

# Diocese of Geraldton

## 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](#).

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd  
PO Box 5365  
Braddon, ACT 2612

Phone: 1300 603 411

Email: [info@acsltd.org.au](mailto:info@acsltd.org.au)

Website: [www.acsltd.org.au](http://www.acsltd.org.au)

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>TO BISHOP MICHAEL MORRISSEY, DIOCESE OF GERALDTON</b> .....	<b>5</b>
OPINION .....	5
DISCLAIMER .....	5
<b>1. Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.1 CONTEXT .....	6
1.2 BACKGROUND .....	6
1.3 AUDIT APPROACH .....	7
1.4 IN SCOPE ASSESSMENT .....	9
<b>2. Overarching findings</b> .....	<b>9</b>
ASSESSMENT SUMMARY .....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
<b>Table 1: Summary of NCSS Assessment</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>3. Summary of recommendations</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>4. Assessment of compliance with NCSS indicators</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>4. Detailed findings and Recommendations</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix A – Maturity Assessment</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix B – Audit Finding Priorities</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>Appendix C – Glossary</b> .....	<b>44</b>

## 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 Geraldton's performance against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. The report includes compliance level ratings for each standard, criteria, and indicator, and includes explanatory notes for key findings.

The information contained in this report is based on evidence provided by the Diocese of Geraldton 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 MICHAEL MORRISSEY, DIOCESE OF GERALDTON

## Opinion

ACSL has undertaken a safeguarding audit of a sample of parish and Diocesan leadership and Safeguarding office activities of the Diocese of Geraldton. This audit includes an analysis of the NCSS Self-Assessment, interviews with Diocese of Geraldton personnel and follow up conversations. ACSL considers that the audit evidence obtained from the Diocese of Geraldton 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 Geraldton offers a true and fair view of the Diocese's safeguarding policies, procedures and processes as at 30 April 2026 and of its performance against the NCSS for the period ended on that date.

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

Signed:



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Dr Ursula Stephens  
Chief Executive Officer  
Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd

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

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

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

## 1.2 Background

Bishop Michael Morrissey was appointed on 15 May 2017 as the ninth Bishop of Geraldton in Western Australia and is the first Bishop of Geraldton who was born, raised, ordained and ministered in the Diocese. His Episcopal Ordination was celebrated 28 June 2017.

The Diocese of Geraldton was established in 1898 by separating the northern areas from the Archdiocese of Perth. The Diocese serves the vast Mid-West region of Western Australia. The Diocese spans a wide geographic area from the coast inland to mining areas. The Diocese is the largest in land size in Australia with a total land mass of more than a million square kilometres, 1,318,310 km sq. There are sixteen priests, ten parishes centre and twelve Catholic schools- eight primary and four secondary schools. The Diocese shares ownership of the St Charles Seminary Perth, The Parishes of Port Hedland and South Hedland are managed by the Spiritan Fathers, while the Redemptorist Fathers support the Carnarvon parish.

The Diocese has a growing reliance on priests recruited from overseas. Bishop Michael is very aware of the process of acculturation that his missionary priests experience coming to the Diocese. To address this he has

been working closely with St Charles's Provincial Seminary in Perth to recruit mid-level seminarians to complete their training in Australia.

The 2021 Social Profile of the Catholic Community in the Diocese of Geraldton, published by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, National Centre for Pastoral Research, shows a total population of 122,918 people living within the diocesan boundaries with a Catholic population of 21,371. The Diocese serves a diverse population, including a significant indigenous community with 10.6% of the population identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in 2021. The median age of Catholics in the diocese is 39 years. This reflects the highly transient nature of the workforce families in the mining communities of Port Hedland, Karratha and the regional administrative centre of Geraldton. The prevalence of Fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) workers from overseas on working visas who bring their families, means that the schools have in place a heightened vigilance about child safety.

This population profile impacts on the level of volunteering present in the communities, and within the local parishes. Some small parishes have only one or two volunteers who undertake numerous roles in support of local ministries.

The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia is mandated by the Bishops of Western Australia to act on behalf of the Catholic community for the benefit of all Catholic school-aged children. The parish schools work closely with their priests in support of sacramental and liturgy preparation, school leadership induction and church celebrations.

Centacare Family Services is an incorporated body, of which the Bishop is the member. There is a highly skilled -based voluntary board appointed by the Bishop, who also approves the appointment of the Director on the recommendation from the Board. Centacare Family Services employs between 50-60 staff, working across several sites within the Diocese.

The assessment of the Diocese of Geraldton's compliance with the NCSS indicators is detailed in Section 2 of this report. Our recommendations for improvement, including the Diocese of Geraldton'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 Geraldton and the extent to which they meet the requirements of the NCSS.

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

ACSL 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 Geraldton was assessed against the NCSS which includes consideration of adults at risk. In April 2026 ACSL completed a review audit of the Diocese of Geraldton's NCSS Self-Assessment. This self-assessment allowed the Diocese of Geraldton to present evidence of their compliance with the NCSS. Fieldwork was conducted from 21 – 23 April 2026.

ACSL met with Bishop Michael Morrissey, and Ms Jacqui Correy to discuss safeguarding practices and procedures. ACSL also interviewed the Chancellor, Vicar General, and Diocesan Financial Administrator.

The audit scope included:

- Interviews, observations, and enquiry with the leadership, including their Safeguarding Committee and relevant ministry 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 Diocese.
- Site visits to:
  - The Chancery to review documents and meet with the leadership team.
  - Three parishes:
    - Karratha
    - Port Hedland
    - Geraldton Cathedral Parish
  - Two schools
    - Karratha
    - Port Hedland
  - Meetings with the Director of Centacare Family Services and Catholic Education.

As this is the first audit of the Diocese and creates a baseline for a continuous improvement plan, Centacare Family Services and Catholic Education will provide Declarations of Assurance of their compliance with all regulatory standards.

### Overarching findings

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

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

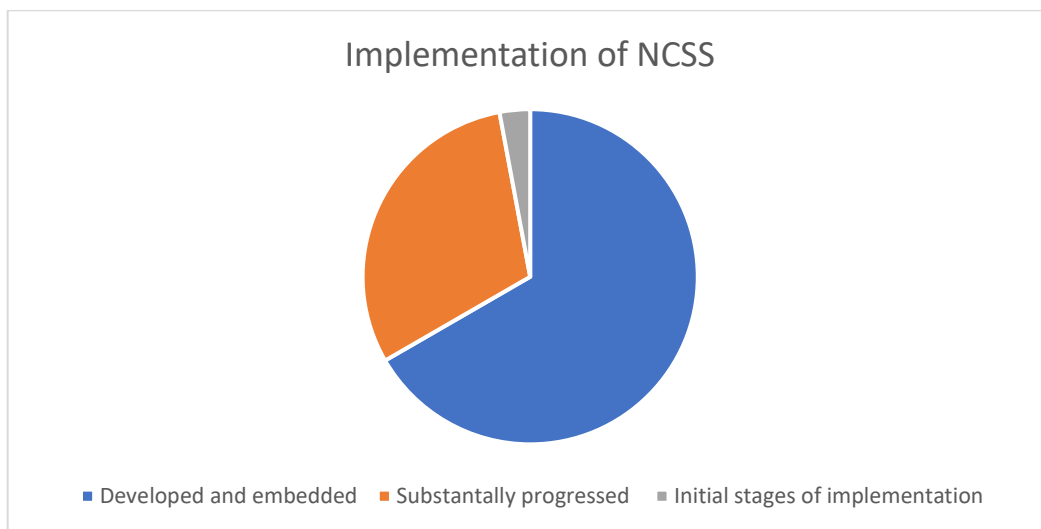
- 68 indicators are developed and embedded.
- 31 indicators are substantially progressed.
- 3 indicators are in the initial stages of implementation.

Of the 104 NCSS indicators applicable to full audited Church Authorities, two (2) of these are not relevant to the Diocese of Geraldton's operations.

ACSL assessment of the implementation of NCSS indicators by a Church Authority has been determined using a four-point maturity scale<sup>1</sup>.

**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**.



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

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



Standards 1 and 9 focus on how the Diocesan leadership influences and implements a positive safeguarding culture across its ministries. Diocesan key personnel are expected to display strong leadership within their ministry activities, including through an accountable and transparent governance structure. Standard 9 is focused on assessing how the Diocese is preparing to meet emerging safeguarding risks and the continuous review and improvement approaches that are in place, across its ministries and services.

The audit assessed safeguarding policies, procedures and processes in different settings to understand how a zero-tolerance approach to abuse is implemented and how all people (children and adults) are provided a safe environment, free from abuse and discrimination. The audit is aimed at understanding how the Diocesan safeguarding efforts are embedded and/or developed in parishes and ministries.

<sup>1</sup> Refer Appendix A for definitions of the maturity scale used for the Compliance Assessment.

Key findings of the audit are:

- The Diocese of Geraldton demonstrates a firm commitment to promoting a strong safeguarding culture. This is actively promoted by the Bishop and supported by the Vicar General, Safeguarding Coordinator and key parish leaders.
- The Diocese has an approved Safeguarding Policy which is publicly available.
- A dedicated part-time Safeguarding Co-ordinator leads the development of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices.
- There are specific cultural safeguarding representatives from diverse backgrounds in several parishes.
- The Diocese adopts a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and uses a trauma-informed approach to its operations and activities.
- The personnel interviewed as part of the audit all valued the role and advice provided by the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee is in place and is responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the NCSS.
- The personnel interviewed and parishes visited demonstrate an embedded culture of child safeguarding, by championing and modelling sound practices, procedures, and language.
- Safeguarding practices are mostly developed and embedded in the parishes and ministries.
- All clergy in the Diocese have undertaken formation and safeguarding training.
- The Diocese's safeguarding practices are regularly reviewed and the process to analyse complaints and identify systemic failures is developed.
- The Diocese has implemented the SAAT (Safeguarding Activities Assessment Tool) parish annual self-audit tool which are reviewed by the Director of Safeguarding and reported to the Bishop.

#### Areas for improvement:

- Parish Risk Management plans need to be further developed to ensure robust risk management strategies are in use. It would assist the Diocesan leadership if an aggregate parish and ministry risk register was created, which details all activities and generates a management system that monitors how risk management plans are implemented, reviewed, and reported to the Diocese.
- Where facilities are used by third parties, the Diocesan Safeguarding Commitment Statement and contact information should be widely displayed.



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

The focus of this Capability Area is on implementing safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to keep children and adults at risk safe, informed and able to contribute to safeguarding policies and practices. Safeguarding is most effective when an inclusive approach is taken that actively encourages the participation and involvement of families and carers and where diverse needs and circumstances are acknowledged and met in culturally safe ways.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The Diocese has developed a range of age-appropriate materials to engage and consult with children with support from the Archdiocese of Perth, which meet the requirements of the WA Child Safe Standards.
- The current information aimed at children is displayed in all areas visited.
- The Diocese is preparing additional materials and training to understand safeguarding adults at risk.

- The Diocese participates in community awareness programs, including Safeguarding Sunday, National Child Protection Week and NAIDOC week.
- The Diocese encourages parents, carers/guardians to be involved in their children’s activities including sacramental preparation and programs.
- Diocesan schools have parent engagement strategies that include partnering with families.
- Safeguarding materials has been translated into Easy English and community languages for parishioners.
- A Syro-Malabar Mass is celebrated regularly for that community.

### Areas for Improvement

- ACSL recommends that material for programs supporting adults who may be at risk be widely displayed (e.g. Elder Abuse hotline, family violence support).
- Parishes and ministries continue, as part of the normal activities, to provide a range of feedback options and respond to any suggestions for improvements or areas of concern.
- Video messages could be developed by parishioners in community languages to promote safeguarding messages and practices.



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

Standards 5 and 7 focus on ensuring that all personnel (clergy, staff, and volunteers) within the Diocese are supported in their ministry according to best practice standards. This includes induction and refresher training, professional supervision and regular performance appraisals.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- A Diocesan centralised system is in place to record the National Police Check, WWCC information of personnel and their training records.
- Personnel interviewed demonstrated a good understanding of safeguarding either through previous experiences or in-service induction.
- All personnel have signed the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Statement.
- The Diocese has comprehensive recruitment policies and procedures that outline safeguarding requirements in its advertising, vetting, and screening of personnel.
- A zero-tolerance approach to abuse is explicit in advertising, screening, and recruitment practices for personnel.
- Some positions but not all are risk assessed prior to advertisement.
- Some personnel are yet to undertake regular supervision and annual performance reviews.
- The Diocese uses the Australian Catholic Ministry Register.
- Personnel interviewed indicate a sound understanding of the requirements for child safeguarding, including knowledge of the appropriate responses should a complaint or concern be raised, indicators of child sexual abuse, including harmful behaviours of child towards another child.
- The Diocese has implemented training for personnel to understand the safeguarding needs of adults at risk.
- The safeguarding training content is subject to continuous improvement.

## Areas for improvement:

- Contrary to the stated policy, not all volunteers have undergone referee checks and risk assessments prior to being appointed to ministry activities.
- It was noted there are personnel in significant ministries with children who have not completed the compulsory safeguarding training. Any personnel who do complete the NCSS Safeguarding module must not engage in ministry.
- All personnel should receive professional supervision and annual performance reviews.
- Where priests are recruited from overseas religious congregations it is important to ensure that there is a documented agreement for how professional/pastoral supervision, mentor support, professional development and appraisals will be met and where the responsibilities are shared between the diocese and the religious order that these are clearly understood by all parties.
- The vastness of the Diocese and the distance between parishes means the clergy are all missionary priests. This can introduce challenges to supporting clergy in remote communities. It is therefore important to formalise mentoring arrangements for new clergy.



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

The audit focuses on reviewing current complaint management practices. This includes policies and procedures in place to prevent, detect, report, and respond to all incidents and complaints, and the associated training, awareness, and education available for all personnel. The ACSL audit does not re-assess the outcomes of individual complaints.

An audit assesses both the effectiveness of the complaint management process and that the roles and responsibilities of those involved in managing the process are clear. Further, complaints management processes should specify what supports will be offered to all parties to a complaint. The audit also assesses whether all personnel interviewed in the Diocese are aware of the complaint processes.

The audit team made the following key findings:

- The reporting system of the Diocese is effective.
- The Diocese follows the National Response Protocol and the Complaints Management policies of the Archdiocese of Perth which is supported by locally developed guidelines. The Diocese is in the process of finalising the Safeguarding Guideline: Responding and Reporting Abuse.
- The Diocesan Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.
- The requirement to maintain safeguarding records for a minimum of 50 years is documented in the Privacy Policy.
- All parishes and clergy are using a Diocesan email address and Sacristy Register.
- Personnel have signed the Code of Conduct, and the register is updated regularly.
- The auditor was asked for identification in the selected parishes and ministries.
- The IT monitoring system is managed through the Archdiocese of Perth.
- Parishes use their websites rather than social media to provide bulletins and to update information.
- Key safeguarding policies and procedures relating to safeguarding requirements are in place and operating effectively. The policies and procedures address the requirements of the NCSS. They are accessible and are presented in child friendly formats.
- The leaders champion and model best practices in safeguarding and personnel interviewed during the audit understood and appeared to be implementing safeguarding policies and procedures.

## Areas for improvement.

- There is CCTV in some parishes – a policy on where and how often the footage is backed up and who can view would strengthen the Diocese’s Privacy commitments.
- More support should be provided to help parishes to be pre-emptive in managing risk, through scenario planning.
- Parish risk registers should be provided to the diocesan Safeguarding Officer to ensure the Bishop, as the Church Authority, has oversight of an overall Diocesan Risk Management Register.
- Outside of School Hours Care (OSCH) services use the facilities of a parish school and it is recommended that all third-party contractors are provided with the safeguarding requirements of the Diocese, sign agreements for venue hire, and that safeguarding information is visible within those facilities.
- Some home visitation continues with only one person rather than two.

## 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	12	4		-
2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate	6		4	2	-	-
3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6		4	3	-	-
4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected	4		3	1	-	-
5: Robust human resource management	22		14	5	3	-
6: Effective complaints management	19	-	9	10	-	-
7: Ongoing training & education	11		9	2	-	-
8: Safe physical and online environments	7		4	3	-	-
9: Continuous improvement	6	1	3	2	-	-
10: Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults	6		6	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>103</b>		<b>97%</b>		<b>3%</b>	

## 2. Summary of recommendations

- There are no Priority 1 (high rated) audit recommendations.
- There are ten (10) Priority 2 (medium rated) recommendations.
- There are no Priority 3 (low rated) recommendation.

Audit recommendations are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation <sup>2</sup>.

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

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

No.	Indicator	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	1.1.2	That the Diocese ensure the Safeguarding Commitment Statement be more widely displayed throughout facilities, particularly those being used by Third Parties.
Recommendation 2	1.5.1-1.5.3, 8.1.1	That scenario planning support be provided to help parishes to be pre-emptive in managing risk.
		That Parishes be supported to further develop Risk Management Plans to ensure robust risk management strategies are in use.
		That a consolidated parish and ministry risk register be created to generate a management system that monitors how risk management plans are implemented, reviewed and reported in the Diocese.
		That parishes provide their risk registers to the Safeguarding Officer on a regular basis. This will support better oversight and help ensure Diocesan Leadership stays informed of emerging risks and mitigation efforts.
Recommendation 3	2.1.2, 2.3.1	That the Diocese continue to develop additional materials and training to understand safeguarding adults at risk including strategies to further engage with adults at risk on safeguarding approaches. This includes training to induct volunteers who will commence a new Home Visitation ministry.
Recommendation 4	3.2.1, 3.3.1	That the Diocese continue to develop strategies to encourage families, carers and communities to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches and views on safeguarding policies and practices, including through the planned implementation of the Parish/Carer questionnaire.
Recommendation 5	4.1.2, 6.1.5, 6.2.1, 6.3.1-6.3.6	That the Diocese finalise and publish the draft Safeguarding Guideline: Responding and Reporting Abuse.

<sup>2</sup> Refer Appendix B for definitions of the Priority ratings used for audit recommendations.

No.	Indicator	Recommendation
Recommendation 6	5.1.3	That the Diocese ensure that all positions are risk assessed for the expected level of contact with children and adults at risk prior to advertisement.
	5.1.3	That the Diocese ensure that all volunteers undergo referee checks and risk assessments prior to being appointed to ministry activities.
	5.3.1	That all personnel must complete safeguarding training before engaging in ministry.
	5.3.2	That everyone in leadership roles undertake the Introductory session for leaders to ensure they understand their responsibilities that cannot be delegated.
	5.4.1	Some all personnel undertake regular supervision and annual performance reviews.
	5.4.1	Ensure that the diocesan risk management framework incorporates safeguarding risk management and mitigation and that there is regular oversight and review as part of the risk matrix.
	5.5.4,5.5.5, 5.5.6	That documented agreements are in place between the Diocese and religious congregations to ensure standards 5.5.4-5.5.6 are met and where the responsibilities are shared between parties that these are clearly understood by all parties.
	5.8.3	That the Diocese ensure mentoring arrangements are formalised for all new clergy.
Recommendation 7	6.1.3, 6.1.4	That Integrity in Our Common Mission should be the subject of a specific training session with clergy and personnel.
Recommendation 8	7.1.1	That the Diocese continue to work towards full compliance for safeguarding refresher training for all personnel, volunteers, clergy and religious.
	7.4.2	That safeguarding training includes responsibilities under the Privacy Act.
Recommendation 9	8.1.1	Risk management strategies for solo ministries should be regularly reviewed
	8.2.1	That the Diocese develop a CCTV policy to ensure that practices align with legislative requirements including privacy laws, NCSS and best practices.
	8.4.1	That all third-party contractors be provided with the safeguarding requirements of the Diocese, sign agreements for venue hire, and that safeguarding information is visible within those facilities.
Recommendation 10	9.1.1	That the Diocese continue to work towards full compliance for Parish annual self-audits, known as SAAT (Safeguarding Activities Assessment Tool).
	9.3.1	It is recommended that parishes are formally advised of the outcome of their SAAT self-audits and any areas for improvement.

## 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.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b>					
1.1.2 The Safeguarding Commitment Statement should be more widely displayed throughout facilities, particularly those being used by Third parties. Refer Recommendation #1.					
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"> <li>emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and</li> <li>actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management.</li> </ul>	✓			
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.3 - Governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy across the entity's activities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.3.1	Governance arrangements are transparent and include safeguarding roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability for the safeguarding of children and adults is clear.	✓			
1.3.2	Where the Church Authority's governance includes activities in countries other than Australia, these Standards are applied wherever possible,	N/A			

	considering cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.				
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.4 – The entity’s Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural standards towards children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.4.1	The Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour.	✓			
1.4.2	The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, families, and carers.	✓			
1.4.3	The Code of Conduct considers the needs of all children and adults at risk, paying particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Nations people.</li> <li>• individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are at risk of abuse’;</li> <li>• individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</li> <li>• children in out of home care, or are homeless; and,</li> <li>• children and adults of diverse sexuality.</li> </ul>	✓			
1.4.4	The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.5 - The entity’s risk management plan focuses on preventing, identifying, and mitigating safeguarding risks to children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.5.1	The Risk Management Plan considers the needs of children and adults with diminished capacity, and how and when adults at risk make informed choices (dignity of risk).		✓		
1.5.2	The Risk Management Plan incorporates procedures to assess, evaluate, review, and oversee safeguarding of children and adults at risk across its services.		✓		
1.5.3	There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report, and review risks.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b>					
<b>1.5.1 – 1.5.3</b> Parish Risk Management plans need to be further developed to ensure robust risk management strategies are in use. It would assist the Diocesan leadership if an aggregate parish and ministry risk register was created, which details all activities and generates a management system that monitors how risk management plans are implemented, reviewed, and reported to the Diocese. <b>Refer Recommendation #2.</b>					

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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> 2.1.2 The Diocese has a Safeguarding Guideline - Engaging with Adults at Risk with the aim of ensuring adults, especially adults at risk, are informed about their rights, empowered to participate in decisions affecting them and are provided appropriate support. The Diocese is preparing additional materials and training to understand safeguarding adults at risk. <b>Refer Recommendation #3</b>					
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 2.3 - The importance of friendships and social connections for adults at risk is recognised and encouraged, helping them feel safe and less isolated.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

2.3.1	Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b>					
2.3.1 The Diocese is preparing additional materials and training to understand safeguarding adults at risk this includes training to induct volunteers who will commence a new Home Visitation ministry. <b>Refer Recommendation #3.</b>					
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

<b>Standard 3</b>		<b>Partnering with families, carers and communities</b>			
<b><i>Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults.</i></b>					
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 3.2 – Families, carers and communities are engaged with and are provided information about the organisation's approach to safeguarding.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.		✓		
3.2.2	Safeguarding information widely available, including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinators.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
3.2.1 Families, carers and communities are informed about Safeguarding Policies and Guidelines through Parish Bulletin reminders, posters displayed in each church and the availability of safeguarding information on the Diocesan website. The Diocese is continuing to develop strategies to encourage families, carers and communities to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches, including through the implementation of a Parish/Carer questionnaire to encourage contribution to safeguarding discussions. <b>Refer Recommendation #4</b>					

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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
3.3.1 See observations at 3.2.1. The Diocese is continuing to develop pathways to encourage families, carers and communities to contribute to discussions about safeguarding policies and practices. <b>Refer Recommendation #4.</b>					
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 4		Equity is promoted and diversity is respected			
<i>Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice</i>					
Criterion 4.1 - The diverse circumstances and backgrounds of children and adults at risk are acknowledged and accommodated by providing appropriate support.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.1.1	The Safeguarding Policy and procedures demonstrate an understanding, and awareness of the diverse circumstances and experiences that increase the risk of abuse.	✓			
4.1.2	The Complaints Handling Policy and practices address barriers that may prevent a disclosure of abuse being made and that hinders personnel from recognising and responding appropriately.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b>					
The Diocese follows the National Response Protocol and the Complaints Management policies of the Archdiocese of Perth supported by locally developed guidelines. The Diocese is due to publish the draft Safeguarding Guideline: Responding and Reporting Abuse. <b>Refer Recommendation #5</b> (Related Indicators 6.1.5, 6.2.1, 6.3.1-6.3.6.)					
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.	✓			

<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 4.3 - The diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, those living with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and adults who are unable to live at home, and those of diverse sexuality, are acknowledged.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.3.1	The Safeguarding Policy and procedures empower children and adults by reflecting attitudes and behaviours that respect their inherent dignity, are inclusive and are responsive to diverse needs.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

<b>Standard 5</b>		<b>Robust human resource management</b>			
<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.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> 5.1.3 Some positions but not all are risk assessed prior to advertisement. Contrary to the stated policy, not all volunteers have undergone referee checks and risk assessments prior to being appointed to ministry activities. <b>Refer Recommendation #6</b>					
Criterion 5.2 – Personnel have current clearances (for example, working with children checks) and/or equivalent background checks relevant to their role.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.2.1	All personnel are required to have a background check or clearance (as relevant to their role).	✓			
5.2.2	As required by legislation, personnel must have a current working with children check (or working with vulnerable people check) and/or NDIS Worker Screening Check prior to working with children and adults at risk.	✓			

5.2.3	Records of all checks, for all personnel, are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.3 - Personnel complete appropriate induction and are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities including reporting obligations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.3.1	All personnel participate in a safeguarding induction program, which occurs as soon as possible after commencement.		✓		
5.3.2	The Board and their leadership team undertake Leaders Safeguarding program		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> <b>Refer Recommendation #6</b> 5.3.1 It was noted there are personnel in significant ministries with children who have not completed the compulsory safeguarding training. Any personnel who do complete the introduction to Safeguarding module cannot engage in ministry. <b>Refer Recommendation #6</b> 5.3.2 The Diocese has provided significant safeguarding training to clergy and religious. It is recommended that everyone in leadership roles undertakes the Introductory session for leaders to ensure they understand the responsibilities that cannot be delegated. <b>Refer Recommendation #6</b>					
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.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> The Diocese is commencing development of an overarching risk framework which includes HR functions, performance reviews for staff and ensuring regular supervision for clergy. The Diocesan risk management framework will need to incorporate safeguarding risk management and mitigation with regular oversight and review as part of the risk matrix. <b>Refer Recommendation #6 (Related recommendation #2)</b> All personnel should be receiving professional supervision and annual performance reviews. <b>Refer Recommendation #6</b>					
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.	✓			

5.5.3	Ongoing integrated formation for clergy and religious addresses both the canonical and civil safeguarding requirements. For priests, this would include supporting their fidelity to the Church's teaching regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the inviolability of the Sacramental Seal.	✓			
5.5.4	All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.			✓	
5.5.5	All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals			✓	
5.5.6	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 – 5.5.6 Where priests are recruited from overseas religious congregations it is important to ensure that there is a documented agreement about how these standards will be met and where the responsibilities are shared between the diocese and the religious order so that these are clearly understood by all parties. **Refer**

**Recommendation #6**

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.	✓			
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.	✓			
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.	✓			

**Observations:**

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

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.	✓			
5.8.3	Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia are supported with a suitable mentor for at least the first two years of their time in Australia.		✓		

**Observations:**

5.8.3 That the vastness of the Diocese and the distance between parishes means the clergy are all missionary priests. This can introduce challenges to supporting clergy in remote communities. It is important to formalise mentoring arrangements for new clergy. **Refer Recommendation #6**

Standard 6		Effective complaints management			
<i>Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities and personnel.</i>					
Criterion 6.1 - The 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"> <li>breaches of Code of Conduct.</li> <li>disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child.</li> <li>an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child; and</li> <li>an adult bringing forward a complaint of current or past abuse experienced as an adult.</li> </ul>	✓			
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.	✓			



	such times as the process for imposing a penalty is completed by the relevant dicastery.				
<b>Observations:</b>					
6.3.1-6.3.6 Refer to observations at 4.1.2. Related Indicators 4.1.2, 6.1.5, 6.2.1) <b>Refer Recommendation #5</b>					
Criterion 6.4 - The Complaints Handling Policy includes the process of reporting complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, requiring cooperation with any statutory or contractual processes.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.4.1	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concerns and complaints of child abuse occurring within the entity be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities, in accordance with regulations.</li> <li>any concerns and/or complaints of a criminal against adults be reported to statutory authorities; and</li> <li>personnel cooperate with law enforcement procedures and directives.</li> </ul>	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. 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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

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

Criterion 7.1 - Personnel are trained and supported to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.1.1	Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.		✓		
7.1.2	The organisation's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must as a minimum cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• Safeguarding risk management.</li> <li>• Safeguarding Policy and procedures.</li> <li>• Complaints Handling Policy and procedures.</li> <li>• reporting obligations; and</li> <li>• e-safety training.</li> </ul>	✓			
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
7.1.1 Safeguarding training for new personnel is mandatory. While the expectation of refresher training is clearly described in policies and guidelines, full compliance is still being worked towards. <b>Refer Recommendation #8.</b>					
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"> <li>• understand the nature and impact of child abuse.</li> <li>• understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse.</li> <li>• identify risk factors, such as grooming behaviours; and</li> <li>• understand, identify, and respond to abusive behaviours by a child towards another child.</li> </ul>	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
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"> <li>• understand the nature and impact of adult abuse.</li> </ul>	✓			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand the nature, factors, and impact of institutional abuse.</li> <li>• identify risk factors, such as abuse of power, and exploitation.</li> <li>• recognise how adults and institutions can be groomed, including power imbalances can be exploited; and</li> <li>• understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse.</li> </ul>				
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 7.4 - Personnel have the information and skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
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"> <li>• reporting suspected criminal behaviour to police.</li> <li>• mandatory reporting to child protection authorities.</li> <li>• Reportable Conduct Scheme.</li> <li>• reporting to other regulatory authorities or government departments; and</li> <li>• Canonical reporting requirements.</li> </ul>	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> 7.4.2 Ensure all personnel including parish volunteers understand their responsibilities under the Privacy Act. <b>Refer Recommendation #8.</b>					
<b>Criterion 7.5 - Personnel receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and adults.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 8		Safe physical and online environments			
<i>Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed.</i>					
Criterion 8.1 – The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy addresses both physical and online risks, without compromising the individual’s right to privacy or wellbeing.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.1.1	<p>Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of services including risks arising from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child.</li> <li>• services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, and mentoring.</li> <li>• one-to-one interaction with adults at risk.</li> <li>• child-to-child interactions.</li> <li>• adult-to-child interactions.</li> <li>• adult-to-adult interactions (with consideration to power imbalances); and</li> <li>• the nature of physical spaces.</li> </ul> <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.	✓			
<p><b>Observations:</b></p> <p>8.1.1 More support should be provided to help parishes to be pre-emptive in managing risk, through scenario planning. <b>Refer Recommendation #2</b></p> <p>Parish risk registers should be provided to the diocesan Safeguarding Officer to ensure the Bishop, as the Church Authority, has oversight of an overall Diocesan Risk Management Register. <b>Refer Recommendation #2</b></p> <p>Risk management strategies for solo ministries should be regularly reviewed. <b>Refer Recommendation #9</b></p>					
Criterion 8.2 - The online environment is used in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policy.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.2.1	Personnel access and use online environments in line with the 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.	✓			
<p><b>Observations:</b></p> <p>8.2.1 There is CCTV in some parishes – a policy on where and how often the footage is backed up and who can view would strengthen the Diocese’s Privacy commitments. <b>Refer Recommendation #9</b></p>					

Criterion 8.3 - Risk management plans address the range of settings, activities, and physical environments in which ministry and/or service occur.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.3.1	A process is in place to assess and manage risk if the organisation becomes aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their service.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 8.4 – Where facilities and services are contracted to and from third parties, contractual arrangements specify safeguarding considerations.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.4.1	If a third party provides services or uses the organisations facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.		✓		
<b>Observations:</b> Outside of School Hours Care (OSCH) services use the facilities of a parish school and it is recommended that all third-party contractors are provided with the safeguarding requirements of the Diocese, sign agreements for venue hire, and that safeguarding information is visible within those facilities. <b>Refer Recommendation #9</b>					

<b>Standard 9</b>		<b>Continuous improvement</b>			
<b>Entities regularly review and improve implementation of their systems for keeping children and adults safe.</b>					
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> 9.1.1 Each Parish is required to complete an annual self-audit, known as SAAT (Safeguarding Activities Assessment Tool). The Diocese is working towards full compliance. The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee will regularly monitor the Safeguarding Plan through reviews conducted by the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee. <b>Refer Recommendation #10</b>					
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.				
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 9.3 - The organisation reports on the findings of its safeguarding reviews.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.3.1	The findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to are reported to stakeholders.		✓		
9.3.2	The findings of audits or reviews undertaken or validated by ACSL are made public	N/A			
<b>Observations:</b>					
9.3.1 The Diocese has implemented the SALT parish annual self-audit tool which are reviewed by the Director of Safeguarding and reported to the Bishops. It is recommended that parishes be formally advised of the outcome of their self-audits and any areas for improvement. <b>Refer Recommendation #10</b>					

<b>Standard 10</b>		<b>Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults</b>			
<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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
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.	✓			

<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> 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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

## 8 Detailed findings and Recommendations

Recommendation #2		Priority 2
Indicator No.	Indicator	
1.1.2	The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, widely displayed, and made publicly available.	
<b>Details of finding</b>	The Safeguarding Commitment Statement should be more widely displayed throughout facilities, particularly those being used by Third Parties.	
<b>Recommendations</b>	That the Diocese ensure the Safeguarding Commitment Statement be more widely displayed throughout facilities, particularly those being used by Third Parties.	
<b>Agreed Actions</b>	As per recommendation.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Director of Safeguarding	
<b>Due date</b>	November 2026	

Recommendation #2		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.	
8.1.1	Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of services including risks arising from: 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. Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.	

<b>Details of finding</b>	<p><b>1.5.1 – 1.5.3</b> Parish Risk Management plans need to be further developed to ensure robust risk management strategies are in use.</p> <p>It would assist the Diocesan leadership if an aggregate parish and ministry risk register was created, which details all activities and generates a management system that monitors how risk management plans are implemented, reviewed, and reported to the Diocese.</p> <p><b>8.1.1</b> More support should be provided to help parishes to be pre-emptive in managing risk, through scenario planning.</p> <p>Parish risk registers should be provided to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer to ensure the Bishop, as the Church Authority, has oversight of an overall Diocesan Risk Management Register.</p>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<p>That scenario planning support be provided to help parishes to be pre-emptive in managing risk.</p> <p>That Parishes be supported to further develop Risk Management Plans to ensure robust risk management strategies are in use.</p> <p>That a consolidated parish and ministry risk register be created to generate a management system that monitors how risk management plans are implemented, reviewed and reported in the Diocese.</p> <p>That Parishes provide their risk registers to the Safeguarding Officer on a regular basis. This will support better oversight and help ensure Diocesan Leadership stays informed of emerging risks and mitigation efforts.</p>
<b>Agreed Action</b>	As per recommendations.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Finance Administrator
<b>Due date</b>	November 2026

<b>Recommendation #3</b>		<b>Priority 2</b>
<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	
2.1.2	Adults at risk (or carers where appropriate) are engaged to provide their views about decisions which affect them, what makes them feel safe and to contribute to safeguarding approaches.	
2.3.1	Adults at risk (or their carers where appropriate), are provided with information about safe and respectful relationships.	
<b>Details of finding</b>	<p>The Diocese has in place a Safeguarding Guideline - Engaging with Adults at Risk with the aim of ensuring adults, especially adults at risk, are informed about their rights, empowered to participate in decisions affecting them and are provided appropriate support.</p> <p>The Diocese is preparing additional materials and training to understand safeguarding adults at risk.</p> <p>Within the next three months, the Diocese will be undertaking training to induct volunteers who will commence a new Home Visitation ministry.</p>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	That the Diocese continue to develop additional materials and training to understand safeguarding adults at risk including strategies to further engage with adults at risk on safeguarding approaches. This includes training to induct volunteers who will commence a new Home Visitation ministry.	

<b>Agreed Action</b>	As per recommendation.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Director of Safeguarding
<b>Due date</b>	July 2026

<b>Recommendation #4</b>		<b>Priority 2</b>
<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.	
3.3.1	Processes are in place to engage families, carers and communities about their views on safeguarding policies and practices.	
<b>Details of finding</b>	<p>The Diocese encourages parents, carers/guardians to be involved in their children's activities including sacramental preparation and programs.</p> <p>Diocesan schools have parent engagement strategies that include partnering with families.</p> <p>The Diocese is in the process of implementing a Parish/Carer questionnaire to encourage contribution to safeguarding discussions</p> <p>The Diocese is continuing to develop pathways to encourage families, carers and communities to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.</p>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	That the Diocese continue to develop strategies to encourage families, carers and communities to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches and views on safeguarding policies and practices, including through the planned implementation of the Parish/Carer questionnaire.	
<b>Agreed Action</b>	As per recommendation.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Director of Safeguarding	
<b>Due date</b>	November 2026	

<b>Recommendation #5</b>		<b>Priority 2</b>
<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	
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.	
6.1.5	The Complaint Handling Policy spells out who has responsibilities in relation to handling complaints and when procedures are enacted.	
6.2.1	The Complaint Handling Policy and procedures demonstrate how the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk are prioritised.	
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.	
<b>Details of finding</b>	<p>The Diocese follows the National Response Protocol and the Complaints Management policies of the Archdiocese of Perth which is supported by locally developed guidelines. The Diocese is finalising the Safeguarding Guideline: Responding and Reporting Abuse.</p> <p>The Diocese works closely with the WA PSO regarding any allegations of abuse. The Diocesan Safeguarding Guideline: Responding and Reporting Abuse includes a flowchart of responsibilities. reference from above, flowchart.</p>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	That the Diocese finalise and publish the draft Safeguarding Guideline: Responding and Reporting Abuse.	
<b>Agreed Action</b>	As per recommendation.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Director of Safeguarding	
<b>Due date</b>	July 2026	

<b>Recommendation #6</b>		<b>Priority 2</b>
<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	
5.1.3	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children/adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.	
5.3.1	All personnel participate in a safeguarding induction program, which occurs as soon as possible after commencement.	
5.3.2	The Board and their leadership team undertake Leaders Safeguarding program	
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.	
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.	
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.	
<b>Details of finding</b>	<p>5.1.3 Contrary to the stated policy, not all volunteers have undergone referee checks and risk assessments prior to being appointed to ministry activities.</p> <p>5.1.3 Some positions, but not all, are risk assessed for the expected level of contact with children and adults at risk prior to advertisement</p> <p>5.3.1 It was noted there are personnel in significant ministries with children who have not completed the compulsory safeguarding training.</p> <p>5.3.2 The Diocese has provided significant safeguarding training to clergy and religious. It is recommended that everyone in leadership roles undertakes the Introductory session for leaders to ensure they understand the responsibilities that cannot be delegated.</p> <p>5.4.1 The Diocese is commencing to develop an overarching risk framework which includes HR functions, performance reviews for staff and ensuring regular supervision for clergy.</p> <p>5.4.1 All personnel should receive professional supervision and annual performance reviews.</p> <p>5.5.4 - 5.5.6 Where priests are recruited from overseas religious congregations it is important to ensure that there is a documented agreement about how these standards will be met and where the responsibilities are shared between the diocese and the religious order that these are clearly understood by all parties.</p> <p>5.8.3 The vastness of the Diocese and the distance between parishes means the clergy are all missionary priests. This can introduce challenges to supporting clergy in remote communities. It is important to formalise mentoring arrangements for new clergy.</p>	

<b>Recommendation</b>	<p>5.1.3 That all positions are risk assessed for the expected level of contact with children and adults at risk prior to advertisement.</p> <p>5.1.3 That all volunteers undergo referee checks and risk assessments prior to being appointed to ministry activities</p> <p>5.3.1 That all personnel must complete the safeguarding training before engaging with ministry.</p> <p>5.3.2 That everyone in leadership roles undertake the Introductory session for leaders to ensure they understand their responsibilities that cannot be delegated.</p> <p>5.4.1 That the Diocese ensure all personnel undertake regular supervision and annual performance reviews.</p> <p>5.4.1 Ensure that the diocesan risk management framework incorporates safeguarding risk management and mitigation and that there is regular oversight and review as part of the risk matrix.</p> <p>5.5.4-5.5.6 That documented agreements are in place between the Diocese and religious congregations to ensure standards 5.5.4-5.5.6 are met and where the responsibilities are shared between parties that these are clearly understood by all parties.</p> <p>5.8.3 That the Diocese ensure mentoring arrangements are formalised for all new clergy.</p>
<b>Agreed Action</b>	As per recommendation.
<b>Responsibility</b>	<p>5.1.3, 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.4.1 : Director of Safeguarding</p> <p>5.5.4-5.5.6, 5.8.3: Vicar General</p>
<b>Due date</b>	November 2026

<b>Recommendation #7</b>		<b>Priority 2</b>
<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	
6.1.2	The Complaint Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflict of interests are managed.	
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.	
<b>Details of finding</b>	6.1.3,6.1.4: To strengthen understanding of the existence of power imbalances and the management of conflict of interest ensure these topics are covered in training sessions.	
<b>Recommendation</b>	6.1.3, 6.1.4: maintain regular safeguarding training for clergy and personnel that includes cultural awareness and maintaining appropriate boundaries.	
<b>Agreed Action</b>	As per recommendation.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Safeguarding Officer	

<b>Due date</b>	Ongoing
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<b>Recommendation #8</b>		<b>Priority 2</b>
<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	
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.	
<b>Details of finding</b>	7.1.1 Safeguarding training for new personnel is mandatory. While the expectation of refresher training is clearly described in the Policies and Guidelines, full compliance is still being worked towards. 7.4.2 Ensure all personnel including parish volunteers understand their responsibilities under the Privacy Act.	
<b>Recommendation</b>	7.1.1 That the Diocese continue to work towards full compliance for safeguarding refresher training for all personnel, volunteers, clergy and religious. 7.4.2 That training modules include responsibilities under the Privacy Act.	
<b>Agreed Action</b>	As per recommendation.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Director of Safeguarding	
<b>Due date</b>	Ongoing	

<b>Recommendation #9</b>		<b>Priority 2</b>
<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	
8.1.1	Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of services including risks arising from: 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. Wherever possible, these interactions are conducted in an open or visible space, or within clear line of sight of another adult.	
8.2.1	Personnel access and use online environments in line with the organisation's Code of Conduct, Privacy Act and relevant communication protocols	
8.4.1	If a third party provides services or uses the organisations facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.	

<b>Details of finding</b>	<p>8.1.1 Risk management strategies for solo ministries should be regularly reviewed.</p> <p>8.2.1 There is CCTV in some parishes – a policy on where and how often the footage is backed up and who can view would strengthen the Diocese’s Privacy commitments.</p> <p>8.4.1 Outside of School Hours Care (OSCH) services use the facilities of a parish school and it is recommended that all third-party contractors are provided with the safeguarding requirements of the Diocese, sign agreements for venue hire, and that safeguarding information is visible within those facilities.</p>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<p>8.1.1 Risk management strategies for solo ministries should be regularly reviewed</p> <p>8.2.1 That the Diocese develop a CCTV policy to ensure that CCTV practices align with legislative requirements including privacy laws, NCSS and sector best practices.</p> <p>8.4.1 All third-party contractors be provided with the safeguarding requirements of the Diocese, sign agreements for venue hire, and that safeguarding information is visible within those facilities.</p>
<b>Agreed Action</b>	As per recommendations.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Director of Safeguarding
<b>Due date</b>	November 2026

<b>Recommendation #10</b>		<b>Priority 2</b>
<b>Indicator No.</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	
9.1.1	The Safeguarding Implementation Plan outlines how safeguarding practices are monitored and reviewed, and how this information is reported.	
9.3.1	The findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to are reported to stakeholders.	
<b>Details of finding</b>	<p>9.1.1 Each Parish is required to complete an annual self-audit, known as SAAT (Safeguarding Activities Assessment Tool). The Diocese is working towards full compliance. The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee will regularly monitor the Safeguarding Plan through reviews conducted by the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee</p> <p>9.3.1 The Diocese has implemented the parish salts which are reviewed by the director of safeguarding and reported to the Bishops. It is recommended that parishes be formally advised of the outcome of their self-audits and any areas for improvement.</p>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	<p>9.1.1 That the Diocese continue to work towards full compliance for Parish annual self-audits, known as SAAT (Safeguarding Activities Assessment Tool).</p> <p>9.3.1 That parishes be formally advised of the outcome of their annual SAAT self-audits and any areas for improvement.</p>	
<b>Agreed Action</b>	As per recommendations.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Director of Safeguarding	
<b>Due date</b>	November 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"> <li>• siloed; and/or</li> <li>• undocumented; and/or</li> <li>• inconsistent; and/or</li> <li>• lack clarity.</li> </ul>	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 3-6 months.</p>	<p>Issues have been identified which represent minor procedural weaknesses or improvement opportunities with respect to the operation of the indicator.</p> <p>Expected resolution is within 12 months or earlier from the issuance of this report.</p>

## Appendix C – Glossary

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

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

<b>Abuse</b>	when used throughout the NCSS document this is an inclusive term covering both child and adult abuse.
<b>Abuse of Power</b>	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.
<b>Accessible language</b>	means information is provided in multiple formats for individuals with different levels of English literacy and proficiency, modes of communication, languages, and cognitive abilities.
<b>Adult</b>	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.
<b>Adult abuse</b>	<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"> <li>• Sexual abuse*</li> <li>• Physical abuse*</li> <li>• Emotional/psychological abuse*</li> <li>• Neglect*</li> <li>• Elder abuse*</li> <li>• Financial abuse*</li> <li>• Exploitation*</li> </ul> <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>
<b>Adult at risk</b>	means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who are elderly.</li> <li>• with a disability.</li> <li>• who suffer from mental illness.</li> <li>• who have diminished capacity.</li> <li>• who have cognitive impairment.</li> <li>• who have suffered previous abuse.</li> <li>• who are experiencing transient risks.</li> <li>• who in receiving a ministry or service are subject to a power imbalance.</li> <li>• who are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background.</li> <li>• who are of diverse sexuality.</li> <li>• who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse.</li> </ul>
<b>Allegation</b>	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”.
<b>Audit</b>	means a mechanism to assess how a Church Authority, ministry or entity governed by a Church Authority, is implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.
<b>Australian Catholic Bishops Conference</b>	means the assembly of Bishops of Australia exercising together certain pastoral offices for the Catholics of Australia.
<b>Bishop</b>	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.
<b>Certification</b>	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.
<b>Child/ren</b>	means individuals under 18 years of age.
<b>Child abuse</b>	<p>There are different legal definitions of child abuse in Australia. Definition sourced from the Australian Institute of Family Studies:  <a href="https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect">https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect</a></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"> <li>• physical abuse</li> <li>• emotional/psychological abuse</li> <li>• neglect</li> <li>• sexual abuse</li> <li>• exposure to family violence</li> </ul>
<b>Church Authority</b>	means:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• the competent authority, howsoever titled, exercising the ministry of governance for religious institutes in Australia in accordance with their Constitutions; or</li> <li>• for ministerial PJS the competent authority in accordance with the statutes.</li> <li>• for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organisation in accordance with its rules.</li> </ul>
<b>Civil Standard</b>	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).
<b>Clergy</b>	includes bishops, priests and deacons.
<b>Cleric</b>	a member of the clergy.
<b>Clericalist/ism</b>	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”.
<b>Cognitive impairment</b>	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: <a href="https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment">https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/cognitive-impairment</a>
<b>Complainant</b>	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
<b>Conflicts of interest</b>	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.
<b>Cultural safety</b>	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.
<b>Dicastery</b>	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

	<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>
<b>Diminished capacity</b>	<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"> <li>• understanding the nature and effect of the decision;</li> <li>• freely and voluntarily deciding; and</li> <li>• communicating the decision in some way.</li> </ul>
<b>Diocese</b>	<p>means a diocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelature of the Latin Church and an eparchy of an Eastern Church.</p>
<b>Disability (persons with)</b>	<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>
<b>Diversity</b>	<p>means a range of people who have various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests.</p>
<b>Diverse sexuality</b>	<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>
<b>Elder abuse</b>	<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>
<b>Emotional abuse (adults)</b>	<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>
<b>Emotional abuse (children)</b>	<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>

<b>Entity</b>	means a diocese, religious institute, ministerial PJP (including their agencies) or association recognised as Catholic in accord with canon law.
<b>Exploitation</b>	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.
<b>Exposure to family violence</b>	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.
<b>Financial abuse</b>	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.
<b>Formation/program</b>	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.
<b>Good Standing</b>	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.
<b>Grooming (child)</b>	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.
<b>Grooming (adult)</b>	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.
<b>Guardian</b>	refers to the person(s) who has the legal authority to care for the personal and property interests of another person.
<b>Institutional abuse</b>	means abuse or poor care within an institution or specific care setting. Possible causes of institutional abuse include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a "closed" culture within an organisation where transparency is discouraged.</li> <li>• lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service.</li> <li>• failure to properly check the backgrounds and interview staff.</li> <li>• inadequate training.</li> <li>• lack of safeguarding policies and procedures.</li> <li>• lack of support of staff by management.</li> <li>• poor supervision; and</li> <li>• poor standards of care.</li> </ul>
<b>Lay/lay person</b>	means members of the Catholic Church and Church personnel other than bishops, priests, deacons and religious.

<b>Leaders</b>	means personnel who are responsible for important governance decisions within a Church entity and/or who lead and coordinate Church improvement initiatives.
<b>Mentor</b>	means an experienced and trusted advisor or a person who gives a younger or less experienced person help and advice over a period.
<b>Ministerial PJP</b>	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.
<b>Ministry</b>	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.
<b>NDIS Worker Screening Check</b>	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 <a href="https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/ndis-worker-screening-check">https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/ndis-worker-screening-check</a>
<b>Neglect (adult)</b>	is the failure of a carer to provide the necessities of life to a person for whom they are caring.
<b>Neglect (child)</b>	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.
<b>Offender</b>	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.
<b>Organisation</b>	means a ministry and/or service operating under the governance of a recognised authority (such as a legal entity) and/or a Church Authority.
<b>Pastoral care</b>	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.
<b>Personnel (Church personnel)</b>	means a cleric, religious or other person who is employed by the entity or engaged on a contract, subcontract, voluntary or unpaid basis.
<b>Physical abuse</b>	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.
<b>Professional/pastoral supervision</b>	means a professional activity in which personnel are engaged in reflection and learning, under the guidance of a supervisor. Supervision assists personnel in their accountabilities for professional standards, defined competencies for their role and understanding and implementation of organisational policy and procedures. For clerics and religious, professional supervision

	assists in the maintenance of boundaries of the pastoral relationship and enhances the quality of their ministry.
<b>Protective behaviours program</b>	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.
<b>Reflective practice</b>	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.
<b>Religious institute</b>	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.
<b>Religious</b>	means a member of an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life.
<b>Respondent</b>	means a person against whom a complaint is made.
<b>Review</b>	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.
<b>Risk-based audit and Review Framework</b>	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.
<b>Risk Profile</b>	means an assessment against key safeguarding risk factors.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	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.
<b>Safeguarding Committee</b>	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.
<b>Safeguarding Culture</b>	means embedding safeguarding into everything an organisation does. In promoting this culture, young people and adults at risk

	will understand they will be listened to, supported, and known action will be taken on their behalf.
<b>Safeguarding Commitment Statement</b>	means a Commitment Statement describing an entity's commitment to keep children and adults safe from harm. It informs the entity's safeguarding culture.
<b>Safeguarding Co-ordinator</b>	means an individual who champions safeguarding and co-ordinates the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards within an entity.
<b>Safeguarding Implementation Plan</b>	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.
<b>Safeguarding policies and procedures</b>	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"> <li>• recruitment.</li> <li>• risk management.</li> <li>• complaint handling; and</li> <li>• acceptable use of online applications.</li> </ul>
<b>Seminarian</b>	a student in a theological formation and education centre preparing for ordination as a priest.
<b>Seminary</b>	means a centre for the formation and education of students preparing for ordination.
<b>Sexual abuse (adult)</b>	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.
<b>Sexual abuse (child)</b>	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.
<b>Spiritual abuse</b>	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
<b>Substantiated complaint</b>	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.
<b>Third parties</b>	means any individual, group or legal entity outside the Church entity who contract services and facilities to or from the Church entity.
<b>Transient Risk</b>	means short-term risk, experienced by people at different stages in their life: e.g. when someone is vulnerable due to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grief</li> <li>• bereavement</li> <li>• relationship breakdown</li> <li>• homelessness</li> <li>• unemployment</li> <li>• financial hardship</li> </ul>
<b>Trauma-informed and victim-centred support</b>	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.
<b>Validation</b>	means an assessment by ACSL of any self-assessment, review or audit, undertaken to achieve ACSL Certification status.
<b>Working With Children Check</b>	means generic term used to denote the statutory screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. There is not yet a single national framework setting out requirements for 'working with children' checks. Each State/Territory in Australia has its own system. They are one part of a Church entity's recruitment, selection, and screening practices.
<b>Working with Vulnerable People Check</b>	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.
<b>Zero Tolerance</b>	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.