

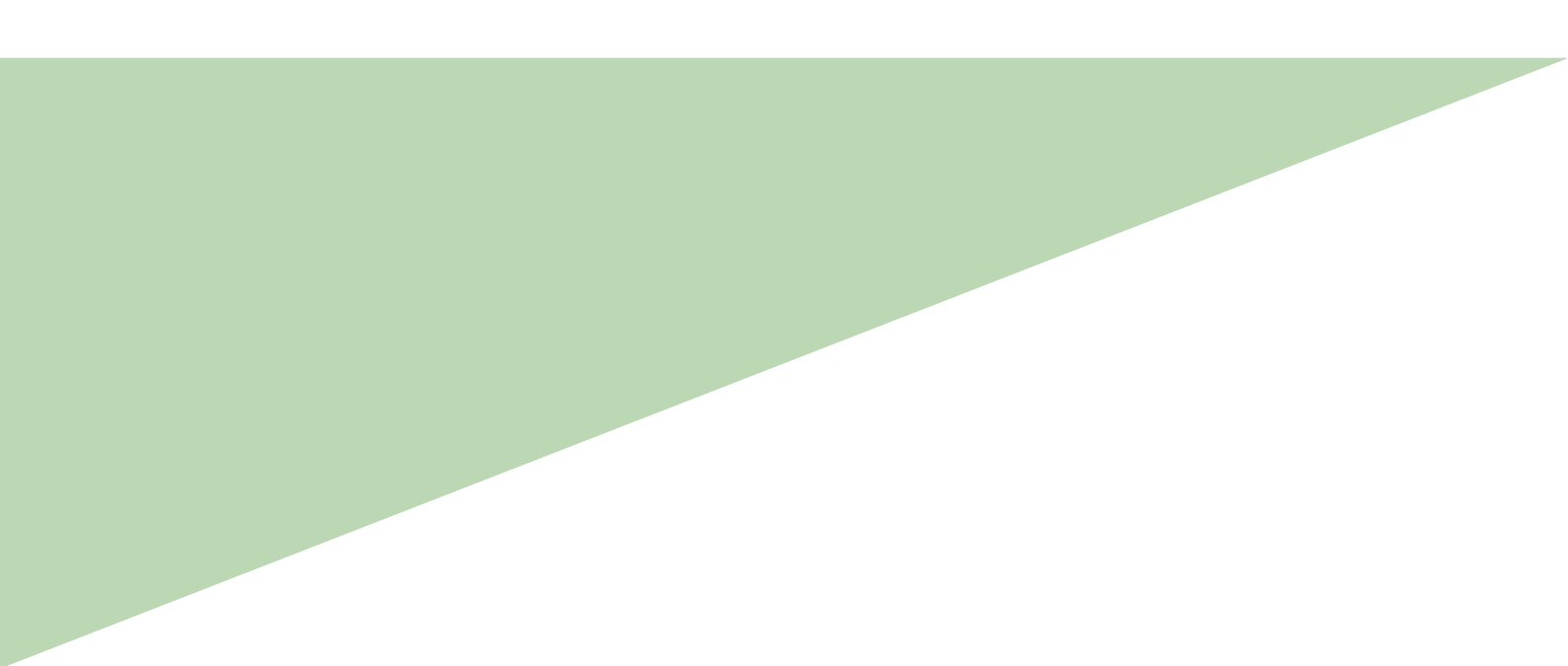
Diocese of Wagga Wagga

Safeguarding Audit Report

December 2025

National Catholic
Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:



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

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

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

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Table of Contents

- Table of Contents 3**
- Foreword 4**
- TO THE BISHOP OF WAGGA WAGGA 5**
 - DISCLAIMER 5
- 1. Executive Summary 6**
 - 1.1 CONTEXT 6
 - 1.2 BACKGROUND 6
 - 1.3 AUDIT CLASSIFICATION 7
 - 1.4 AUDIT APPROACH 7
 - 1.5 IN SCOPE ASSESSMENT 8
- 2. Overarching findings 10**
- Table 1: Summary of NCSS Assessment 16**
- 3. Summary of recommendations 17**
- 4. Assessment of compliance with NCSS indicators 18**
- 5. Detailed findings and Recommendations 35**
- Appendix A – Compliance Assessment 46**
- Appendix B – Audit Finding Priorities 46**
- Appendix C - Glossary 47**

Foreword

Safeguarding certification by ACSL is an independent recognition that a religious entity and its ministries meet the requirements of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. Certification achievement is measured against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards set by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia as the minimum benchmark for providing a safe Church for everyone. Compliance with the Standards is demonstrated through an independent assessment.

NCSS Certification:

- Provides independent recognition that the religious entity is committed to safeguarding.
- Fosters a culture of quality and continuous improvement.
- Reduces and mitigates safeguarding risks.
- Provides the community with confidence that the Church is taking action to address past abuse.
- Fosters a systematic approach to safeguarding quality and performance.
- Increases capability and safeguarding capacity.
- Complies with regulatory requirements, and, where relevant, established canonical requirements.

The following report is based on an independent assessment of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga's performance against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. The report includes compliance level ratings for each standard, criteria, and indicator, and includes explanatory notes for key findings.

The information contained in this report is based on evidence provided by the Diocese of Wagga Wagga 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 BISHOP OF WAGGA WAGGA

Opinion

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

In ACSL's opinion, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Audit Report for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga offers a true and fair view of the Diocese's safeguarding policies, procedures and processes as at 5 November 2025 and of its performance against the NCSS for the period ended on that date.

ACSL is independent of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga 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 Diocese of Wagga Wagga and its representatives at the time of the assessment and, where applicable, any subsequent information the Diocese of Wagga Wagga has supplied through the reporting process.

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

Signed:



Dr Ursula Stephens
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd



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

30 December 2025

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Context

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

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

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

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

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

This audit report includes the results of the assessment against the NCSS for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

1.2 Background

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has a population of 219,967 of whom 26% or 60,605 identify as Catholics¹. More than half the Catholic population is 60 years and older. The Diocese is home to 2,517 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, an increase of almost 200 since the 2016 Census. Languages other than English spoken in the Catholic population include Filipino, Oceania and Pacific Island languages, Malayalam and Italian. Established in 1917, the Diocese of Wagga Wagga has a rich faith tradition based on the early evangelising work of the Goulburn Diocese, and schools and institutions established by the Sisters of Mercy, the Presentation Sisters and the Christian Brothers. The faith communities are nourished and sustained by the sacramental life of the church administered and accessed through 31 parishes, 29 schools (24 primary and 5 secondary) and support services offered by Centacare throughout the Diocese. The Diocese stretches from Khancoban in the east to Griffith and Yenda in the west.

Pope Francis appointed Bishop Mark Edwards as 6th Bishop of Wagga Wagga following the retirement of Bishop Gerard Hanna, due to ill health, in 2016. Bishop Edwards was received into the Diocese of Wagga Wagga at St Michael's Cathedral Wagga Wagga on 22nd July 2020. He serves on the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education, and the National Catholic Education Commission.

¹ [WaggaWagga -2021Diocesan-Social-Profile-1.pdf](#)

Vianney College is the Seminary for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga. Founded in 1992 by Bishop William Brennan, it is located on the outskirts of the city of Wagga Wagga. Its courses are recognised by Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga and by the Urbaniana University in Rome. Vianney College was established primarily as the seminary for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga. However, its students now include candidates for priesthood and religious life from other dioceses and religious congregations.

The Chancery, which oversees the pastoral and administrative governance of the Diocese and includes the Safeguarding Office is located in Wagga Wagga.

As in other dioceses, institutional child abuse has historically occurred in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, and this is acknowledged by Bishop Mark in his video acknowledgement and apology to victims and survivors, and in the Diocesan Safeguarding Commitment Statement.

1.3 Audit classification

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

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

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

1.4 Audit approach

The purpose of the NCSS is to build a culture of shared responsibility for safeguarding and to ensure that policies, practices, and codes of behaviour work together to prevent, detect, and respond appropriately to potential or actual incidents of child abuse.

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



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 Diocese of Wagga Wagga 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).

1.5 In scope assessment

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga was assessed against the NCSS, covering both children and adults at risk in September 2025. ACSL completed a review of the Diocese's NCSS Self-Assessment, which provided the opportunity to present evidence of their congruency with the NCSS. Fieldwork was conducted from September 16 to 21, 2025 inclusive. Thirteen (13) site visits were included in the audit.

Key personnel at the Diocese of Wagga Wagga were engaged to discuss safeguarding practices that are subject to existing regulatory requirements and external accreditations. Under the ACSL audit framework, representatives from these entities were interviewed and sites visited to assess the implementation of their safeguarding practices.

The audit scope, as agreed between the Diocese and ACSL, is outlined below:

- Diocesan Leadership and Governance where the field work and site visits will consider how overarching policies and procedures support safeguarding efforts across the Diocese.
- Confirmation and attestation that regulatory requirements are being met for WWCC, record keeping and complaints management.
- Adequacy of recruitment, training and supervision policies and practices for clergy, staff and volunteers.
- Safeguarding management relating to how the Diocese undertakes safeguarding risks for children and adults at risk.
- Site visits to six parishes across the Diocese.
- Declaration of Assurance relating to Wagga Wagga Catholic Education schools, activities and facilities.
- Declaration of Assurance relating to Centacare services, and facilities.
- Meetings with the Chief Executive Officers of Catholic Education and Centacare in the Diocese.
- Assessment of the design and testing of the operation of safeguarding controls implemented by the Diocese.
- Site visits to:
 - McAlroy House
 - Mt Erin Boarding School
 - Holy Spirit Parish, Lavington
 - St Mel's Parish, Narrandera
 - Cathedral Parish, Wagga Wagga
 - St Mary's Parish, the Rock
 - St Mary's Star of the Sea Parish, Corowa
 - Sacred Heart Parish, Kooringal
- Interviews with over 50 personnel – inclusive of clergy, paid personnel and volunteers.

2. Overarching findings

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

Our assessment indicates that the Diocese of Wagga Wagga has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 94 (92%) of the relevant indicators to their operations. Assessment for each maturity scale is as follows:

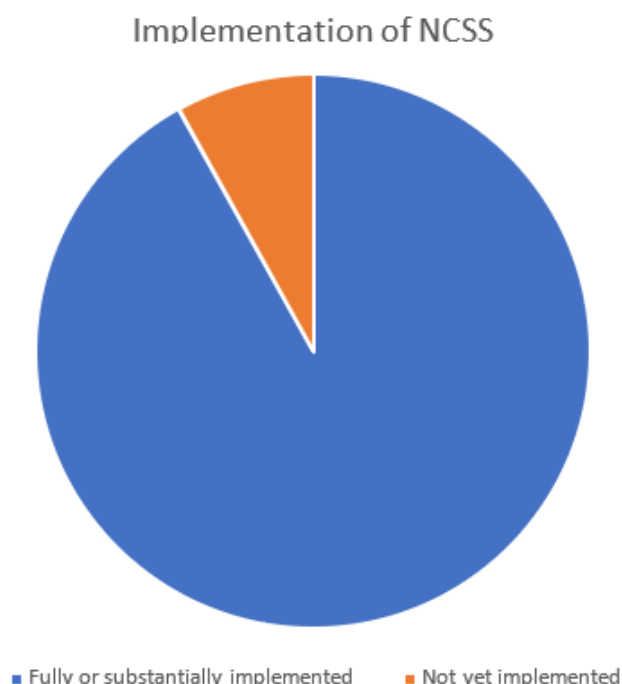
- 61 indicators are developed and embedded
- 33 indicators are substantially progressed.
- 8 indicators are in the initial stages of implementation.

Of the 104 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church Authorities, 2 of these are not relevant to the Diocese of Wagga Wagga operations.

ACSL assessment of the implementation of NCSS indicators by a Church Authority has been determined using a four-point maturity scale ².

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**.



² 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.

There is a genuine and tangible commitment to safeguarding in the Diocese. On his appointment to the Diocese the Bishop conducted a review of Diocesan Safeguarding. He accepted all the recommendations of the review and resourced the Safeguarding Unit it envisaged. These appointments sent a strong message to the Diocesan clergy and parishes of his priority of safeguarding.

As the Bishop's senior delegate, the Vicar General plays a pivotal leadership role in advocating for and modelling safeguarding practices, while the Safeguarding Manager has been instrumental to ensuring the Diocese is meeting its responsibilities in relation to handling individual safeguarding matters. The decision to maintain safeguarding roles will assist the Diocese to be able to undertake more proactive work, particularly in relation to supporting parishes. Evidence of safeguarding leadership is also demonstrated in individual parishes.

The Diocesan personnel interviewed approached the audit with openness, acknowledging the importance of accountability and continuous improvement. They identified opportunities to further strengthen their safeguarding credentials, and their eagerness to receive feedback to support them with this work, which is a notable strength. The Diocese continues to draw on commissioned external experts to provide advice about safeguarding and professional standards matters.

In support of its NCSS self-assessment and throughout the audit, the Diocese provided policies, procedures, templates, communication materials, training materials and other resources demonstrating its understanding of and engagement with the Standards. Other materials supplied to us by parishes visited provided tangible evidence that the Standards are being addressed at a local level.

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



Bishop Mark's video message that emphasises the pastoral apology and acknowledging victims and survivors of abuse and the importance of safeguarding is a powerful message that is regularly shown in parishes.

The Diocese's Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Commitment Statement, were both refreshed in 2024 to acknowledge the change in NCSS Ed2 and include consideration of adults at risk. Both are public documents that are made available throughout the Diocese in a variety of ways.

While the Safeguarding Policy applies to both children and adults, there is scope to better reflect the Diocese's commitment to safeguarding adults by organising the policy around the key competencies required under the NCSS Standards (rather than the Child Safe Standards as is currently the case). The Safeguarding Policy should also refer to the Diocese's Safeguarding Strategic Plan and Safeguarding Risk Management Framework.

The leadership of the Diocese is unequivocally committed to implementing and sustaining a strong safeguarding culture through the organisation. On his appointment Bishop Mark immediately prioritised filling the Safeguarding Manager role and preparing the Diocese for its safeguarding audit.

The Safeguarding Manager articulated her personal and professional commitment to safeguarding and spoke clearly to the responsibilities of the Safeguarding Unit to establish Diocesan wide structures and practices to support safeguarding. While the Safeguarding Office is small and a new Safeguarding Officer is being recruited, positive feedback was received about the training and support the Office provides to parishes.

The Safeguarding Manager formally reports to the Bishop and maintains a register of all allegations, reportable conduct notifications and serious abuse or misconduct matters being handled by the

Safeguarding Office or other entities of the Diocese operating with the authority of the Bishop.

The Safeguarding Committee provides an important ongoing mechanism of accountability, transparency and continuous improvement. The Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR) should formalise the Bishop's intention to meet with the Committee at least annually. The TOR should also specify the nature of key (deidentified) safeguarding data that will be reported to the Committee to assist it to fulfil its role.

ACSL encourages the Diocese to

- formally identify and document the senior roles across the entities of the Diocese that have key safeguarding responsibilities (that is, those to whom the responsibility for safeguarding is delegated by the Bishop) as comprising the 'Diocesan Safeguarding Executive', and their safeguarding accountabilities to the Bishop.
- Schedule regular meetings of the Safeguarding Executive with the Bishop and the Safeguarding Manager, to discuss important safeguarding and serious professional misconduct issues, and report against agreed safeguarding data and compliance indicators which should also be documented.
- Create a strategic line of sight over operational safeguarding data, by requiring the Safeguarding Executive to notify the Safeguarding Manager of any serious abuse or misconduct involving children or vulnerable adults. This report should include all reportable allegations and incidents involving sexual misconduct, sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and serious neglect, being handled by entities of the Diocese.

The Diocese has a comprehensive Code of Conduct which was recently reviewed to ensure it aligns with the requirements of Standard 1. The Code is provided to all staff and volunteers, and its requirements are covered in safeguarding training.

The Diocese regularly reviews its overarching Risk Management Framework to reflect that there are mechanisms in place to prevent, identify, and mitigate safeguarding risks to children and adults. These mechanisms are currently reflected across existing safeguarding policies, procedures and resources.

At a parish level, the need to risk assess activities from a safeguarding perspective is well understood. The parishes visited had either completed or were in the process of completing risk assessments using templates developed by the Safeguarding Office. The Diocese has recently developed a Safeguarding Risk Management Framework to support parishes to identify and mitigate risks and document risk management strategies for common activity types. The Safeguarding Risk Management Framework should specify that it is the responsibility of parish priests to approve and sign risk assessments.

The Safeguarding Risk Management Framework in its current form if inked to the Diocese's overarching Risk Management Framework and key safeguarding policies, would capture the main strategies (beyond risk assessing activities) employed by the Diocese to prevent, identify and mitigate safeguarding risks to children and adults.

The Safeguarding Information and Record Keeping Policies support personnel to understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping for safeguarding and professional standards. This is also addressed in the Code of Conduct and via safeguarding training.



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

NCSS Standards 2, 3 & 4 are focused on empowering children and adults to have a say in decisions that affect them as this is an integral element of a safe church for everyone. The Diocese has done significant work in this area including:

- producing a range of materials to make children aware of their rights to be safe from abuse and who to contact if they are concerned about their safety. This information is, overall, displayed in high traffic areas in the parishes and ministries.
- displaying information aimed at children in all areas visited.
- preparing materials for adults at risk.
- encouraging children to appreciate the importance of friendships, social connections and appropriate relationships that support a culture of safeguarding.
- providing materials on the availability of abuse prevention programs locally in parishes or ministries. The audit noted these are available in public areas in the venues visited.
- participating in community awareness programs, for instance, National Child Protection Week and NAIDOC week.
- encouraging parents and carers/guardians to participate in decision-making that affects their child.
- having parent engagement strategies that include partnering with families.
- demonstrating a good understanding of the diversity and the needs for these groups of parishioners (across a range of ministries and parishes).

The recommendations below are designed to further assist the Diocese in connecting with families, carers and communities and build a safeguarding culture, where ministries and activities are provided in culturally safe and inclusive ways that facilitate self-determination.

It is recommended that the Diocese:

- engages more informally than formally with adults at risk when seeking feedback on how to support them to feel safe in ministries. Whilst the Diocese has developed some information about safe and respectful relationships for adults at risk, this could be distributed widely across the Diocese. Further, some generic and age-appropriate information could be provided about abuse prevention programs in public areas.
- continues to review how its safeguarding and abuse awareness information is being received and shared within different cultural communities within the parishes and ensure information is provided in community languages where appropriate.

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



The Diocese has comprehensive recruitment policies and procedures that outline safeguarding requirements in its advertising, vetting, and screening of personnel, and uses a centralised system to record the WWCC information of personnel. A zero-tolerance approach is explicit in advertising, screening, and recruitment practices.

Personnel interviewed demonstrated a good understanding of safeguarding either through seminary formation, or through previous experiences or in-service induction.

The selection, screening and assessment processes for candidates wishing to apply for the Diaconate and the Priesthood are comprehensive and compliant with relevant Church directives.

The seminary has a structured program for the formation of candidates for priesthood, which includes robust screening processes and education in safeguarding, including exploring the potential challenges candidates will face in priesthood.

Positions are risk assessed prior to advertisement and recruitment practices follow normative human resource management practices.

ACSL notes the importance given to pastoral supervision to clergy and personnel. We did note that whilst supervision is in place for most personnel, this could be extended further to all personnel. Additionally, annual appraisals need to include a safeguarding dimension.

The Diocese uses the Australian Catholic Ministry Register and has registered for the Catholic Ministry Formation Register.

Ideally, all personnel undertake safeguarding induction prior to commencing in their roles. However, ACSL also acknowledges there may be timing issues associated with safeguarding induction and if this occurs, then it is expected that all personnel undertake an induction within 12 weeks of commencing their role.

The Diocese recognises that specific roles require additional training and support needs and there is a regular training program that focuses on building and maintaining culturally safe environments.

Interviews with Diocesan staff, clergy, ministry, and parish personnel indicate a sound understanding of the requirements for child safeguarding, including knowledge of the appropriate responses should a complaint or concern be raised, indicators of child sexual abuse, including harmful behaviours of child towards another child.

The Diocese has begun to implement training for personnel to understand the safeguarding needs of adults at risk. ACSL recommends that the Diocese uses its risk framework to develop targeted safeguarding training for specific ministries.

The safeguarding training program is subject to continuous improvement.

It is recommended that:

- The Diocese will ensure all clergy undertake a minimum of 6 hours professional/pastoral supervision each year.
- The Diocese implements an annual performance process for all personnel.
- Diocese will continue to regularly update their safeguarding training to ensure it remains current and relevant.



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

There is evidence that the reporting system of the Diocese is working effectively. The Diocesan Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements. This was demonstrated by Diocesan personnel who discussed how the complaint processes encouraged and empowered personnel to feel safe and confident to make a complaint. Further, the process was followed through with a positive outcome for the personnel.

The requirement to maintain safeguarding records for a minimum of 50 years is documented in the Privacy Policy and is appropriately implemented.

ACSL recommends that once a complaint is resolved that all relevant parties are informed of the outcomes.

The auditor was asked for identification in the selected parishes and ministries, and it was noted there were also 'sign in' and 'sign out' registers in parishes.

The IT monitoring system is managed by the Diocese. The Diocesan policies need to state that all equipment will be monitored. The Diocese will ensure that all safeguarding risk management plans address physical and online risks within the provision of ministry and/or services, including risks arising from the checklist items.

The Diocese is yet to embed online policies to address the safe use of online applications; and provide resources for children and adults to safely use IT platforms.

Key safeguarding policies and procedures relating to safeguarding requirements are in place and operating effectively. The policies and procedures address the requirements of the NCSS. They are accessible and presented in child friendly formats. There is an opportunity to provide safeguarding policies and procedures in multi-communication formats – for example, Plain English, videos.

The leaders champion and model best practices in safeguarding and personnel interviewed during the audit understand and appear to implement safeguarding policies and procedures.

It is recommended that:

- The Diocesan IT policies state that all the equipment provided to personnel to engage in ministry activities will be monitored by the Diocese.
- The Diocese will ensure that all safeguarding risk management plans address physical and online risks within the provision of ministry and/or services, including risks arising from the checklist items.
- The Diocese promote e-safety policies to address the safe use of online applications.
- The Diocese further test the processes in place if they become aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their ministry and/or service.

Table 1: Summary of NCSS Assessment

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

National Catholic Safeguarding Standard	# NCSS indicators	Not Relevant	Assessment of Implementation			
			Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1: Committed leadership, governance & culture	17	1	9	7		
2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate	6			3	3	
3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6		1	5		
4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected	4		1	3		
5: Robust human resource management	22		19		3	
6: Effective complaints management	19		13	6		
7: Ongoing training & education	11		4	5	2	
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		6			
TOTAL	104	2	61	33	8	0
		102	92%		8%	

3. Summary of recommendations

- There are no Priority 1 (high rated) audit recommendations for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.
- There are 4 sets of Priority 2 (medium rated) recommendations.
- There are no Priority 1 (low rated) recommendations.

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

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

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

Competency Area	Recommendation	Priority
Standard 1	<p>1.5.1 to 1.5.3 The Diocese continue with the risk assessment roll-out across parishes and ensure these include consideration of adults at risk.</p> <p>1.6.1 & 1.6.2 Provide support to parishes to implement and maintain robust record keeping systems.</p>	
Standards 2,3 and 4	<p>2.1.1-2.1.3 The Diocese develop strategies to engage adults at risk and their carers to provide feedback.</p> <p>2.3.1 The Diocese provide information to adults at risk and/their carers with information about safe and respectful relationships.</p> <p>2.4.1 The Diocese provide generic abuse information, access and/or referral to appropriate abuse intervention programs.</p> <p>3.2.1 The Diocese further develop ways for families, carers and communities to discuss safeguarding.</p> <p>3.2.2 All parishes provide safeguarding information including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s).</p> <p>3.3.1 Parishes implement processes to engage families, carers and communities about their views on policies and practices for keeping children and adults safe.</p> <p>3.3.2 Parishes continue to inform families, carers and communities on the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services directly to children and adults at risk.</p> <p>3.4.1 All parishes promote and/or participate in activities which raise awareness of abuse prevention and the rights and dignity of adults.</p> <p>4.1.1 The Diocese update the Safeguarding Policy and procedures to demonstrate an understanding, and awareness of the diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse.</p> <p>4.2.1 The Diocese develop materials in accessible languages and formats to promote inclusion and inform children and adults of support and complaints processes.</p> <p>4.3.1 Enhance the Safeguarding Policy and procedures by organising the policy around the key competencies required under the NCCS Standards.</p>	
Standards 5 and 7	<p>5.4.1 All clergy undertake professional supervision, mentoring.</p> <p>5.4.1 Annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.</p> <p>5.5.4 The Diocese take steps to ensure all clergy and religious undertake professional pastoral supervision.</p> <p>5.5.5 All clergy undertake regular appraisals.</p> <p>7.1.2 The Diocese ensures induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training covers the checklist items.</p>	

	<p>7.1.3 Ensure annual training records are maintained by the Diocese in keeping with regulation.</p> <p>7.2.1; 7.3.1; 7.4.2; 7.5.1 & 7.5.2 The Diocese continues to ensure education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, record keeping, privacy and cultural safety.</p>	
Standards 6 and 8	<p>6.1.3 The Diocese document clear procedures for identifying and mitigating actual and perceived conflicts of interest in complaint management.</p> <p>6.3.2 The Diocese ensure that 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 and adults.</p> <p>6.3.3 The Diocese ensure complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed of progress in dealing with their complaint.</p> <p>6.3.4 The Diocese ensure that trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced or is alleging abuse.</p> <p>6.6.1 The Diocese ensure that appropriately trained personnel are engaged in consultation with the respondent to counsel and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent.</p> <p>8.1.1 The Diocese ensure that all safeguarding risk management plans address physical and online risks within ministry and/or services.</p> <p>8.1.2 The Diocese embed online policies to address the safe use of online applications; and provide resources for parishes to safely use IT platforms.</p> <p>8.2.2 The Diocese implement a system to routinely monitor the online environment.</p> <p>8.3.1 The Diocese develops a plan to assess and manage risk if becoming aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their ministries and/or services.</p>	

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

4. Assessment of compliance with NCSS indicators

Standard 1		Committed leadership, governance and culture			
<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 Church Authority and/or relevant leadership body and is publicly available.	✓			
1.1.2	The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, widely displayed, and made publicly available.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.2 - A culture of safeguarding children and adults is championed and modelled at all levels of the Church Authority from the top down and bottom up.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.2.1	A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority and leaders by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone. • emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and • actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management. 	✓			
1.2.2	A Safeguarding Committee is appointed at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices, policies, and procedures.	✓			
1.2.3	A Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) is appointed with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.	✓			
1.2.4	Personnel understand that good safeguarding practices are everyone's responsibility and are empowered to contribute to the organisation's safeguarding practices.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.3 - Governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy across the entity's activities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.3.1	Governance arrangements are transparent and include safeguarding roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability for the safeguarding of children and adults is clear.	✓			

1.3.2	Where the Church Authority's governance includes countries other than Australia, the NCSS are applied wherever possible, taking into account cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.	Not relevant to current activities			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.4 – The entity's Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural standards towards children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.4.1	The Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour.		✓		
1.4.2	The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, families, and carers.		✓		
1.4.3	The Code of Conduct considers the needs of all children and adults at risk, paying particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations people. • individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are considered to be at risk of abuse; • individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. • children in out of home care, or are homeless; and, • children and adults of diverse sexuality. 	✓			
1.4.4	The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.	✓			
Observations:					
1.4.1 & 1.4.2 The updated Code of Conduct was released in August 2025, and it is being rolled out across the Diocese. The Code will be translated into specific language groups relevant to parishioners and those people who are in contact with the Diocese. The Code will also be presented in an accessible format for everyone. Refer recommendation #1.					
Criterion 1.5 - The entity's risk management plan focuses on preventing, identifying, and mitigating safeguarding risks to children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.5.1	The Risk Management Plan considers the needs of children and adults with diminished capacity, and how and when adults at risk make informed choices (dignity of risk).		✓		
1.5.2	The Risk Management Plan incorporates procedures to assess, evaluate, review, and oversee safeguarding of children and adults at risk within its ministry and/or service.		✓		
1.5.3	There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report, and review risks.		✓		
Observations:					
1.5.1 – 1.5.3 Risk Assessments are advanced in the Diocesan sphere including at Mt Erina Boarding School. The audit team noted that they need to be further developed in parishes and to include adults at risk. 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 and 1.6.2 The record keeping processes are developed and need to be progressed further to embed them across all parishes. 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 an entity’s ministry and/or services are informed about their rights, including safety, decision making, participation and how a complaint will be managed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.1.1	Age-appropriate strategies are used to engaged children, seek their views about what makes them feel safe, and enable them to participate in decisions that affect them.		✓		
2.1.2	Adults at risk (or carers where appropriate) are engaged to provide their views about decisions which affect them, what makes them feel safe and to contribute to safeguarding approaches.			✓	
2.1.3	The organisation makes children and adults at risk aware of their rights, including their right to be safe from abuse, and who to contact if they are concerned about their safety or the safety of others.		✓		
Observations: 2.1.1 to 2.1.3 Parishes could develop further resources to engage children. The Diocese is developing strategies to engage adults at risk and their carers to provide feedback. Refer recommendation #2.					
Criterion 2.2 - The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, helping children feel safe and less isolated.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.2.1	Children are provided with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful peer relationships.			✓	
Observations: 2.2.1 The Diocesan agencies have provided children with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful relationships and these have yet to be adapted and rolled out to parishes. 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 The Diocese is yet to provide information to adults at risk and/or their carers with information about 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 Diocese is yet to provide generic abuse information, access and/or referral to appropriate abuse intervention programs. Refer recommendation #2.					

Standard 3		Partnering with families, carers and communities			
Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults.					
Criterion 3.1 – Parents, carers and/or guardians participate in decisions affecting their child, or adults with diminished capacity.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.1.1	The entity encourages parents, carers and/or guardians to take an active role in monitoring the safety of those engaged in the ministry and/or service.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 3.2 – Families, carers and communities are engaged with and are provided information about the Church Authority’s approach to safeguarding.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.		✓		
3.2.2	Safeguarding information is provided and widely available, including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinators.		✓		
Observations: 3.2.1 Parishes will develop more strategies to promote more dialogue and provide a range of ways for families, carers and communities to discuss safeguarding. 3.2.2 All parishes have yet to provide families, carers and communities with relevant safeguarding information including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Coordinator(s). Refer recommendation #2.					
Criterion 3.3 - Families, carers and communities are informed about the Church Authority’s operations and governance; and have an opportunity to have a say in the safeguarding policies and practices.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.3.1	Processes are in place to engage families, carers and communities about their views on safeguarding policies and practices.		✓		
3.3.2	Families, carers and communities are aware of the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services directly to children and adults at risk.		✓		
Observations: 3.3.1 Parishes need to further implement processes to engage families, carers and communities about their views on policies and practices for keeping children and adults safe. 3.3.2 Parishes need to continue to educate families, carers and communities on the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services directly to children and adults at risk. 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: 3.4.1 The Diocese have yet to promote and/or participate in activities which raise awareness of abuse prevention and the rights and dignity of adults. Refer recommendation #2.					

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					
4.1.1 The Diocese has yet to ensure the Safeguarding Policy and procedures demonstrate an understanding, and awareness of the diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse. Refer recommendation #2.					
Criterion 4.2 – Children and adults have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that promote inclusion, are culturally safe, and accessible.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.2.1	Information about company processes and supports are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.		✓		
Observations:					
4.2.1 The Diocese is yet to develop materials in accessible languages and formats to promote inclusion and inform children and adults of support and complaints processes. Refer recommendation #3.					
Criterion 4.3 - The diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those living with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and adults who are unable to live at home, and those of diverse sexuality, are acknowledged.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.3.1	The Safeguarding Policy and procedures empower children and adults by reflecting attitudes and behaviours that respect their inherent dignity, are inclusive and are responsive to diverse needs.		✓		
Observations:					
4.3.1 While the Safeguarding Policy applies to both children and adults, there is scope to better reflect the Diocese’s commitment to safeguarding adults by organising the policy around the key competencies required under the NCSS Standards (rather than the Child Safe Standards as is currently the case). The Safeguarding Policy should also refer to the Diocese’s Safeguarding Strategic Plan and Safeguarding Risk Management Framework Refer recommendation #2					

Standard 5		Robust human resource management			
People working with children and adults at risk are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice					
Criterion 5.1 – A strong commitment to safeguarding underpins an entity’s recruitment.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.1.1	The commitment to safeguarding and a zero-tolerance approach to abuse are explicit in advertising, screening, and recruitment for personnel.	✓			
5.1.2	Recruitment and screening procedures and processes are fully documented.	✓			
5.1.3	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children/adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.2 – Personnel have current clearances (for example, working with children checks) and/or equivalent background checks relevant to their role.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.2.1	All personnel are required to have a background check or clearance (as relevant to their role).	✓			
5.2.2	As required by legislation, personnel must have a current working with children check (or working with vulnerable people check) and/or NDIS Worker Screening Check prior to working with children and adults at risk.	✓			
5.2.3	Records of all checks are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation, for all personnel	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvements are noted.					
Criterion 5.3 - Personnel complete appropriate induction and are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities including reporting obligations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.3.1	All personnel participate in a safeguarding induction program, which occurs as soon as possible after commencement.	✓			
5.3.2	All Church Authorities and their leadership team undertake the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvements are noted.					

Criterion 5.4 - Ongoing supervision and people management includes an emphasis on safeguarding responsibilities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.			✓	
Observations:					
5.4.1 Not all personnel are undertaking professional supervision, mentoring; annual performance reviews for personnel do not always include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities. 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.	✓			
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 The Diocese encourages all clergy and religious to undertake professional pastoral supervision and all these personnel are yet to take this up.					
5.5.5 All clergy are yet to undertake regular appraisals. 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.	The Seminary program has been revised to meet the new safeguarding curriculum within <i>Ratio Fundamentalis</i>			
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.	The Seminary program has been revised to meet the new safeguarding curriculum within <i>Ratio Fundamentalis</i>			
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.	The Seminary program has been revised to meet the new safeguarding curriculum within <i>Ratio Fundamentalis</i>			
Observations: N/A.					
Criterion 5.7 – The movement and credentialing of those in active ministry is appropriately managed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.7.1	A system to assess the safeguarding credentials and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy, religious and lay ministries between different seminaries, formation programs and other Church entities is in place.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvements are noted.					
Criterion 5.8 – Where clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are recruited to ministry, programs are in place to support their cultural awareness, screening, induction, professional supervision and development.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.8.1	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia recruited to ministry, are screened and verification information is sought from the international Church Authority.	✓			
5.8.2	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia participate in a safeguarding induction program which is documented and occurs as soon as possible after commencement of ministry.	✓			
5.8.3	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are supported with a suitable mentor for at least the first two years of their time in Australia.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					

Standard 6		Effective complaints management			
<i>Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities and personnel.</i>					
Criterion 6.1 - The entity's Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.1.1	Policies and procedures address mandatory reporting obligations.	✓			
6.1.2	There are clear procedures that provide step-by-step responses and action to be taken for different types of complaints, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • breaches of Code of Conduct. • disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child. • an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and • an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult. 	✓			
6.1.3	The Complaint Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflict of interests are managed.		✓		
6.1.4	The Complaint Handling Policy acknowledges that power imbalances exist between the complainant and respondent and has strategies in place to address this.	✓			
6.1.5	The Complaint Handling Policy spells out who has responsibilities in relation to handling complaints and when procedures are enacted.	✓			
6.1.6	All abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referral are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years.	✓			
Observations:					
6.1.3 The Diocese needs to implement clear procedures for identifying and mitigating actual and perceived conflicts of interest in complaint management. 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 Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 6.3 - Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.3.1	The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned, and operates in conjunction with the Code of Conduct, HR and other policies.	✓			
6.3.2	The Complaints Handling Policy commits to an initial risk assessment if a complaint of abuse is received, to identify and minimise any risk to children or adults. Ongoing risk assessments are conducted throughout investigation processes.		✓		
6.3.3	Complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.		✓		
6.3.4	Trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced abuse.		✓		
6.3.5	Sharing information relating to complaints adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant legislation.	✓			
6.3.6	The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures empower and support personnel to raise, in good faith, concerns and allegations about unacceptable behaviour towards children and adults by other personnel.	✓			
6.3.7	Where a complaint related to the sexual abuse of a child or adult against clergy or religious is substantiated under a civil standard, the Church Authority undertakes a risk management process to determine the appropriate action, in keeping with Church protocols.	✓			
6.3.8	Where a clergy or religious is convicted of a canonical offence relating to child sexual abuse, the respondent is to be prohibited from the exercise of ministry until such times as the process for imposing a penalty is completed by the relevant dicastery.	✓			
Observations:					
6.3.2 The Diocese needs to ensure that 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 and adults.					
6.3.3 The Diocese needs to ensure complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.					
6.3.4 The Diocese needs to ensure that trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced or is alleging abuse.					
Refer recommendation #4.					

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. ● any concerns and/or complaints of a criminal against adults be reported to statutory authorities; and ● personnel cooperate with law enforcement procedures and directives. 	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 6.5 – The Church Authority ensures mechanisms are in place to support complainants of child and adult sexual abuse.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.5.1	Appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants.		✓		
Observations: 6.5.1 The Diocese needs to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants. Refer recommendation #4.					
Criterion 6.6 - The Church Authority ensures respondents facing allegations are supported and monitored.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.6.1	Appropriately trained personnel are 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: 6.6.1 The Diocese needs to ensure that appropriately trained personnel are engaged in consultation with the respondent to counsel and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent. Refer recommendation #4. 6.6.2 The Diocese is responsible for implementing arrangements to monitor, supervise and support a respondent, where there is a complaint, until (and if) the Church Authority no longer has this responsibility.					

Standard 7	Ongoing education and training
Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and adults safe through information, ongoing education and training.	

<i>Criterion 7.1 - Personnel are trained and supported to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures.</i>		<i>Devel oped & Embe dded</i>	<i>Developed</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Yet to Develop</i>
7.1.1	<i>Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.</i>	✓			
7.1.2	<i>The entity's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must as a minimum cover:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Code of Conduct.</i> ● <i>safeguarding risk management.</i> ● <i>Safeguarding Policy and procedures.</i> ● <i>Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.</i> ● <i>reporting obligations; and</i> ● <i>e-safety training.</i> 		✓		
7.1.3	<i>Records are maintained to ensure all personnel attend induction training and participate in refresher safeguarding training at least every three years.</i>		✓		
7.1.4	<i>All personnel with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive ongoing support and professional development to their role.</i>	✓			
<p>Observations:</p> <p>7.1.2 The Diocese needs to ensure induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training covers the checklist items.</p> <p>7.1.3 Complete records of participation to ensure all personnel attend induction and refresher safeguarding training need to be maintained. Refer recommendation #3.</p>					
<i>Criterion 7.2 - Personnel are supported to recognise the nature and indicators of child abuse, including harmful behaviours by a child towards another child.</i>		<i>Devel oped & Embe dded</i>	<i>Developed</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Yet to Develop</i>
7.2.1	<i>Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place children at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>understand the nature and impact of child abuse.</i> ● <i>understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse.</i> ● <i>identify risk factors, such as grooming behaviours;</i> <i>and</i> ● <i>understand, identify, and respond to</i> 		✓		

	<i>abusive behaviours by a child towards another child.</i>				
Observations:					
7.2.1 The Diocese will provide regular training to relevant personnel which equips them with the knowledge to understand and identify risk factors for child abuse. Refer recommendation #3.					
<i>Criterion 7.3 – Personnel are supported to recognise the factors that contribute to adult abuse, with a focus on adults at risk.</i>		<i>Devel oped & Embe dded</i>	<i>Developed</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Yet to Develop</i>
7.3.1	<p><i>Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• understand the nature and impact of adult abuse.</i> <i>• understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse.</i> <i>• identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation.</i> <i>• recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including power imbalances can be exploited; and</i> <i>• understand what could make specific adults at</i> <i>• increased risk of abuse.</i> 		✓		

Observations:					
7.3.1 The Diocese will continue to ensure education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse. Refer recommendation #3.					
<i>Criterion 7.4 - Personnel have the information and skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.</i>		<i>Developed & Embedded</i>	<i>Developed</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Yet to Develop</i>
7.4.1	Education and training programs equip relevant personnel to appropriately respond to and support anyone bringing forward concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.	✓			
7.4.2	Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.			✓	
7.4.3	<p>Personnel receive training on reporting obligations under Commonwealth/State/Territory legislative and canon law, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reporting suspected criminal behaviour to police. • mandatory reporting to child protection authorities. • Reportable Conduct Scheme. • reporting to other regulatory authorities or government departments; and • Canonical reporting requirements. 	✓			

Observations: 7.4.2 The Diocese will Provide training to ensure personnel are aware of information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures. Refer recommendation #3.					
Criterion 7.5 - Personnel receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.5.1	Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.			✓	
7.5.2	Training is provided to relevant personnel to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds and how to create safe environments for people from these groups.		✓		
Observations: 7.5.1 The Diocese will provide cultural safety training which reinforces the importance of, and equips personnel to create, culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 7.5.2 The Diocese will provide training to relevant personnel which equips them with the knowledge to create safe environments for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Refer recommendation #3					

Standard 8		Safe physical and online environments			
<i>Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed.</i>					
Criterion 8.1 – The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy addresses both physical and online risks, without compromising the individual’s right to privacy or wellbeing.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.1.1	<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; • potential physical contact between the penitent and the confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated; • one-to-one interaction with adults at risk; • child-to-child interactions. • adult-to-child interactions. • adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); and • the nature of physical spaces. <p>Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.</p>		✓		
8.1.2	The entity’s policies require the safe use of online applications for children and adults to learn, communicate and seek help.		✓		
8.1.3	Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults.	✓			
<p>Observations:</p> <p>8.1.1 The Diocese will ensure that all safeguarding risk management plans address physical and online risks within the provision of ministry and/or services, including risks arising from the checklist items.</p> <p>8.1.2 The Diocese is yet to embed online policies to address the safe use of online applications; and provide resources for children and adults to safely use IT platforms.</p> <p>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.		✓		

Observations:					
8.2.2 The Diocese is yet to routinely monitor the online environment, reporting and responding to breaches of the Code of Conduct or safeguarding policies in accordance with the disciplinary, complaints handling or other relevant process. Refer recommendation #4.					
Criterion 8.3 - Risk management plans address the range of settings, activities, and physical environments in which ministry and/or service occur.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.3.1	A process is in place to assess and manage risk if the organisation becomes aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their ministry and/or service.		✓		
Observations:					
8.3.1 The process to assess and manage risk if the Diocese becomes aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their ministry and/or service is developing in the Diocese. Refer recommendation #4.					
Criterion 8.4 – Where facilities and services are contracted to and from third parties, contractual arrangements specify safeguarding considerations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.4.1	If a third party provides services or uses the organisations facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 9		Continuous improvement			
<i>Entities regularly review and improve implementation of their systems for keeping children and adults safe.</i>					
Criterion 9.1 - The safeguarding practices for the protection of children and adults at risk are regularly reviewed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.1.1	The Safeguarding Implementation Plan outlines how safeguarding practices are monitored and reviewed, and how this information is reported.	✓			
9.1.2	The Church Authority monitors the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and co-ordinates annual local self-assessment checks.	✓			
9.1.3	The Safeguarding Policy is subject to review at least every three years and outcomes of this review are documented.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 9.2 – Concerns and complaints are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures in safeguarding practices.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.2.1	All individual incidents or complaints relating to safeguarding practices and/or failures are considered by the leadership to identify systemic patterns and support continuous improvement.	✓			
Observations Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement are noted					
Criterion 9.3 - The Church Authority reports on the findings of its safeguarding reviews.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.3.1	The findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices are reported to stakeholders.	✓			
9.3.2	The findings of audits or reviews undertaken or validated by ACSL are made public.	Not applicable – first audit			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement are noted					

Standard 10		Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults			
Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.					
Criterion 10.1 - Policies and procedures address the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.1.1	All relevant policies and procedures reference appropriate safeguarding approaches, requirements and responsibilities.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement are noted.					
Criterion 10.2 - Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.2.1	The policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding are readily available and accessible to all personnel.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 10.3 - Best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development and review of policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.3.1	There are processes in place to monitor how safeguarding policies and procedures are being implemented.	✓			
10.3.2	There is a process in place to develop and review safeguarding policies and procedures.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement are noted.					
Criterion 10.4 - Church leaders champion and model best practice implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.4.1	The Church Authority and leaders promote the NCSS and enact all policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 10.5 - Personnel understand and implement the policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.5.1	Personnel are encouraged to reflect on their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement are noted.					

5. Detailed findings and Recommendations

Recommendation #1		Priority 2
Indicator No.	Indicator	
1.4.1	The Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behavior.	
1.4.2	The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, families, and carers.	
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 practice.	
Details of finding	<p>1.4.1 & 1.4.2 The updated Code of Conduct was released in August 2025, and it is being rolled out across the Diocese. The Code of Conduct is updated and presented in an accessible format for everyone.</p> <p>1.5.1; 1.5.2 & 1.5.3 Risk Assessments are advanced in the Diocesan sphere including at Mt Erina Boarding School. The audit team noted that they need to be further developed in parishes and to include adults at risk.</p> <p>1.6.1 & 1.6.2 Record keeping processes need support in some parishes.</p>	
Recommendation	<p>1.5.1 to 1.5.3 ACSL recommends the Diocese continue with the risk assessment roll out across parishes and ensures these include adults at risk.</p> <p>1.6.1 & 1.6.2 ACSL recommends all parishes are supported to implement and maintain robust record keeping systems.</p>	
Agreed Actions	As per recommendations.	
Responsibility	Diocesan Safeguarding Manager	
Due date	1 September 2026	

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 make them safe and to contribute to safeguarding approaches.	
2.1.3	The organisation makes children and adults at risk aware of their rights, including the right to be safe from abuse, and who to contact if they are concerned about their safety or the safety of others.	
2.2.1	Children and provided with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful relationships.	
2.3.1	Adults at risk (and/their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.	
2.4.1	Children and their 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 approaches.	
3.2.2	Safeguarding information is provided and widely available, including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s).	
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.	
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.	
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.	
4.2.1	Information about complaints processes and support are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.	
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.	

<p>Details of finding</p>	<p>2.1.1-2.1.3 The Diocese is developing strategies to engage adults at risk and their carers to provide feedback.</p> <p>2.2.1 The Diocesan agencies have provided children with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful relationships and these have yet to be adapted and rolled out to parishes.</p> <p>2.3.1 The Diocese is yet to provide information to adults at risk and/or their carers with information about safe and respectful relationships.</p> <p>2.4.1 The Diocese is yet to provide generic abuse information, access and/or referral to appropriate abuse intervention programs.</p> <p>3.2.1 The Diocese provide a range of ways for families, carers and communities to discuss safeguarding.</p> <p>3.2.2 All parishes should provide families, carers and communities with relevant safeguarding information including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s).</p> <p>3.3.1 Parishes need to further implement processes to engage families, carers and communities about their views on policies and practices for keeping children and adults safe.</p> <p>3.3.2 Parishes could continue to inform families, carers and communities on the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services directly to children and adults at risk.</p> <p>3.4.1 All parishes have yet to promote and/or participate in activities which raise awareness of abuse prevention and the rights and dignity of adults.</p> <p>4.1.1 The Diocese has yet to ensure the Safeguarding Policy and procedures demonstrate an understanding, and awareness of the diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse.</p> <p>4.2.1 The Diocese is yet to develop materials in accessible languages and formats to promote inclusion and inform children and adults of support and complaints processes.</p> <p>4.3.1 While the Safeguarding Policy applies to both children and adults, there is scope to better reflect the Diocese’s commitment to safeguarding adults by organising the policy around the key competencies required under the NCSS Standards. The Safeguarding Policy should also refer to the Diocese’s Safeguarding Strategic Plan and Safeguarding Risk Management Framework.</p>
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Recommendation	<p>2.1.1-2.1.3 Parishes develop further resources to engage children. The Diocese develop strategies to engage adults at risk and their carers to provide feedback.</p> <p>2.2.1 The Diocesan agencies have provided children with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful relationships, and these should be adapted and rolled out to parishes.</p> <p>2.3.1 The Diocese provide information to adults at risk and/their carers with information about safe and respectful relationships.</p> <p>2.4.1 The Diocese provide generic abuse information, access and/or referral to appropriate abuse intervention programs.</p> <p>3.2.1 The Diocese promote more dialogue and provide a range of ways for families, carers and communities to discuss safeguarding.</p> <p>3.2.2 All parishes provide families, carers and communities with relevant safeguarding information including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s).</p> <p>3.3.1 Parishes implement processes to engage families, carers and communities about their views on policies and practices for keeping children and adults safe.</p> <p>3.3.2 Parishes continue to educate families, carers and communities on the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services directly to children and adults at risk.</p> <p>3.4.1 All parishes promote and/or participate in activities which raise awareness of abuse prevention and the rights and dignity of adults.</p> <p>4.1.1 The Diocese update the Safeguarding Policy and procedures to demonstrate an understanding, and awareness of the diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse.</p> <p>4.2.1 The Diocese develop materials in accessible languages and formats to promote inclusion and inform children and adults of support and complaints processes.</p> <p>4.3.1. The Safeguarding Policy and procedures should be enhanced to better reflect the Diocese’s commitment to safeguarding adults by organising the policy around the key competencies required under the NCSS Standards.</p>
Agreed Action	As per recommendations.
Responsibility	Diocesan Safeguarding Manager
Due date	1 September 2026

Recommendation #3		Priority 2
Indicator No.	Indicator	
5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.	
5.5.4	All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.	
5.5.5	All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals.	
7.1.2	The entity's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must 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.	
7.2.1	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 	
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 how power imbalances can be exploited; and • understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse 	
7.4.2	Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures	
7.5.1	Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	

7.5.2	Training is provided to relevant personnel to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds and how to create safe environments for people from these groups.	
Details of finding	<p>5.4.1 All personnel are yet to undertake professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.</p> <p>5.5.4 The Diocese encourages all clergy and religious to undertake professional pastoral supervision and all these personnel are yet to take this up.</p> <p>5.5.5 All clergy are yet to undertake regular appraisals.</p> <p>7.1.2 The Diocese needs to ensure induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training covers the checklist items.</p> <p>7.1.3 Complete records of participation to ensure all personnel attend induction and refresher safeguarding training needs to be maintained.</p> <p>7.2.1 The Diocese needs to provide regular training to relevant personnel which equips them with the knowledge to understand and identify risk factors for child abuse.</p> <p>7.3.1 The Diocese will continue to ensure education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse.</p> <p>7.4.2 The Diocese could provide training to ensure personnel are aware of Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.</p> <p>7.5.1 The Diocese could provide cultural safety training which reinforces the importance of, and equips personnel to create, culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p> <p>7.5.2 The Diocese is yet to provide training for relevant personnel which equip them with the knowledge to create safe environments for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p>	

Recommendation	<p>5.4.1 All personnel undertake professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.</p> <p>5.5.4 The Diocese take steps to ensure all clergy and religious undertake professional pastoral supervision.</p> <p>5.5.5 All clergy undertake regular appraisals.</p> <p>7.1.2 The Diocese ensures induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training covers the checklist items.</p> <p>7.1.3 Complete records of participation to ensure all personnel attend induction and refresher safeguarding training needs to be maintained by the Diocese.</p> <p>7.2.1 The Diocese provides regular training to relevant personnel which equips them with the knowledge to understand and identify risk factors for child abuse.</p> <p>7.3.1 The Diocese continues to ensure education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse.</p> <p>7.4.2 The Diocese could provide training to ensure personnel are aware of Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.</p> <p>7.5.1 The Diocese provides cultural safety training which reinforces the importance of, and equips personnel to create, culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p> <p>7.5.2 The Diocese provides training to relevant personnel which equips them with the knowledge to create safe environments for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p>
Agreed Action	As per recommendations.
Responsibility	Diocesan Safeguarding Manager
Due date	1 September 2026

Recommendation #4		Priority 2
Indicator No.	Indicator	
6.1.3	The Complaints Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflicts of interest is managed.	
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 and 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 or is alleging abuse.	

6.5.1	Appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants.	
6.6.1	Appropriately trained personnel are engaged in consultation with the respondent to counsel and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent.	
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; • 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>	
8.1.2	The entity's policies require the safe use of online applications for children and adults to learn, communicate and seek help.	
8.2.2	The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary procedures, or other relevant policies and reported to the leadership.	
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>Details of finding</p>	<p>6.1.3 The Diocese is yet to fully implement clear procedures for identifying and mitigating actual and perceived conflicts of interest in complaint management.</p> <p>6.3.2 The Diocese needs to ensure that 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 and adults.</p> <p>6.3.3 The Diocese needs to ensure complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.</p> <p>6.3.4 The Diocese needs to ensure that trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced or is alleging abuse</p> <p>6.5.1 The Diocese needs to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants.</p> <p>6.6.1 The Diocese needs to ensure that appropriately trained personnel are engaged in consultation with the respondent to counsel and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent.</p> <p>8.1.1 The Diocese will ensure that all safeguarding risk management plans address physical and online risks within the provision of ministry and/or services, including risks arising from the checklist items.</p> <p>8.1.2 The Diocese is yet to embed online policies to address the safe use of online Applications; and provide resources for children and adults to safely use IT platforms.</p> <p>8.2.2 The Diocese is yet to routinely monitor the online environment, reporting and responding to breaches of the Code of Conduct or safeguarding policies in accordance with the disciplinary, complaints handling or other relevant process.</p> <p>8.3.1 The process to assess and manage risk if the Diocese becomes aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their ministry and/or service is developing in the Diocese.</p>
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Recommendation	<p>6.1.3 The Diocese implement clear procedures for identifying and mitigating actual and perceived conflicts of interest in complaint management.</p> <p>6.3.2 The Diocese ensure that 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 and adults.</p> <p>6.3.3 The Diocese ensure complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.</p> <p>6.3.4 The Diocese ensure that trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced or is alleging abuse</p> <p>6.5.1 The Diocese ensure that appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants.</p> <p>6.6.1 The Diocese ensure that appropriately trained personnel are engaged in consultation with the respondent to counsel and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent.</p> <p>8.1.1 The Diocese ensure that all safeguarding risk management plans address physical and online risks within the provision of ministry and/or services, including risks arising from the checklist items.</p> <p>8.1.2 The Diocese embed online policies to address the safe use of online Applications; and provide resources for children and adults to safely use IT platforms.</p> <p>8.2.2 The Diocese implement a system to routinely monitor the online environment, reporting and responding to breaches of the Code of Conduct or safeguarding policies in accordance with the disciplinary, complaints handling or other relevant process.</p> <p>8.3.1 The process to assess and manage risk if the Diocese becomes aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their ministry and/or service be developed and implemented in the Diocese.</p>
Agreed Action	As per recommendations.
Responsibility	Diocesan Safeguarding Manager
Due date	1 September 2026

Appendix A – Compliance Assessment

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

Appendix B – Audit Finding Priorities

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

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

Appendix C - Glossary

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

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

Abuse	when used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term covering both child and adult abuse
Abuse of Power	means the abuse of position, function, or duty to take advantage of another. This can take many forms and include situations where a person has power over another person by virtue of their relationship (e.g., employer and employee, teacher and student, coach and athlete, parent or guardian and child, clergy/religious and parishioner) and uses that power to their advantage.
Accessible language	means information is provided in multiple formats for individuals with different levels of English literacy and proficiency, modes of communication, languages, and cognitive abilities.
Adult	means any person 18 years or older. When used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term referring to all adults, including adults at risk.
Adult abuse	<p>means the improper treatment of a person that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm. Abuse can come in many forms, such as: physical or verbal maltreatment, neglect, injury, assault, violation, rape, unjust practices, crimes, exploitation, or other types of aggression.</p> <p>There are several categories of abuse of adults, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sexual abuse* ● Physical abuse* ● Emotional/psychological abuse* ● Neglect* ● Elder abuse* ● Financial abuse* ● Exploitation* <p>Within the context of the Catholic church and faith-based entities, it is also important to recognise spiritual abuse* as an additional subtype of abuse.</p>
Adult at risk	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>¹The 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>²Definition 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
	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical abuse • emotional/psychological abuse • neglect • sexual abuse • exposure to family violence
Church Authority	means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a diocesan bishop or archbishop, an ordinary of an Ordinariate and the prelate of a Personal Prelature of the Latin Church and an eparch of an eparchy of an Eastern Church. • the competent authority, howsoever titled, exercising the ministry of governance for religious institutes in Australia in accordance with their Constitutions; or • for ministerial PJPS the competent authority in accordance with the statutes. • for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organization in accordance with its rules.
Church Protocols	means official procedures or system of rules which govern the affairs of the Catholic Church in Australia, for example, Vos Estis Lux Mundi and the National Response Protocol.
Civil Standard	the most common standard of proof relates to civil proceedings, which is the balance of probabilities (incorporating the principles from Briginshaw v Briginshaw) – which means it is more probable than not that what the person says happened is true (in criminal cases, the standard is proof beyond reasonable doubt).
Clergy	includes bishops, priests and deacons.
Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia	means any cleric or member of a religious institute who is specifically recruited or welcomed from overseas by a Church Authority or entity.
Cleric	a member of the clergy.
Clericalist/ism	means an attitude toward clergy/religious characterised by an excessive deference and an assumption of their moral superiority. Pope Francis has said that it occurs when “clerics feel they are superior, [and when] they are far from the people.” It can be “fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons”.
Cognitive impairment	means when a person has trouble remembering, learning new things, concentrating, or making decisions that affect their everyday life, because of their condition. Some causes of long-term or permanent cognitive impairment include dementia, stroke, or brain injury. For further information see: https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment

Complainant

means any person who makes a complaint that may include any allegation, suspicion, concern, or report of a breach of the entity's Code of Conduct. A complaint may also include disclosures made to an institution that may be about, or relate to, abuse in the entity's context.

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

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

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

Physical abuse	is a non-accidental physically aggressive act which results in physical pain or injury, and which may include physical coercion and physical restraint. Physical abuse may be intentional or may be the inadvertent result of physical punishment.
Professional/pastoral supervision	means a professional activity in which personnel are engaged in reflection and learning, under the guidance of a supervisor. Supervision assists personnel in their accountabilities for professional standards, defined competencies for their role and understanding and implementation of organisational policy and procedures. For clerics and religious, professional supervision assists in the maintenance of boundaries of the pastoral relationship and enhances the quality of their ministry.
Protective behaviours program	Is a type of abuse prevention program and means an age-appropriate structured education program to equip children and young people with the skills and knowledge to enhance their personal safety.
Reflective practice	is a professional development technique that involves thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice. It is expected to be a continuous process, whereby an individual explores an experience to identify what happened and what their role in this experience was, including behaviour, thinking, and related emotions. Reflective practice enables potential changes in approaches to similar future events to be identified, with the aim of improved performance.
Registration to Work with Vulnerable People	the Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tasmanian Legislation) requires people who work or volunteer with vulnerable people, including children to hold a registration.
Religious institute	means an entity within the Catholic Church whose members commit themselves through religious vows to lead a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. Societies of apostolic life resemble religious institutes in that their members also live a life in common. They do not take religious vows but live out the apostolic purpose of the group. In these Standards, the term 'religious institutes' is used to include religious institutes, societies of apostolic life and secular institutes.
Religious	means a member of an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life.
Respondent	means a person against whom a complaint is made.
Review	means an internal self-assessment of an entity's implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. A review can also be an assessment that forms part of the process of continuous improvement which occurs when following up recommendations made during an audit.
Risk-based audit and Review Framework	means a framework for assessing the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards that reflects a proportionate response based on the risk profile of the Church Authority.
Risk Profile	means an assessment against key safeguarding risk factors.
Safeguarding	refers to proactive measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals. These measures allow children, young people and adults to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. Within the life of the Church, safeguarding includes pastoral, liturgical and spiritual responses through engagement in the Sacraments and the life of the Church.
Safeguarding Committee	means a committee established to advise and support the Church Authority on all matters relating to safeguarding, including the development and implementation of a Safeguarding Implementation Plan and coordinating annual self-audits at a local level. Committee members need relevant and varied professional expertise in relation to safeguarding, child protection, organisational culture and structure, policy development, etc. and include lay women and

	men.
Safeguarding Culture	means embedding safeguarding into everything an organisation does. In promoting this culture, young people and adults at risk will understand they will be listened to, supported, and known action will be taken on their behalf.
Safeguarding Commitment Statement	means a Commitment Statement describing an entity's commitment to keep children and adults safe from harm. It informs the entity's safeguarding culture.
Safeguarding Co-ordinator	means an individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
Safeguarding Implementation Plan	means a documented plan which articulates actions to be taken across the entity to ensure safeguarding practices are in place. It includes actions, strategies, responsibilities, delegations, and accountabilities, and tracks review and progress. It is overseen by the Safeguarding Committee.
Safeguarding policies and procedures	means any policies or procedures of the entity that address elements of safeguarding children and adults. For example, but not limited to:

	<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.
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.

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.

**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.

