Observations:</p> <p>8.2.1 and 8.2.2 We observe that the technology approach adopted at head office is sophisticated and has the necessary risk controls. However, each parish adopted different approaches to online risk. Most parishes we spoke with used CAM email addresses. Some parishes used social media, including Facebook and WhatsApp groups, with the online environment monitored by 2-3 users. Refer recommendation #4.</p>					
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.	✓			
<p>Observations:</p> <p>Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted</p>					
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.		✓		
<p>Observations:</p> <p>8.4.1 There is a template MOU/ third party hire agreement that addresses some of these issues. One suggested strategy to address this issue could include a short letter which would be appropriate where it is another ministry of the Church. For example, in several parishes there were multiple external ministries using Parish property.</p> <p>We consider that a review of third-party use of parish property or other external sites may be worthwhile in the future.</p> <p>Some parishes have groups that use the parish property that are legally part of the parish (e.g. a tennis club that is not separately incorporated to the parish), but the clubs do not necessarily follow diocesan standards for safeguarding. These arrangements should be reviewed. Refer recommendation #4.</p>					

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 coordinates annual local self-assessment checks.	✓			
9.1.3	The Safeguarding Policy is subject to review at least every three years and outcomes of this review are documented.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 9.2 – Concerns and complaints are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures in safeguarding practices.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.2.1	All individual incidents or complaints relating to safeguarding practices and/or failures are considered by the leadership to identify systemic patterns and support continuous improvement.	✓			
Observations. We note the existence of a sub-committee which considers all complaints and incidents relating to safeguarding. Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 9.3 - The Archdiocese reports on the findings of its safeguarding reviews.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.3.1	The findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to be reported to stakeholders.	✓			
9.3.2	The findings of audits or reviews undertaken or validated by ACSL are made public.	Not applicable – this is the first audit by ACSL			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 10		Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults			
Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.					
Criterion 10.1 - Policies and procedures address the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

10.1.1	All relevant policies and procedures reference appropriate safeguarding approaches, requirements and responsibilities.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted					
Criterion 10.2 - Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.2.1	The policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding are readily available and accessible to all personnel.	✓			
Observations: We observed that policies and procedures were easily accessible on Parish websites, although Parish websites are not necessarily consistent across the Archdiocese. Refer recommendation #3.					
Criterion 10.3 - Best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development and review of policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.3.1	There are processes in place to monitor how safeguarding policies and procedures are being implemented.		✓		
10.3.2	There is a process in place to develop and review safeguarding policies and procedures.		✓		
Observations:					
10.3.1 and 10.3.2 Greater consultation could occur on the development of safeguarding policies and procedures with parishes, including parishioners that are children and adults at risk. This consultation could be both sector specific (faith based safeguarding teams) or a broader approach that includes the separately incorporated agencies of CAM (such as the school bodies). This would enable current issues in other environments to inform the approach of CAM to safeguarding. Refer recommendation #3.					
Criterion 10.4 - Archdiocese leaders champion and model best practice implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.4.1	The Church Authority and leaders promote the NCSS and enact all policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted					
Criterion 10.5 - Personnel understand and implement the policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.5.1	Personnel are encouraged to reflect on their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback.			✓	
Observations:					
10.5.1 Personnel were unable to articulate formal opportunities that were available to them to reflect upon their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback. Refer recommendation #4.					

5. Detailed findings and Recommendations

Recommendation #1		Priority 2
Indicator No.	Indicator	
1.2.1	A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority leaders by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone; • emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone’s responsibility; and, • actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management. 	
1.2.2	A Safeguarding Committee is appointed at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices, policies, and procedures.	
1.2.3	A Safeguarding Co-ordinator is appointed with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.	
1.2.4	Personnel understand that good safeguarding practices are everyone’s responsibility and are empowered to contribute to the organisation’s safeguarding practices.	
1.3.1	Governance arrangements are transparent and include safeguarding roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability for the safeguarding of children and adults is clear.	
1.4.2	The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, families, and carers.	
1.4.3	The Code of Conduct considers the needs of all children and adults at risk, paying particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations people. • individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are considered to be at risk of abuse’; • individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. • children in out of home care, or are homeless; and, • children and adults of diverse sexuality. 	
1.5.1	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.	
1.6.1	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures are documented and communicated to personnel.	
1.6.2	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures align with best practices.	

<p>Details of finding</p>	<p>The Desktop and fieldwork findings revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong commitment amongst those involved with safeguarding to equip and resource Parishes and business units; • safeguarding roles are encouraged within every Parish, with regional offices providing support, and a skilled central team; • there are varying but increasing levels of co-operation between the central team and Parishes and business units (albeit this appears to be more recent for some Parishes); • the consequences for parishes failing to comply, or to provide evidence of complying, are not clear; • there are some role clarity issues, and co-ordination issues, between the key stakeholders at the CAM leadership level; • there is a potential for partnership with Parishes that had a mature understanding of safeguarding practices, with those that were at a ‘developing’ or ‘yet to developed’ stage, or were under resourced in their pool of volunteers; • some parishes were less resourced than others and these would benefit from assistance from the Safeguarding Unit to develop a realistic action plan that focus on initial steps to implement safeguarding practices in a practical and effective manner. • The role clarity and co-ordination issues, between the key stakeholders at the CAM leadership level, contributes to a lack of transparency in safeguarding roles and responsibilities; • The audit team received feedback from some personnel that the Code of Conduct is lengthy and could be written in more accessible language; • We consider that many of the Parishes had an introductory understanding of risk assessment and risk management. There were some Parishes that had a mature understanding of risk and excelled in their risk assessment and risk management practices. As most Parishes had some form of risk management in place, we consider that a ‘Developing’ outcome would be supported; and • The Information sharing and record keeping policies are developed and CAM need to ensure they are understood and rolled out across the Archdiocese.
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>1.2 ACSL recommends Safeguarding roles are present in all parishes and a deeper collaboration culture with the Safeguarding Unit (SU) is fostered. Where there are limited safeguarding resources in parishes, ACSL recommends developing a realistic Action Plan with these parishes to focus on implementing immediate safeguarding practices.</p> <p>1.3.1 ACSL recommends CAM clarify the roles and coordinating issues between key internal stakeholders and clarify safeguarding roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>1.4.2 ACSL recommends that CAM summarize the Code of Conduct in more accessible language to everyone.</p> <p>1.5 ACSL recommends the Safeguarding Unit work with all parishes to deepen their understanding of risk assessment and risk management.</p> <p>1.6 ACSL recommends the Information sharing and record keeping policies are developed and CAM need to ensure they are understood and rolled out across the Archdiocese.</p>
<p>Agreed Action</p>	<p>The Archdiocese has agreed to implement the recommendations.</p>

Responsibility	Office of the Vicar General - Safeguarding.
Due date	31 March 2027.

Recommendation #2		Priority 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.	
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 contribute to safeguarding approaches.	
2.3.1	Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.	
2.2.1	Children are provided with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful peer-relationships.	
2.3.1	Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate) are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.	
2.4.1	Children and families are provided with information, access and/or referral to abuse prevention programs, appropriate to the child's age, development, ability and level of understanding.	
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding activities.	
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.	
4.2.1	Information about company processes and supports are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.	

<p>Details of finding</p>	<p>The desktop and fieldwork interviews revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are a variety of strategies CAM utilize to seek feedback which includes: suggestion boxes; email feedback; brochures about other referral services; • there are play areas for children and sections in the library for children that include books on safety and autonomy; • adjustments that had been made for specifically vulnerable people to be able to attend and participate, for example, wheelchair access and other accessibility changes; • codes of conduct and other material are accessible and include notice of their right to be safe from abuse and who to contact if they feel unsafe; • Most parishes acknowledged that implementing age-appropriate strategies to engage children was difficult and that they are yet to take active steps to ensure their participation in decisions that affect them; • some parishes had a limited understanding of adults being adults at risk or vulnerable persons, and consequently, limited application of developing safe practices in relation to vulnerable persons; • many of the descriptions of Parish life were grounded in ideas of friendship and community. One larger Parish had a program that included information about respectful relationships; • most parishes visited could articulate the importance of friendship and connections for adults at risk though some parishes need support in understanding boundaries about safe and respectful relationships; • the SU had developed relationships with other child protection authorities and had relevant information to support the necessary referrals; • Parishes had limited information available to parishioners – generally information was available by way of posters in the foyer and newsletters. One parish had developed a magnet for families that provided useful information; • Some parishes display the information of all safeguarding committee members with contact details and photographs so that they are identified – this is a helpful approach, particularly in large parishes; • There was an emerging theme that engagement of families and children in safeguarding is still developing. Parishes would benefit from assistance in practically implementing this standard, which in our view, would be easy to implement; and • Codes of Conduct and other policy documents include information about children and adults from diverse backgrounds. Most parishes do not yet have copies of materials in LOTE relevant to their parishioners. There was feedback from Parishes to provide training in engaging with individuals with neurodiversity, noting that we observed ad hoc practices of helpfully engaging with families in that respect.
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Recommendation	<p>2.1 ACSL recommends Safeguarding Unit (SU) further support parishes to engage their children and adults at risk. This includes informing such person of their rights, including safety, decision making and participation and how a complaint will be managed.</p> <p>2.2.1 ACSL recommends SU to work with all parishes and provide information on respectful relationships.</p> <p>2.3.1 ACSL recommends parishes are provided with resources in understanding boundaries about safe and respectful relationships.</p> <p>2.4.1 ACSL recommends that all parishes have a variety of safeguarding support and referral information publicly available.</p> <p>3.2.1 ACSL recommends works with all parishes to publicly display appropriate safeguarding materials including safeguarding committee members.</p> <p>3.3 ACSL recommends SU work will all parishes to further develop how parishes meaningfully engage with families, carers and communities in safeguarding.</p> <p>4.2.1 ACSL recommends the Code of Conduct is presented in more accessible forms, offer training on cultural diversity and engaging with neurodiverse individuals.</p>
Agreed Action	The Archdiocese has agreed to implement the recommendations.
Responsibility	Office of the Vicar General - Safeguarding.
Due date	31 March 2027.

Recommendation #3		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.	
5.3.1	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.	
5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.	
5.5.4	All clergy and religious in full time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.	
5.5.5	All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals.	
7.1.4	All personnel with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive ongoing support and professional development to their role.	

<p>Details of finding</p>	<p>The desktop and fieldwork interviews revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a central level, the HR processes were mature and included advertising that referred to safeguarding, screening and interview questions relating to safeguarding, and an induction process that informed the applicant of the policy and procedure approach of CAM; • . We did not complete an assessment of compliance with WWCC obligations for each Parish; • We note that these standards reflect the policy position of CAM or each Parish rather than requiring an assessment of compliance with these obligations. • We observed a relatively high level of completeness of screening steps across each Parish; • We observed that some Parish Priests are not under professional supervision but participate in a form of mentoring (such as having a Spiritual Director). • Volunteers holding roles with significant responsibility received ad hoc supervision from the parish priest. • A parish visited had instituted a program of supervision from the parish council by ‘accompanying’ all ministries to children, which involves regular visits to be a designated parish council member to the programs to provide feedback and support, and to ensure that safeguarding decision makers have a sufficient understanding of the ministry being undertaken; • All clergy and religious are yet to engaged in at least six hours professional/pastoral supervision and undertake regular appraisal; and • The training program is well established, and personnel have knowledge of their requirement to undertake the training every three years. The training program covers introductory material relating to safeguarding, including information around the code of conduct, receiving disclosures, and complaint handling and reporting. The safeguarding team offers tailored training to Parishes on specific issues, for example, on cultural safety; and • Some parishes are sufficiently equipped to be able to run their own in-person training sessions.
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>5.1.3 ACSL recommends that all parishes have role descriptions that assess the risks of individual roles and apply safeguarding requirements to these roles.</p> <p>5.3 ACSL recommends all personnel engaged in ministry should participate in safeguarding induction as soon as possible after commencement in their role. All those in senior CAM leadership roles should undertake the NCSST Introductions Session for Leaders.</p> <p>5.4.1 ACSL recommends that all personnel in ministry should participate in at least 6 hours of professional/pastoral supervision yearly.</p> <p>5.5.4 & 5.5.5 ACSL recommends all clergy and religious engage in at least six hours professional/pastoral supervision and undertake regular appraisal.</p> <p>7.1.4 ACSL recommends that SU provide some Parishes with in-person training. Some parishes are sufficiently equipped to be able to run their own in-person training sessions.</p>

Agreed Action	The Archdiocese has agreed to implement the recommendations.
Responsibility	Office of the Vicar General - Safeguarding.
Due date	31 March 2027.

Recommendation #4		Priority 2
Indicator No.	Indicator	
6.1.2	<p>There are clear procedures that provide step-by-step guidance on the response and action to be taken for different types of complaints, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • breaches of Codes 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. 	
8.1.1	<p>Both physical and online risks are addressed withing the provision of ministry and/or services, including risks arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child; • ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction, and mentoring; • potential physical contact between the penitent and the Confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated; • one-to-one interactions with adults at risk; • child-to-child interactions; • adult-to-child interactions; • adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration of power imbalances); and • the nature of physical spaces. <p>Where possible, these interactions are to be conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.</p>	
8.2.1	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 leadership.	
8.4.1	If a third party provides services or uses the organisations facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.	
10.3.1	There are processes in place to monitor how safeguarding policies and procedures are being implemented.	
10.3.2	There is a process in place to develop and review safeguarding policies and procedures.	

10.5.1	Personnel are encouraged to reflect on their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback.	
Details of findings	<p>The desktop and fieldwork interviews revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CAM Safeguarding Unit provides Safeguarding Risk Management Training to support Parishes to complete risk management processes. This support is highly regarded by Parishes. Where this training was provided, risk management plans demonstrated mature risk assessment. • We note that many of the physical spaces required further thought around: line of sight and supervision; including in the confessional room and sacristy; and delineation between Parish property and school property, especially where unfettered access to the School was available through the Parish property. We observed that despite there being some further changes required, there was generally strong awareness of the importance of supervision and which areas of the property were higher risk. • We observe that the technological approach adopted at head office is sophisticated and has the necessary risk controls. However, each parish adopted different approaches to online risk. Most Parishes we spoke with used CAM email addresses. Some Parishes used social media, including Facebook and WhatsApp groups, with the online environment monitored by 2-3 users. • We noted that many of the services to children were provided in areas with good line of sight, enabling passive parental supervision. • We consider greater consultation could occur on the development of safeguarding policies and procedures with Parishes, including parishioners that are children and adults at risk. This consultation could be both sector specific (faith-based safeguarding teams) or a broader approach that includes the separately incorporated agencies of CAM (such as the school bodies). This would enable current issues in other environments to inform the approach of CAM to safeguarding; and • Personnel were unable to articulate formal opportunities that were available to them to reflect upon their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback. 	

Recommendation	<p>6.1.2 ACSL recommends some parishes would benefit from further training or other education/support to improve Parish understanding of mandatory reporting and reportable conduct schemes.</p> <p>8.1.1 ACSL recommends CAM complete an audit of their physical environments to ensure all safeguarding risks are managed in their physical environments.</p> <p>8.2 ACSL recommends CAM provide advice and support to all parishes to manage their online risks.</p> <p>8.4.1 ACSL recommends a simplified approach to managing third-party agreements when an internal CAM unit wishes to hire another CAM facility. Further all tennis groups' legal status needs to be reviewed to understand who holds safeguarding responsibilities,</p> <p>10.3 ACSL recommends CAM implements best practices consultation models which includes all stakeholders to inform the latter of CAM safeguarding practices.</p> <p>10.5.1 ACSL recommends that CAM develop forums and/or process which enable personnel to reflect upon their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback.</p>
Agreed Action	The Archdiocese has agreed to implement the recommendations.
Responsibility	Office of the Vicar General - Safeguarding.
Due date	31 March 2027.

Appendix A – Compliance Assessment

	General	Processes & Systems	People & Resources
Yet to Develop	As an entity we are unable to demonstrate that the requirements of the indicator are in place and will implement the necessary strategies developed through the Standards Action Plan.	Processes may be in place however the specific requirements of the indicator have not been addressed. The actions generated through the Standards Action Plan will be implemented.	At an entity level resources have yet to be assigned. The people and resources will be determined and allocated in the Standards Action Plan.
Developing	Our entity has begun to address the requirements of the indicator, however processes are developing and not universally applied.	Some relevant processes have been implemented which align with the requirements of the indicator; however, they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • siloed; and/or • undocumented; and/or • inconsistent; and/or • lack clarity. 	Personnel capabilities vary across the entity and resources, and responsibility are not formally assigned. This will be addressed in the Standards Action Plan.
Developed	Our entity is addressing the indicator and is in the process of implementing its requirements. The gaps will be highlighted and addressed through the Standards Action Plan.	Relevant processes and systems have been defined and developed but are yet to be implemented across the full operations of the entity. A plan is being developed to fully implement processes and systems.	Resources have been assigned and responsibilities defined, however there is no formal training or communication of standard procedures, and it is unlikely that deviations will be detected. This will be remediated through the Standards Action Plan.
Developed & embedded	The entity can demonstrate that indicator requirements are formally embedded. Processes are operating effectively, and opportunities provided for continuous improvement.	Relevant processes are integrated and coordinated, including remote operations and reviews/audits of activities.	Personnel are trained to detect and report on deviations or break downs in processes. Resources have been assigned to monitor and address requirements.

Appendix B – Audit Finding Priorities

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

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

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

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

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

Abuse	when used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term covering both child and adult abuse
Abuse of Power	means the abuse of position, function, or duty to take advantage of another. This can take many forms and include situations where a person has power over another person by virtue of their relationship (e.g., employer and employee, teacher and student, coach and athlete, parent or guardian and child, clergy/religious and parishioner) and uses that power to their advantage.
Accessible language	means information is provided in multiple formats for individuals with different levels of English literacy and proficiency, modes of communication, languages, and cognitive abilities.
Adult	means any person 18 years or older. When used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term referring to all adults, including adults at risk.
Adult abuse	<p>means the improper treatment of a person that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm. Abuse can come in many forms, such as physical or verbal maltreatment, neglect, injury, assault, violation, rape, unjust practices, crimes, exploitation, or other types of aggression.</p> <p>There are several categories of abuse of adults, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual abuse* • Physical abuse* • Emotional/psychological abuse* • Neglect* • Elder abuse* • Financial abuse* • Exploitation* <p>Within the context of the Catholic church and faith-based entities, it is also important to recognise spiritual abuse* as an additional subtype of abuse.</p>
Adult at risk	means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who are elderly. • with a disability. • who suffer from mental illness. • who have diminished capacity. • who have cognitive impairment. • who have suffered previous abuse. • who are experiencing transient risks. • who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance. • who are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background/ • who are of diverse sexuality/ • who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse.
Allegation	means a complaint, still to be verified, claiming, or asserting that someone has committed an act of abuse against a child or adult. The term is used interchangeably and in combination with “complaint”.
Audit	means a mechanism to assess how a Church Authority, ministry or entity governed by a Church Authority, is implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference	means the assembly of Bishops of Australia exercising together certain pastoral offices for the Catholics of Australia.
Bishop	means a diocesan bishop or archbishop, the ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of the Eastern Churches
Canon law	means the revised code of canon law promulgated by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in 1983 and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches as promulgated in 1990 and any other universal or legislation promulgated by the competent ecclesiastical authority.
Canonical Offence	<p>means canonical crimes¹ of sexual abuse committed by clerics and religious are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts. • performing sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person. • the production, exhibition, possession, or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions. <p>¹ The canonical crimes/delicts/offences committed by clerics or religious as stated in Art. 1 §1 a) of <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i>.</p> <p>² Definition of vulnerable person as stated in Art. 1 §2 b) of <i>Vos Estis Lux Mundi</i>: “means: any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence”. This definition is captured by the term ‘Adult at risk’ within the NCSS.</p>
Catholic Religious Australia	CRA is the conference of major superiors comprising leaders of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life within the Catholic Church in Australia.
Certification	means the act of giving official authority or approval and certification of the implementation of the NCSS and permission to use the ACSL Certification symbol.
Child/ren	means individuals under 18 years of age.
Child abuse	There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Definition sourced from the Australian Institute of Family Studies: https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect

	<p>Child abuse refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission. Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical abuse • emotional/psychological abuse • neglect • sexual abuse • exposure to family violence
Church Authority	<p>means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a diocesan bishop or archbishop, an ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of an eparchy of an Eastern Church. • the competent authority, howsoever titled, exercising the ministry of governance for religious institutes in Australia in accordance with their Constitutions; or • for ministerial PJPS the competent authority in accordance with the statutes. • for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organization in accordance with its rules.
Church Protocols	<p>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.</p>
Civil Standard	<p>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).</p>
Clergy	<p>includes bishops, priests and deacons.</p>
Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia	<p>means any cleric or member of a religious institute who is specifically recruited or welcomed from overseas by a Church Authority or entity.</p>
Cleric	<p>a member of the clergy.</p>
Clericalist/ism	<p>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”.</p>
Cognitive impairment	<p>means when a person has trouble remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions that affect their everyday life, because of their condition. Some causes of long-term or permanent cognitive impairment include dementia, stroke, or brain injury.</p> <p>For further information see: https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment</p>
Complainant	<p>means any person who makes a complaint that may include any allegation, suspicion, concern, or report of a breach of the entity’s Code of Conduct. A complaint may also include disclosures made to an institution that may be about, or relate to, abuse in the entity’s context.</p>

Conflicts of interest	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’, <i>Australasian Journal on Ageing</i> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding the nature and effect of the decision; • freely and voluntarily deciding; and • communicating the decision in some way.
Diocese	means a diocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelatry of the Latin Church and an eparchy of an Eastern Church.
Disability (persons with)	means those who have physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (Article 2, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.)
Diversity	means a range of people who have various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests.
Diverse sexuality	refers to all the diversities of sex characteristics, sexual orientations, and gender identities, without the need to specify each of the identities, behaviours, or characteristics that form this plurality.
Elder abuse	means a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.

Emotional abuse (adults)	is a common form of abuse that occurs in close relationships. Emotional abuse is defined as abuse that occurs when a person is subjected to behaviours or actions aimed at preventing or controlling their behaviour, with the intent to cause them emotional harm or fear, through manipulation, isolation, or intimidation.
Emotional abuse (children)	Emotional abuse of children refers to a parent or caregiver's inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts towards a child and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurturing and emotional availability. Such acts of commission or omission are likely to damage a child's self-esteem or social competence.
Entity	means a diocese, religious institute, ministerial PJP (including their agencies) or association recognised as Catholic in accord with canon law.
Exploitation	is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person. It is taking advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain.
Exposure to family violence	is generally considered to be a form of psychologically abusive behaviour, where a child is present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse, or psychological maltreatment, or is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member's violent behaviour.
Financial abuse	involves the illegal or improper use or mismanagement of a person's money, property or resources. Stealing, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, forced changes to a will, inappropriate removal of a resident's decision-making powers and misuse of power of attorney are all forms of financial abuse or exploitation.
Formation/program	means a program preparing individuals for ordination or profession of vows and a life-long journey to the invitation of Christ to proclaim and live the Gospel message, within the life of the Church.
Good Standing	A person in good standing is regarded as having complied with all their safeguarding obligations, and is not subject to any form of allegation, disciplinary process, sanction suspension.
Grooming (child)	refers to a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging a child as a precursor to sexual abuse. It includes establishing a 'special' friendship/relationship with the child. Grooming can include the conditioning of parents and other adults to think that the relationship with the child is 'normal' and positive.
Grooming (adult)	is the predatory act of manoeuvring another individual into a position that makes them more isolated, dependent, likely to trust, and more vulnerable to abusive behaviour.
Guardian	refers to the person(s) who has the legal authority to care for the personal and property interests of another person.
Institutional abuse	means abuse or poor care within an institution or specific care setting. Possible causes of institutional abuse include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a "closed" culture within an organisation where transparency is discouraged. • lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service. • failure to properly check the backgrounds and interview staff. • inadequate training. • lack of safeguarding policies and procedures. • lack of support of staff by management. • poor supervision; and • poor standards of care.
Lay/lay person	means members of the Catholic Church and Church personnel other than bishops, priests, deacons and religious.

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

	thinking, and related emotions. Reflective practice enables potential changes in approaches to similar future events to be identified, with the aim of improved performance.
Religious institute	means an entity within the Catholic Church whose members commit themselves through religious vows to lead a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. Societies of apostolic life resemble religious institutes in that their members also live a life in common. They do not take religious vows but live out the apostolic purpose of the group. In these Standards, the term ‘religious institutes’ is used to include religious institutes, societies of apostolic life and secular institutes.
Religious	means a member of an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life.
Respondent	means a person against whom a complaint is made.
Review	means an internal self-assessment of an entity’s implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. A review can also be an assessment that forms part of the process of continuous improvement which occurs when following up recommendations made during an audit.
Risk-based audit and Review Framework	means a framework for assessing the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards that reflects a proportionate response based on the risk profile of the Church Authority.
Risk Profile	means an assessment against key safeguarding risk factors.
Safeguarding	refers to proactive measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals. These measures allow children, young people and adults to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. Within the life of the Church, safeguarding includes pastoral, liturgical and spiritual responses through engagement in the Sacraments and the life of the Church.
Safeguarding Committee	means a committee established to advise and support the Church Authority on all matters relating to safeguarding, including the development and implementation of a Safeguarding Implementation Plan and coordinating annual self-audits at a local level. Committee members need relevant and varied professional expertise in relation to safeguarding, child protection, organisational culture and structure, policy development, etc. and include lay women and men.
Safeguarding Culture	means embedding safeguarding into everything an organisation does. In promoting this culture, young people and adults at risk will understand they will be listened to, supported, and known action will be taken on their behalf.
Safeguarding Commitment Statement	means a Commitment Statement describing an entity’s commitment to keep children and adults safe from harm. It informs the entity’s safeguarding culture.
Safeguarding Co-ordinator	means an individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
Safeguarding Implementation Plan	means a documented plan which articulates actions to be taken across the entity to ensure safeguarding practices are in place. It includes actions, strategies, responsibilities, delegations, and accountabilities, and tracks review and progress. It is overseen by the Safeguarding Committee.
Safeguarding policies and procedures	means any policies or procedures of the entity that address elements of safeguarding children and adults. For example, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment. • risk management. • complaint handling; and • acceptable use of online applications.

Seminarian	a student in a theological formation and education centre preparing for ordination as a priest.
Seminary	means a centre for the formation and education of students preparing for ordination.
Sexual abuse (adult)	Sexual abuse is a form of sexual assault. Sexual abuse includes rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment, and sexual interference. Sexual activity with an adult who is incapacitated by a mental or physical condition (such as dementia) that impairs his or her ability to grant informed consent, is defined as sexual assault/abuse. Sexual assault/abuse includes where through force, threats or abuse of authority, an individual commits a canonical offence or forces someone to perform or submit to sexual acts. Sexual assault is a crime.
Sexual abuse (child)	refers to exposing a child to any form of sexual activity. This may or may not involve physical contact. This may take the form of taking sexually explicit photographs or videos of children, forcing children to watch or take part in sexual acts and forcing or coercing children to have sex or engage in sexual acts with other children or adults.
Spiritual abuse	means abuse of a person that invokes a person's religious beliefs and faith to perpetrate harm. Spiritual abuse can occur as a secondary experience of abuse when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of spiritual authority and trust within the Church a
Substantiated complaint	means under the civil standard of proof an allegation of abuse for which the investigator finds that sufficient evidence exists to believe that the alleged conduct more likely than not occurred.
Third parties	means any individual, group or legal entity outside the Church entity who contract services and facilities to or from the Church entity.
Transient Risk	means short-term risk, experienced by people at different stages in their life: e.g. when someone is vulnerable due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grief • bereavement • relationship breakdown • homelessness • unemployment • financial hardship
Trauma-informed and victim-centred support	is a strengths-based framework which is founded on five core principles – safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Trauma-informed services do no harm: they do not re-traumatise or blame victims for their efforts to manage their traumatic reactions, and they embrace a message of hope and optimism that recovery is possible. In trauma-informed services, trauma survivors are seen as unique individuals who have managed their responses to the experiences as best that they could.
Validation	means an assessment by ACSL of any self-assessment, review or audit, undertaken to achieve ACSL Certification status.
Working With Children Check	means generic term used in the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards to denote the statutory screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. There is not yet a single national framework setting out requirements for 'working with children' checks. Each State/Territory in Australia has its own system. They are one part of a Church entity's recruitment, selection, and screening practices.
Working with Vulnerable People Check	means the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 in the Australian Capital Territory which requires those working with children (and other vulnerable groups) to complete a Working with Vulnerable People Check and be registered before they can commence employment.

Tasmania has a 'Working with Vulnerable People Check' which requires all employees and volunteers aged 16 and over working in childcare services or other child-related services to apply for a WWVP check. To date, only the ACT and Tasmania have this requirement.