



Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes

Safeguarding Audit Report May 2026

National Catholic
Safeguarding Standards

Report prepared by:



A safe Church for everyone

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

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

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

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Foreword

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

NCSS Certification:

- Provides independent recognition that the religious entity is committed to safeguarding
- Fosters a culture of quality and continuous improvement
- Reduces and mitigates safeguarding risks
- Provides the community with confidence that the Church is taking action to address past abuse
- Fosters a systematic approach to safeguarding quality and performance
- 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 Wilcannia-Forbes 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 Wilcannia-Forbes 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 BISHOP COLUMBA MACBETH-GREEN

Opinion

ACSL has undertaken a safeguarding audit of a sample of parish and Diocesan leadership and Safeguarding office activities of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes. 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 Wilcannia-Forbes 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 Wilcannia-Forbes offers a true and fair view of the Diocese's safeguarding policies, procedures and processes as at 25 March 2026 and of its performance against the NCSS for the period ended on that date.

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

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Signed:



Dr Ursula Stephens
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd



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

May 2026

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 NSW 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 Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes.

1.2 Background

The Diocese of Wilcannia–Forbes was established in 1887, initially as the Diocese of Wilcannia. The Diocese adopted its current name in 1917 when six parochial districts of Diocese of Bathurst, including those of Parkes and Forbes, were added to its western neighbour. The Diocese covers the Far West region of New South Wales in Australia. The Bishop's office is in Forbes while his seat is in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Broken Hill. Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green OSPPE DD was appointed as Bishop by Pope Francis in April 2014.

With 414,398 square kilometres (160,000 sq mi) in its territory, the Diocese of Wilcannia–Forbes is the largest diocese in New South Wales. The total population of the Diocese (2021 census) was 105,894 of which Catholics make up 23.9%, numbering 25,270. There are twenty parish centres within the Diocese, serviced by 16 priests. The Bishop is supported by a team of three staff, with outsourced services provided by the

Archdiocese of Sydney. The large geographic area and the small size of the parish centres pose significant logistical and financial challenges for the Bishop in serving his parishes.

The NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian (OCG) undertook a safeguarding audit of the Diocese in 2024 and made recommendations to improve record keeping and other compliance matters. The ACSL audit included follow up of these recommendations as well as consideration of the care and safety of adults at risk.

The assessment of the Diocese’s compliance with the NCSS indicators is detailed in Section 2 of this report. Our recommendations for improvement, including the Diocese’s 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](#).

1.3 Audit approach

The purpose of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (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 abuse of children, young people and adults in vulnerable circumstances.

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



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

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

ACSL uses an efficient risk assessment mechanism that permits its auditors to focus their efforts on risks that are proportionate to the purpose, size, complexity, and structure of an organisation. This approach to planning audits ensures optimum use of the organisation's limited resources, has maximum impact on the day-to-day activities and programs and ensures constant stakeholder engagement. This approach is consistent with the IIA Standards.

ACSL assesses the risk management safeguarding practices of a Church Authority through a multilayered system keeping in mind IIA Standard 2010.A1 which states: *"The internal audit (here meaning the organisation) activity's plan of engagements must be based on a documented risk assessment, undertaken at least annually. The input of senior management and the board must be considered in this process."*

ACSL can, therefore, provide objective assurance that the organisation is complying with the risk management components of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS).

1.4 In scope assessment

The Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes was assessed against the NCSS which includes consideration of the care and protection of adults at risk. In February 2026 ACSL completed a review audit of the Diocese's NCSS Self-Assessment. This self-assessment allowed the Diocese to present evidence of their compliance with the NCSS, as well as their response to the recommendations from the OCG audit conducted in 2024. Fieldwork was conducted from 18 – 20 March 2026. The Chancery and two parishes were selected for site visits – Parkes and Broken Hill. An online interview was also conducted with the Parish Pastoral Support Officer at Wilcannia.

ACSL met with Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green and the Safeguarding Manager to discuss safeguarding practices and procedures and to review the responses to the OCG Audit. ACSL also interviewed Sr Elizabeth Young RSM who is the Parish Life Coordinator located in Wilcannia, where there is not a resident priest. In Forbes, ACSL also met with staff of Catholic Care, the major provider of family and children support services in the region.

The audit scope included:

- Interviews, observations, and enquiry with the leadership, including their Safeguarding Committee and relevant ministerial personnel.
- A review of key safeguarding documents, policies, and procedures.
- Assessment of the design and testing of the operation of safeguarding controls implemented by the Church Authority.
- Site visits to:
 - Broken Hil Cathedral Parish
 - Forbes Chancery Office
 - Parkes Parish
 - Catholic Care Forbes
- Interviews with 8 clergy and volunteers

Catholic Schools and Catholic Care Administrative offices were excluded from the audit.

2. Overarching findings

This Safeguarding Audit of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes indicates that the Diocese is continuing its efforts to implement and embed a culture of safeguarding throughout its organisation and is compliant with NSW and national legislation and regulation relating to safeguarding children and adults at risk.

Our assessment indicates that the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes is substantially progressed in implementing the indicators relevant to their operations. Assessment for each maturity scale is as follows:

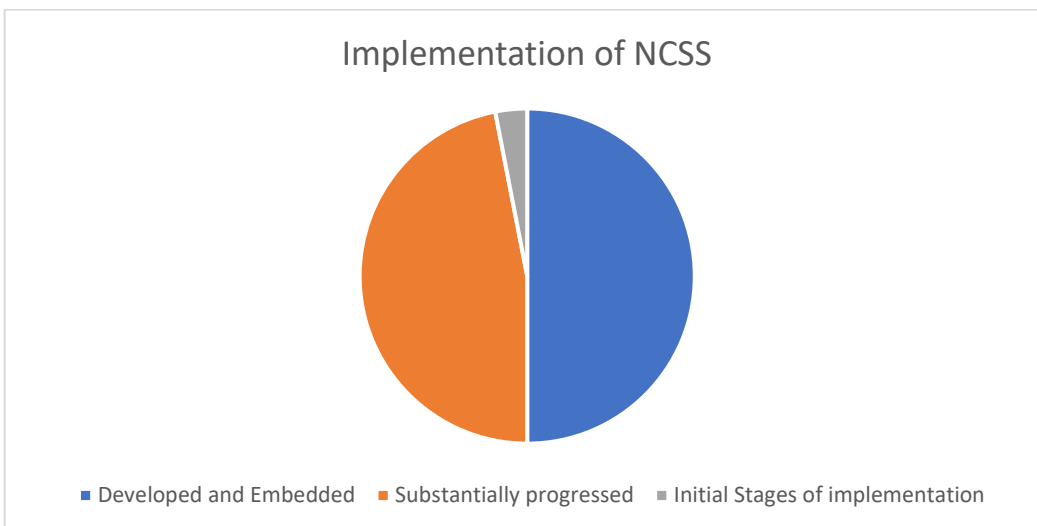
- 49 indicators are developed and embedded.
- 46 indicators are substantially progressed.
- 3 indicator is in the initial stages of implementation.

Of the 104 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church Authorities, six (6) of these are not relevant to the Diocese's operations.

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

Note on scoring the four-point maturity scale:

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



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

Assessment summary

Strengths include:

- Establishment of the position of Safeguarding Manager
- Creating an organisational culture focused on safeguarding
- Understanding the diversity and cultural awareness needs of parishioners
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure development
- Professional supervision and support of clergy

Areas for development include:

- Continuous Improvement of safeguarding practices
- Record keeping ensuring consistency across the Diocese
- Risk management, including risk identification and mitigation
- Continuing education and training to build local capability
- Fine-tuning complaints policies and procedures

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

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



The Diocese is committed to a zero-tolerance of abuse. The appointment of a Safeguarding Manager in August 2024 has enabled the Diocese to address the issues raised by the Office of the Children's Guardian, and to promote, implement and monitor safeguarding within the Diocese. Robust policies and procedures have been put in place to support a safeguarding culture. Safeguarding is viewed as everyone's responsibility and these roles and responsibilities are clearly defined although not always well understood. Clergy and parish volunteers interviewed draw heavily on the Safeguarding Manager for advice. The Safeguarding Manual addresses the 10 Child Safe Standards and outlines the Diocese's approach to creating and maintaining a safe environment for children, young people and adults at risk. The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is widely disseminated across the Diocese and is included in Diocesan publications.

The Safeguarding Manager has been seconded to the Diocese and operates from the Chancery to support the Bishop and Vicar General in overseeing their safeguarding responsibilities. Arrangements have been put in place to ensure there is safeguarding oversight during periods of extended leave. This is with the support of the Sydney Archdiocese Safeguarding team.

Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures have been documented. Work is underway to update records and improve procedures, as recommended by the NSW Office of Children's Guardian. Further work needs to be done to ensure that all clergy and personnel fully understand how their obligations under the Privacy Act apply in their ministries.

The Safeguarding Manager has provided training and support to clergy and parishes as they develop confidence in undertaking Safeguarding Risk Assessments and evaluations. Some areas of focus for future training have been identified in Recommendation 3. The Safeguarding Implementation Plan is still in development.

The Bishop acknowledges that while much has been done to ensure all parts of the Diocese are compliant with child safe regulations, there is more to be done to help embed safeguarding practices in the day-to-day work of ministries. The Diocese also draws on the skill and experience of teachers and staff in its parish schools and CatholicCare to provide guidance for the care and protection of children and vulnerable people.



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

Progress in this capability area is a credit to everyone. The Diocese has implemented policies and practices to ensure that children and adults are safe, informed and participate. The Diocese is commended for the support provided to young people to participate in the Australian Catholic Youth Festival. The Diocese shares many posters, guides and resources for children and young people about safe environments, respectful relationships and e-safety. An initiative of the Diocese is the “Ask Bishop Columba’ activities and video recordings which address issues of safeguarding and responses to child safety concerns. At Broken Hill Parish children are encouraged to participate in Mass and are provided with a designated space within the Cathedral for children’s liturgy and activities with volunteers.

Sacramental preparation programs are conducted through parish schools, where parents and children attend lessons. Clergy attend and conform with the school’s safeguarding requirements. Families are engaged in safeguarding activities including training and events such as Safeguarding Sunday as well as multicultural events in parishes. Where possible local priests visit or reach out to station families via videocall or radio. The Diocese has commenced providing guidance on caring for adults who may be at risk of abuse, raising awareness of cyber-scams, online fraud, and forms of elder abuse. This should continue to be a focus of their safeguarding efforts, given the demographic profile of the Diocese.

The most recent census data highlights the ageing population and declining population numbers across the diocese. There is one Catholic High School, located in Forbes, which is under the governance of the Marist Brothers. Many secondary school aged children are boarding in Wagga Wagga, Bathurst, Orange or Albury.

Cultural safety is an important aspect of safeguarding within the Diocese. The participation of children in parish life is relatively low, except for children from newly migrant families. However, as the Diocese extends along the borders of Queensland, South Australia and Victoria, it shares country with many traditional Aboriginal tribal regions including the Madi Madi; Ngemba; Wonkamurra; Nyampaa; Wailwan; Wiradjuri; Paakindji and Yorta Yorta peoples. The Wilcannia Parish has the highest percentage of Aboriginal Catholics within the Diocese.



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

The Diocese has strengthened its human resource management systems to ensure that there are child safe recruitment processes being used across the Diocese, drawing on the procedures in place within the education and social services sectors.

The Bishop has consolidated clergy recruitment, which is now subject to rigorous checks, including references and psychological assessments. All recruited personnel are subject to reference checks, national police checks and must hold current Working With Children’s Checks before commencing child-related work. This includes all overseas and interstate-recruited clergy.

Clergy across the Diocese are encouraged to access regular supervision, and there is a strong commitment by the Bishop to clergy supervision and wellbeing, given the regional isolation of parishes. The fact that only three parishes have an assistant priest, and many parish secretaries are volunteers, means that the pressure on clergy to work seven days a week is significant. The Vicar for Clergy is responsible for ensuring that clergy are accessing their leave and receive support they need for their spiritual and emotional wellbeing.

Parish priests and administrators are required to maintain local WWCC records and provide these six-monthly to the Safeguarding Office. There is a central repository of the WWCC, which is accessed by the Safeguarding Manager. The Safeguarding Office has access to all WWCC verification portals and has confidence that processes are in keeping with the new requirements of the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.

The Diocese uses the Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR) to monitor and manage the movement of clergy. Sacristy registers viewed during the audit were up to date.

The Safeguarding Manager has implemented a bespoke training program for clergy and parish volunteers, relevant to the Diocesan setting. All personnel are required to undertake induction training, while refresher training is delivered during clergy conferences and deanery meetings. The clergy have undertaken cultural competency training through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council. (ATSICC) Further diversity training is being arranged through Catholic Care.

Parish personnel and volunteers are provided with online safeguarding training commensurate with their responsibilities.



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

The Complaint Management framework for the Diocese has improved, including through the partial digitisation of records and the development of detailed guidelines and procedures to support clergy and personnel in how to appropriately manage complaints should they arise. As there have been no allegations reported in the last 12 months, these procedures and guidelines are hypothetical, and further training is required to ensure that the processes are understood.

Where records are no longer needed for operational purposes, the organisation's record keeping policy directs and guides personnel to ensure that records that are, or may be, relevant to the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults continue to be retained, considering:

- delayed disclosures by victims;
- removal of limitation periods for civil actions in relation to child abuse;
- the need to be able to demonstrate in future that the organisation has taken reasonable steps to prevent harm to children and adults, and,
- all relevant legal and canonical obligations to retain such records.

Allegations against employees, any historical claims, National Redress Scheme and civil claims are managed through the Diocese. Personnel understand mandatory reporting requirements within the Diocese and how to deal with a disclosure of abuse. The Diocese has provided specific support to the children, school, parish community and families involved in a contemporary abuse allegation, through CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes.

The Diocese has implemented safeguarding risk assessments in line with the recommendation of the OCG, and these are generally submitted to the Safeguarding Manager for review. There is guidance in the Safeguarding Manual, however, parishes are still struggling to understand how to identify and document risk mitigation. Where parishes have few children attending, they are being encouraged to instead focus on how adults can be at risk of abuse. Parishes are encouraged to maintain a risk register, and templates are being provided for them to implement. As yet, there is no overarching risk management framework to provide the Bishop with an overview of safeguarding risk across the Diocese. This is a capacity constraint within the Chancery.

Clergy and religious are supported to live in safe environments away from their parish office. The Parish Support Coordinator in Wilcannia lives in a compound with other professionals, away from the town centre.

The Diocese is to be commended for its commitment to e-safety. Strong policies exist and all parishes operate using a domain related email address. Parish social media platforms are moderated and used appropriately.

The Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, Risk Management Policy and Complaint Handling Policy reference appropriate safeguarding approaches, requirements and responsibilities. The suite of safeguarding policies is aligned, consistent and well-developed, but not yet embedded in practice. This requires the Diocese to consider what strategies they can utilize to monitor how safeguarding policies and procedures are being implemented, and to develop a schedule of policy review.

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 | 6 | 10 | - | - |
| 2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate | 6 | - | 2 | 4 | - | - |
| 3: Partnering with families, carers and communities | 6 | - | 2 | 4 | - | - |
| 4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected | 4 | - | 2 | 2 | - | - |
| 5: Robust human resource management | 22 | 4 | 14 | 3 | 1 | - |
| 6: Effective complaints management | 19 | - | 12 | 7 | - | - |
| 7: Ongoing training & education | 11 | - | 7 | 4 | - | - |
| 8: Safe physical and online environments | 7 | - | 1 | 6 | - | - |
| 9: Continuous improvement | 6 | 1 | - | 4 | 1 | - |
| 10: Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults | 6 | - | 3 | 2 | 1 | - |
| TOTAL | 104 | 6 | 49 | 46 | 3 | - |
| | | 98 | 97% | | 3% | |

3. Summary of recommendations

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

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

These are detailed in Section 5 of this report. Each recommendation also contains the response of the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes to the audit finding, including management actions.

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

| No. | Indicator | Recommendation |
|------------------|---|---|
| Recommendation 1 | 1.2.2 | The Diocesan Pastoral Council acts as the Safeguarding Committee. It is recommended that Safeguarding is a standing agenda item for meetings, and that a written report is provided for inclusion in the minutes. |
| | 9.2.1 | |
| | 10.3.1 | |
| | 10.3.2 | |
| Recommendation 2 | 1.4.4 | Clergy identified the issues of professional boundaries and power imbalances as areas for further training and support. |
| | 1.2.4 | ACSL recommends that all parishes have systems in place to record daily activities and appointments including a visitor's register |
| | 1.6.2 7.1.1 | Chancery to manage ongoing training and promote ACSL learning opportunities including obligations under the Privacy Act (1998) for volunteers, clergy and personnel |
| | 1.6.2 7.4.2 | ACSL recommends that priority continue to be given to completing the digitization of records and filing. |
| Recommendation 3 | 1.5.1 | ACSL recommends that the Safeguarding Office use the risk assessments collected from parishes, to create a Diocesan wide safeguarding risk management plan, including a risk register, to support the Safeguarding Implementation Plan. |
| | 1.5.2 | |
| | 1.5.3 | |
| | 8.1.1 | ACSL recommends the Diocese continue with the risk assessment roll out across parishes. The Diocese will also continue to review the plans, where appropriate to improve risk assessments |
| 8.3.1 | Ensure safeguarding refresher training for all personnel incorporates the policy and processes that are in place for managing risk if the Diocese becomes aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their service. | |

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

| No. | Indicator | Recommendation |
|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| | 8.4.1 | Ensure third party agreement templates are being used in parishes when facilities are being used by outside parties. This includes contractors. |
| Recommendation 4 | 6.1.3 | ACSL recommends the Diocese publish their conflict-of-interest Policy on the website. |
| | 6.1.6 | Completion of the records digitization and filing is an ongoing ACSL recommends that the completion of the records digitization and filing continues to be an ongoing priority for the Chancery. |
| Recommendation 5 | 5.4.1, 5.5.4 5.5.5 | ACSL recommends the Diocese take steps to ensure all clergy and personnel undertake professional supervision. |
| Recommendation 6 | 8.2.2 | If parishes use CCTV there should be a policy in place to ensure consistent monitoring of footage and compliance with the Privacy Act. |

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 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 organisation | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 1.2.1 | A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Board and leadership promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management. | ✓ | | | |
| 1.2.2 | A Safeguarding Committee is appointed at the highest level of leadership to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding practices, policies, and procedures. | | ✓ | | |
| 1.2.3 | A Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) is appointed with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. | ✓ | | | |
| 1.2.4 | Personnel understand that good safeguarding practices are everyone's responsibility and are empowered to contribute to the organisation's safeguarding practices. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: 1.2.2 The Diocesan Pastoral Council acts as the Safeguarding Committee. It is recommended that A Safeguarding Report is a standing agenda item for meeting, and that a written report is provided for inclusion in the minutes to ensure there is consistency between the responsibilities undertaken by the Sydney archdiocese and local safeguarding co-ordinator. Refer to Recommendation #1. 1.2.4 ACSL recommends that all parishes have systems in place to record daily activities and appointments including a visitor's register. Refer to Recommendation #2. | | | | | |
| 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 activities in countries other than Australia, these Standards are applied wherever possible, considering cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues. | N/A | | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| 1.3.1 Where the oversight and governance is split between the Diocese and the Archdiocese of Sydney for safeguarding and professional Standards issues ensure there is consistency between the responsibilities undertaken by the Sydney archdiocese and local safeguarding co-ordinator. Refer recommendation 1 | | | | | |
| Criterion 1.4 – The entity's Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural standards towards children and adults. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 1.4.1 | The Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour. | ✓ | | | |
| 1.4.2 | The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, families, and carers. | | ✓ | | |
| 1.4.3 | The Code of Conduct considers the needs of all children and adults at risk, paying particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations people. • individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are at risk of abuse'; • individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. • children in out of home care, or are homeless; and, • children and adults of diverse sexuality. | ✓ | | | |
| 1.4.4 | The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| 1.4.2 The Diocese is continuing to strengthen communication strategies to broaden accessibility of the Code of Conduct to families and carers. | | | | | |
| 1.4.4 Clergy identified the issues of professional boundaries and power imbalances as an area for further training. Refer to Recommendation #3. | | | | | |
| 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 across its services. | | ✓ | | |
| 1.5.3 | There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report, and review risks. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| 1.5.1 -1.5.3 As yet, there is no overarching risk management framework. This is a capacity constraint within the Chancery. OCG recommends a comprehensive risk register and management plan be developed to generate an overarching risk management framework. (Related to Standard 8.) Refer Recommendation #4. | | | | | |
| 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 Improvements to the process of updating records and the subsequent implementation of procedures as recommended by the OCG is currently well underway. | | | | | |
| 1.6.2 Further work needs to be done to ensure Clergy and personnel fully understand their obligations under the Privacy Act. Refer to Recommendation #3 | | | | | |

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|---|---|---|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 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 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: | | | | | |
| 2.1.2 Requirements of the indicator are in place and continue to be developed. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |

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|---|---|----------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| Criterion 2.2 - The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, helping children feel safe and less isolated. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 2.2.1 | Children are provided with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful peer relationships. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place and continue to be developed. No recommendations for improvement noted. Not sure why indicator is marked developed when there are no recommendations | | | | | |
| Criterion 2.3 - The importance of friendships and social connections for adults at risk is recognised and encouraged, helping them feel safe and less isolated. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 2.3.1 | Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place and continue to be developed. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |
| Criterion 2.4 – Where relevant to the setting or context, children and families are offered access to abuse prevention programs and related information that is age appropriate. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 2.4.1 | Children and families are provided with information, access and/or referral to abuse prevention programs, appropriate to the child's age, development, ability, and level of understanding. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place and continue to be developed. No recommendations for improvement noted. As above | | | | | |

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

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| 3.2.1 | Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches. | | ✓ | | |
| 3.2.2 | Safeguarding information widely available, including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinators. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| Requirements of the indicator are in place and continue to be developed. No recommendations for improvement noted. Need a recommendation for 3.2.1 | | | | | |
| Criterion 3.3 - Families, carers and communities are informed about the organisation'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 services directly to children and adults at risk. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| Requirements of the indicator are in place and continue to be developed. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |
| Criterion 3.4 – The organisation raises community awareness of the dignity and rights of all children and adults | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 3.4.1 | The entity promotes and/or participates in activities which raise awareness of abuse prevention and the rights and dignity of children and adults at risk. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |

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| Standard 4 | | Equity is promoted and diversity is respected | | | |
| <i>Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice</i> | | | | | |
| Criterion 4.1 - The diverse circumstances and backgrounds of children and adults at risk are acknowledged and accommodated by providing appropriate support. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 4.1.1 | The Safeguarding Policy and procedures demonstrate an understanding, and awareness of the diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse. | ✓ | | | |
| 4.1.2 | The Complaints Handling Policy and practices address barriers that may prevent a disclosure of abuse being made and that hinders personnel from recognising and responding appropriately. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |

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| 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 the organisation’s processes and supports are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place and continue to be developed. No recommendations for improvement noted | | | | | |
| Criterion 4.3 - The diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those living with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and adults who are unable to live at home, and those of diverse sexuality, are acknowledged. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 4.3.1 | The Safeguarding Policy and procedures empower children and adults by reflecting attitudes and behaviours that respect their inherent dignity, are inclusive and are responsive to diverse needs. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place and continue to be developed. No recommendations for improvement noted. Recommendation? | | | | | |

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| Standard 5 | | Robust human resource management | | | |
| <i>People working with children and adults at risk are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice</i> | | | | | |
| Criterion 5.1 – A strong commitment to safeguarding underpins the organisation’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 indicator 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). | ✓ | | | |

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| 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, for all personnel, are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| 5.2.3 Maintaining the records of currency of WWCC is managed at the Parish level with a central repository held by the Diocese. The Safeguarding Office have confidence that this process is in keeping with new requirements of the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian. #Refer to Recommendation #6 | | | | | |
| 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 | The Board and their leadership team undertake Leaders Safeguarding program | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement 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 are in place for personnel, and include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities. | | | ✓ | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| There remains resistance to formal professional supervision by some clergy and personnel. Refer Recommendation #7 | | | | | |
| 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. | ✓ | | | |
| 5.5.2 | Seminary and initial formation programs have robust screening processes for candidates for religious ministry, including external psychological and psychosexual assessments. | Not applicable | | | |
| 5.5.3 | Ongoing integrated formation for clergy and religious addresses both the canonical and civil safeguarding requirements. For priests, this would include supporting their fidelity to the Church's teaching regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the inviolability of the Sacramental Seal. | ✓ | | | |

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| 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 | Newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least five years post ordination or final profession. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: 5.5.4 & 5.5.5 There remains resistance to formal professional supervision by some clergy. Refer Recommendation #7 | | | | | |
| Criterion 5.6 - The curriculum for seminary and formation programs for clergy and religious includes safeguarding knowledge and skills development of candidates to understand and lead initiatives for safeguarding children and adults. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 5.6.1 | Seminary and initial formation programs build candidates' knowledge and skills in a range of areas to support safeguarding children and adults. | Not applicable | | | |
| 5.6.2 | Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse. | Not applicable | | | |
| 5.6.3 | Seminary and initial formation programs identify how to avoid abuse of power and the development and/or reinforcement of clericalist attitudes and behaviours. | Not applicable | | | |
| Observations: N/A. | | | | | |
| Criterion 5.7 – The movement and credentialling of those in active ministry is appropriately managed. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 5.7.1 | A system is in place to assess the safeguarding credentials of all seminarians, clergy, religious and lay ministries and their movement between different seminaries, formation programs and other Church entities is in place. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |
| Criterion 5.8 – Where clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are recruited to ministry, programs are in place to support their cultural awareness, screening, induction, professional supervision and development. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 5.8.1 | Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia recruited to ministry, are screened and verification information is sought from the international Church Authority. | ✓ | | | |
| 5.8.2 | Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia participate in a safeguarding induction program which is documented and occurs as soon as possible after commencement of ministry. | ✓ | | | |

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| 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. | ✓ | | | |
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Observations:

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

| Standard 6 | Effective complaints management |
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Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities and personnel.

| Criterion 6.1 - The organisation's Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
|---|--|----------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| 6.1.1 | Policies and procedures address mandatory reporting obligations. | ✓ | | | |
| 6.1.2 | There are clear procedures that provide step-by-step responses and action to be taken for different types of complaints, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> breaches of Code of Conduct. disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child. an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult. | | ✓ | | |
| 6.1.3 | The Complaint Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflict of interests are managed. | | ✓ | | |
| 6.1.4 | The Complaint Handling Policy acknowledges that power imbalances exist between the complainant and respondent and has strategies in place to address this. | ✓ | | | |
| 6.1.5 | The Complaint Handling Policy spells out who has responsibilities in relation to handling complaints and when procedures are enacted. | | ✓ | | |
| 6.1.6 | All abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referral are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years. | | ✓ | | |

Observations:

- 6.1.2 Requirements of the indicator are in place with further work underway to embed processes in practice. No recommendations for improvement noted.
- 6.1.3 For Transparency, the Diocese should publish a statement which outlines how any allegation of abuse by Diocesan personnel will be managed to ensure there is no conflict of interest. **Refer recommendation #5**
- 6.1.6 Completion of the records digitisation and filing is an ongoing priority for the Chancery. **Refer Recommendation #5**

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| 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 for improvement noted. | | | | | |
| Criterion 6.3 - Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 6.3.1 | The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned, and operates in conjunction, with the Code of Conduct, HR and other policies. | ✓ | | | |
| 6.3.2 | The Complaints Handling Policy commits to an initial risk assessment if a complaint of abuse is received, to identify and minimise any risk to children or adults. Ongoing risk assessments are conducted throughout investigation processes. | ✓ | | | |
| 6.3.3 | Complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint. | ✓ | | | |
| 6.3.4 | Trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced abuse. | ✓ | | | |
| 6.3.5 | Sharing information relating to complaints adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant legislation. | | ✓ | | |
| 6.3.6 | The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures empower and support personnel to raise, in good faith, concerns and allegations about unacceptable behaviour towards children and adults by other personnel. | ✓ | | | |
| 6.3.7 | Where a complaint related to the sexual abuse of a child or adult against personnel is substantiated under a civil standard, the organisation undertakes a risk management process to determine the appropriate action. | ✓ | | | |
| 6.3.8 | Where a clergy or religious is convicted of a canonical offence relating to child sexual abuse, the respondent is to be prohibited from the exercise of ministry until such times as the process for imposing a penalty is completed by the relevant dicastery. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place with Indicators above rated Developed continuing to be embedded. | | | | | |
| Criterion 6.4 - The Complaints Handling Policy includes the process of reporting complaints and concerns to relevant | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |

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| authorities, requiring cooperation with any statutory or contractual processes. | | | | | |
| 6.4.1 | <p>The Complaints Handling Policy requires that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> concerns and complaints of child abuse occurring within the entity be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities, in accordance with regulations. any concerns and/or complaints of a criminal against adults be reported to statutory authorities; and personnel cooperate with law enforcement procedures and directives. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |
| Criterion 6.5 – The organisation 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: | | | | | |
| The management of complaints is undertaken by the Diocese and the policies in place align with best practice. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |
| Criterion 6.6 - The organisation ensures respondents facing allegations are supported and monitored. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 6.6.1 | Appropriately trained personnel engaged in consultation with the respondents to counsel and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent. | | ✓ | | |
| 6.6.2 | Arrangements are in place to monitor, supervise and support a respondent, where there is a complaint, until (and if) the organisation no longer has this responsibility. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| The management of complaints is undertaken by the Diocese and the policies in place align with best practice. No recommendations for improvement noted No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |

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| Standard 7 | | Ongoing education and training | | | |
| <i>Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and adults safe through information, ongoing education and training.</i> | | | | | |
| Criterion 7.1 - Personnel are trained and supported to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 7.1.1 | Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures. | ✓ | | | |

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| 7.1.2 | The organisation's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must as a minimum cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct. • Safeguarding risk management. • Safeguarding Policy and procedures. • Complaints Handling Policy and procedures. • reporting obligations; and • e-safety training. | ✓ | | | |
| 7.1.3 | Records are maintained to ensure all personnel attend induction training and participate in refresher safeguarding training at least every three years. | ✓ | | | |
| 7.1.4 | All personnel with specific safeguarding responsibilities receive ongoing support and professional development to their role. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| 7.1.3 Requirements of the indicator are in place . | | | | | |
| 7.1.2 Clergy identified the issues of professional boundaries and power imbalances as areas for further training. | | | | | |
| See Recommendation #3 | | | | | |
| Criterion 7.2 - Personnel are supported to recognise the nature and indicators of child abuse, including harmful behaviours by a child towards another child. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 7.2.1 | Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place children at risk of abuse, building knowledge to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the nature and impact of child abuse. • understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse. • identify risk factors, such as grooming behaviours; and • understand, identify, and respond to abusive behaviours by a child towards another child. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: | | | | | |
| Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |
| Criterion 7.3 – Personnel are supported to recognise the factors that contribute to adult abuse, with a focus on adults at risk. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 7.3.1 | Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, building knowledge to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the nature and impact of adult abuse. • understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse. • identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation. | | ✓ | | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including power imbalances can be exploited; and • understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse. | | | | |
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Observations:

Requirements of the indicator are in place with work continuing to further embed in process. No recommendations for improvement noted.

| Criterion 7.4 - Personnel have the information and skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
|--|--|----------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| 7.4.1 | Education and training programs equip relevant personnel to appropriately respond to and support anyone bringing forward concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse. | ✓ | | | |
| 7.4.2 | Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures. | | ✓ | | |
| 7.4.3 | Personnel receive training on reporting obligations under Commonwealth/State/Territory legislative and canon law, which includes: <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 Priority to be given to completing the digitization of records, filing and training personnel on how to retrieve those files. **Related Recommendations #3 and #5.**

| Criterion 7.5 - Personnel receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and adults. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
|--|---|----------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| 7.5.1 | Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create, culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. | | ✓ | | |
| 7.5.2 | Training is provided to relevant personnel to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds and how to create safe environments for people from these groups. | | ✓ | | |

Observations:

Ensure that replacement clergy and personnel have access to cultural safety training.

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| Standard 8 | Safe physical and online environments |
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Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed.

| Criterion 8.1 – The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy addresses both physical and online risks, without compromising the individual’s right to privacy or wellbeing. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
|--|---|----------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| 8.1.1 | <p>Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of services including risks arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child. • services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, and mentoring. • one-to-one interaction with adults at risk. • child-to-child interactions. • adult-to-child interactions. • adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); and • the nature of physical spaces. <p>Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.</p> | | ✓ | | |
| 8.1.2 | Policies require the safe use of online applications for children and adults to learn, communicate and seek help. | ✓ | | | |
| 8.1.3 | Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults. | | ✓ | | |

Observations: :

8.1.1 Risk assessments and risk mitigation are undertaken at parish levels with different levels of confidence. Parishes are encouraged to maintain a risk register, and templates are being provided for them to implement **Refer Recommendation #4** (Related Indicator 1.5)

8.1.3 Area of risk identification and management is subject to ongoing training for parishes and personnel.

| 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 organisation’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:

All parishes use a Diocesan domain name and email.

If parishes use CCTV there should be a policy in place to ensure consistent monitoring of footage and compliance with the Privacy Act. **Refer Recommendation #8.**

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| 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 service. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: Policy and process is in place and incorporated in Safeguarding refresher training. 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: More training and advice is required for parishes to understand the importance of third-party contractors and facilities. Refer Recommendation #4 | | | | | |

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| 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 organisation monitors the implementation of the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations and co-ordinates annual local self-assessment checks. | | ✓ | | |
| 9.1.3 | The Safeguarding Policy is subject to review at least every three years and outcomes of this review are documented. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: 9.1.1 – 9.1.3 The Safeguarding Implementation Plan is still in development. | | | | | |
| 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: Refer Recommendation #1 | | | | | |

| Criterion 9.3 - The organisation reports on the findings of its safeguarding reviews. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
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| 9.3.1 | The findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to be reported to stakeholders. | | ✓ | | |
| 9.3.2 | The findings of audits or reviews undertaken or validated by ACSL are made public. | Not Applicable | | | |
| Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place with work continuing to further embed in process. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |

| Standard 10 | | Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults | | | |
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| <i>Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.</i> | | | | | |
| Criterion 10.1 - Policies and procedures address the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 10.1.1 | All relevant policies and procedures reference appropriate safeguarding approaches, requirements and responsibilities. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |
| Criterion 10.2 - Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 10.2.1 | The policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding are readily available and accessible to all personnel. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: Requirements of the indicator 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: Refer Recommendation #1 | | | | | |

| Criterion 10.4 - Leader's champion and model best practice implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
|---|--|----------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| 10.4.1 | The Board and leaders promote the NCSS and enact all policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding. | ✓ | | | |
| Observations: Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted. | | | | | |
| Criterion 10.5 - Personnel understand and implement the policies and procedures. | | Developed & Embedded | Developed | Developing | Yet to Develop |
| 10.5.1 | Personnel are encouraged to reflect on their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback. | | ✓ | | |
| Observations: The opportunity for reflection and practical implementation of policies and procedures is continuing as they are being rolled out and personnel can provide feedback. | | | | | |

4. Detailed findings and Recommendations

| Recommendation #1 | | Priority 2 |
|---------------------------|---|------------|
| Indicator No. | Indicator | |
| 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. | |
| 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. | |
| 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. | |
| 1.2.3 | A Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) is appointed with clearly defined roles and responsibilities | |
| Details of finding | 1.2.2 The Diocesan Pastoral Council acts as the Safeguarding Committee. It is recommended that Safeguarding is a standing agenda item for meetings, and that a written report is provided for inclusion in the minutes. | |
| Recommendations | 1.2.2, 9.2.1, 10.3.1, 10.3.2 ACSL recommends that Safeguarding be added as a standing agenda item for Pastoral Council Meetings and actions and that a written report is provided for inclusion in the minutes. | |
| Agreed Actions | As per recommendations. | |
| Responsibility | Chancery | |
| Due date | July 2026 | |

| Recommendation #2 | | Priority 2 |
|---------------------------|---|------------|
| Indicator No. | Indicator | |
| 1.2.4 | Personnel understand that good safeguarding practices are everyone's responsibility and are empowered to contribute to the organisation's safeguarding practices. | |
| Details of finding | 1.2.4 Not all parishes have systems in place to record daily activities and appointments, which include tradespeople and visitors. | |
| Recommendation | ACSL recommends that all parishes have systems in place to record daily activities and appointments including a visitor's register | |
| Agreed Action | Parishes to be reminded to maintain visitors records and include a visitor sign in register. | |
| Responsibility | Chancery | |

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| Due date | July 2026 |
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| Recommendation #3 | | Priority 3 |
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| Indicator No. | Indicator | |
| 1.4.4 | The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services. | |
| 1.6.2 | Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures align with best practice. | |
| 7.1.1 | Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures. | |
| 7.4.2 | Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures. | |
| Details of finding | <p>1.4.4 & 7.1.1 Clergy identified the issues of professional boundaries and power imbalances as areas for further training. Clergy and Volunteers requested further safeguarding training.</p> <p>1.6.2 & 7.4.2 Further work needs to be done to ensure Clergy and personnel understand their obligations under the Privacy Act.</p> <p>1.6.2 & 7.4.2 Priority to be given to completing the digitization of records, filing and training personnel on how to retrieve those files.</p> | |
| Recommendation | <p>Chancery to manage ongoing training and promote ACSL learning opportunities including obligations under the Privacy Act (1998) and areas identified by Clergy for further training and support, including professional boundaries and power imbalances.</p> <p>ACSL recommends that priority continue to be given to completing the digitization of records, filing and training personnel on how to retrieve those files.</p> | |
| Agreed Action | As per recommendations. | |
| Responsibility | Chancery | |
| Due date | Ongoing | |

| Recommendation #4 | | Priority 2 |
|--------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Indicator No. | Indicator | |
| 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 across its services. | |
| 1.5.3 | There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report, and review risks. | |

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| 8.1.1 | <p>Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of services including risks arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child. services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, and mentoring. one-to-one interaction with adults at risk. child-to-child interactions. adult-to-child interactions. adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); and the nature of physical spaces. <p>Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.</p> | |
| 8.3.1 | <p>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 service.</p> | |
| 8.4.1 | <p>If a third party provides services or uses the organisation’s facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.</p> | |
| Details of finding | <p>1.5.3 & 8.1.1 Risk assessments and risk mitigation are undertaken at parish levels with different levels of confidence. OCG recommends focus on a comprehensive risk register and management plan to be developed to generate an overarching risk management framework. The Diocese would benefit from an overarching Risk Management Register, compiling Risk Assessments from parishes to strengthen risk oversight. The Diocese will continue to review the plans, where appropriate to improve risk assessments.</p> <p>8.3.1 Policy and process is in place for managing risk if the Diocese becomes aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their service but this area of risk should be incorporated in safeguarding refresher training.</p> <p>8.4.1 More training and advice is required for parishes to understand the importance of third-party contractors and facilities</p> | |
| Recommendation | <p>8.1.1 ACSL recommends the Diocese continue with the risk assessment roll out across parishes. The Diocese will also continue to review the plans, where appropriate to improve risk assessments</p> <p>1.5.3 & 8.4.1 ACSL recommends the Chancery continue to support development of risk assessments and use these assessments collected from parishes, to create a Diocesan wide safeguarding risk management plan, including a risk register, to support the Safeguarding Implementation Plan.</p> <p>8.3.1 Ensure safeguarding refresher training incorporates the policy and processes that are in place for managing risk if the Diocese becomes aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their service.</p> <p>8.4.1 Parishes to be supported to use third-party agreements effectively.</p> | |
| Agreed Action | As per recommendations. | |
| Responsibility | Chancery | |
| Due date | July 2026 | |

| Recommendation #5 | | Priority 3 |
|---------------------------|---|------------|
| Indicator No. | Indicator | |
| 6.1.3 | The Complaint Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflict of interests are managed. | |
| 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. | |
| Details of finding | 6.1.6 Completion of the records digitization and filing is an ongoing priority for the Chancery. | |
| Recommendation | 6.1.6 ACSL recommends that the completion of the records digitization and filing continues to be an ongoing priority for the Chancery | |
| Agreed Action | As per recommendations. | |
| Responsibility | Chancery | |
| Due date | December 2026 | |

| Recommendation #6 | | Priority 2 |
|---------------------------|---|------------|
| Indicator No. | Indicator | |
| 5.2.3 | Records of checks are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation, for all personnel | |
| Details of finding | Maintaining the records of currency of WWCC is managed at the Parish level with a central repository held by the Diocese. | |
| Recommendation | ACSL recommends that the Safeguarding Office ensures it has confidence that WWCC monitoring and record-keeping processes are in keeping with new requirements of the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian. | |
| Agreed Action | As per recommendation. | |
| Responsibility | Chancery | |
| Due date | July 2026 | |

| Recommendation #7 | | Priority 2 |
|-------------------|---|------------|
| Indicator No. | Indicator | |
| 5.4.1 | Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews are in place for personnel, and 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. | |

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| 5.5.4 | All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals | |
| Details of finding | There remains resistance to formal professional supervision by some clergy and personnel. | |
| Recommendation | ACSL recommends the Diocese take steps to ensure all clergy and personnel undertake professional supervision. | |
| Agreed Action | As per Recommendation. | |
| Responsibility | Chancery | |
| Due date | July 2026 | |

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| Recommendation #8 | | Priority 2 |
| Indicator No. | Indicator | |
| 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. | |
| Details of finding | Policy is required for use of CCTV if installed and in use. | |
| Recommendation | If parishes use CCTV there should be a policy in place to ensure consistent monitoring of footage and compliance with the Privacy Act. | |
| Agreed Action | As per Recommendation. | |
| Responsibility | Chancery | |
| Due date | July 2026 | |

Appendix A – Maturity 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 and 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 9-12 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 18 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.

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| 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. 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: |

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| | <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. |
| Certification | means the act of giving official authority or approval and certification of the implementation of the NCSS and permission to use the ACSL Certification symbol. |
| Child/ren | means individuals under 18 years of age. |
| Child abuse | <p>There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Definition sourced from the Australian Institute of Family Studies: https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect</p> <p>Child abuse refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e., neglect) and commission. Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical abuse • emotional/psychological abuse • neglect • sexual abuse • exposure to family violence |
| Church Authority | means: |

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| | <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 PJS the competent authority in accordance with the statutes. • for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organisation in accordance with its rules. |
| Civil Standard | the most common standard of proof relates to civil proceedings, which is the balance of probabilities (incorporating the principles from <i>Briginshaw v Briginshaw</i>) – 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. |
| 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. 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. |
| 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. |
| | refers to enabling individuals the right (or dignity) to take reasonable risks. It recognises that restricting this right can stifle |

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| | <p>the individual's growth, self-esteem and the overall quality of life:</p> <p>'Given that an individual's personal dignity is manifested, in part, by their ability to remain autonomous, and being autonomous engenders risk-taking. Inhibiting an individual's ability to take risks erodes their dignity. Dignity of risk is therefore the principle of allowing an individual the dignity afforded by risk-taking, subsequently enhancing their personal growth and quality of life.'</p> <p>(Joseph E Ibrahim and Marie-Claire Davis, 'Impediments to Applying the "Dignity of Risk" Principle in Residential Aged Care Services: "Dignity of Risk" in Residential Aged Care', <i>Australasian Journal on Ageing</i> 32, no. 3 (September 2013): 188–93)</p> |
| Diminished capacity | <p>means if an adult needs to make a decision and is unable to carry out any part of this process (as listed below), they have impaired decision-making capacity.</p> <p>There are three elements to making a decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding the nature and effect of the decision; • freely and voluntarily deciding; and • communicating the decision in some way. |
| Diocese | <p>means a diocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelature of the Latin Church and an eparchy of an Eastern Church.</p> |
| Disability (persons with) | <p>means those who have physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. (Article 2, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.)</p> |
| Diversity | <p>means a range of people who have various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests.</p> |
| Diverse sexuality | <p>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.</p> |
| Elder abuse | <p>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.</p> |
| Emotional abuse (adults) | <p>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.</p> |
| Emotional abuse (children) | <p>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.</p> |

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| 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, other adults or whole communities 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. |

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| 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 |

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

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| | will understand they will be listened to, supported, and known action will be taken on their behalf. |
| Safeguarding Commitment Statement | means a Commitment Statement describing an entity's commitment to keep children and adults safe from harm. It informs the entity's safeguarding culture. |
| Safeguarding Co-ordinator | means an individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity. |
| Safeguarding Implementation Plan | means a documented plan which articulates actions to be taken across the entity to ensure safeguarding practices are in place. It includes actions, strategies, responsibilities, delegations, and accountabilities, and tracks review and progress. It is overseen by the Safeguarding Committee. |
| Safeguarding policies and procedures | means any policies or procedures of the entity that address elements of safeguarding children and adults. For example, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment. • risk management. • complaint handling; and • acceptable use of online applications. |
| Seminarian | a student in a theological formation and education centre preparing for ordination as a priest. |
| Seminary | means a centre for the formation and education of students preparing for ordination. |
| Sexual abuse (adult) | Sexual abuse is a form of sexual assault. Sexual abuse includes rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment, and sexual interference. Sexual activity with an adult who is incapacitated by a mental or physical condition (such as dementia) that impairs his or her ability to grant informed consent, is defined as sexual assault/abuse. Sexual assault/abuse includes where through force, threats or abuse of authority, an individual commits a canonical offence or forces someone to perform or submit to sexual acts. Sexual assault is a crime. |
| Sexual abuse (child) | refers to exposing a child to any form of sexual activity. This may or may not involve physical contact. This may take the form of taking sexually explicit photographs or videos of children, forcing children to watch or take part in sexual acts and forcing or coercing children to have sex or engage in sexual acts with other children or adults. |
| Spiritual abuse | means abuse of a person that invokes a person's religious beliefs and faith to perpetrate harm. Spiritual abuse can occur as a secondary experience of abuse when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of spiritual authority and trust within the Church a |
| Substantiated complaint | means under the civil standard of proof an allegation of abuse for which the investigator finds that sufficient evidence exists to believe that the alleged conduct more likely than not occurred. |
| Third parties | means any individual, group or legal entity outside the Church entity who contract services and facilities to or from the Church entity. |
| Transient Risk | means short-term risk, experienced by people at different stages in their life: e.g. when someone is vulnerable due to: |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grief • bereavement • relationship breakdown • homelessness • unemployment • financial hardship |
| Trauma-informed and victim-centred support | is a strengths-based framework which is founded on five core principles – safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Trauma-informed services do no harm: they do not re-traumatise or blame victims for their efforts to manage their traumatic reactions, and they embrace a message of hope and optimism that recovery is possible. In trauma-informed services, trauma survivors are seen as unique individuals who have managed their responses to the experiences as best that they could. |
| Validation | means an assessment by ACSL of any self-assessment, review or audit, undertaken to achieve ACSL Certification status. |
| Working With Children Check | denotes the statutory screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. There is not yet a single national framework setting out requirements for 'working with children' checks. Each State/Territory in Australia has its own system. They are one part of a Church entity's recruitment, selection and screening practices. |
| Working with Vulnerable People Check | means the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 in the Australian Capital Territory which requires those working with children (and other vulnerable groups) to complete a Working with Vulnerable People Check and be registered before they can commence employment. Tasmania has a 'Working with Vulnerable People Check' which requires all employees and volunteers aged 16 and over working in childcare services or other child-related services to apply for a WWVP check. To date, only the ACT and Tasmania have this requirement. |
| Zero Tolerance to Abuse | means that an organisation does not permit abusive behaviour of any kind; it actively works to prevent it through its recruitment practices, policies, procedures and systems; it responds immediately when it occurs; and the Church Authority holds all individuals accountable without exception. |