



# Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay

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## NATIONAL CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS AUDIT REPORT

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## Foreword

Safeguarding certification by ACSL is an independent recognition that a religious entity and its ministries meet the requirements of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). Certification achievement is measured against the NCSS set by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference 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 Broken Bay's performance against the NCSS. 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 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.

# 1. Audit background

## 1.1 About ACSL and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

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 courage, compassion, and honesty. These values guide the way ACSL work and inform cultural change within the Catholic Church and the wider community. ACSL takes its duty to care for and protect all children and adults at risk seriously and has zero tolerance for abuse of any kind.

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

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

This audit report includes the results of the assessment against the NCSS for the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay (the Diocese).

## 1.2 Auditor credentials

The audit was conducted by Demetrius Consulting, an ACSL accredited auditor listed on the ACSL's NCSS Auditor Register. NCSS auditors must complete ACSL's Auditor Induction Program prior to carrying out safeguarding audits of Church entities against the NCSS. Prior to being engaged by an entity to conduct an NCSS audit, they must also satisfy conflicts of interest requirements.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ACSL, *Guidance Note on Managing Conflicts of Interest in Engaging an NCSS Auditor*, March 2023.

Demetrius Consulting – a practice specialising in safeguarding work – was established by Julianna Demetrius in 2019 following more than 19 years with the NSW Ombudsman in several senior and statutory roles. Julianna has extensive experience in complaint handling, conciliation, oversighting abuse and neglect investigations involving children and vulnerable adults, and leading major systemic reviews and audits across a broad range of human service and justice spheres. Demetrius Consulting has been engaged by a range of state and federal regulatory bodies to develop safeguarding guidelines, and regularly conducts safeguarding investigations, audits, policy development and training for Catholic and other entities working with children and at-risk adults. Julianna was admitted as a solicitor to the NSW Supreme Court in 1999.

### 1.3 Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay

The Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay covers an area of 2,763 square kilometres. The Diocese is nominally divided into three separate geographic regions: the Northern Beaches, containing parishes from Avalon to Manly; the North Shore, from Chatswood north to Arcadia and Berowra parishes; and the Central Coast, from Woy Woy to Toukley, Wyong and Warnervale parishes. Overall, the diocese has 26 parishes, organised into five deaneries, with a full-time resident priest. Most Rev Anthony Randazzo DD JCL was installed as the fourth bishop of Broken Bay in 2019.

The Diocese includes the agencies Catholic Schools Broken Bay (a network of 45 Catholic schools) and CatholicCare Broken Bay, which provides a range of social and care services across the Diocese. The Diocesan offices include Bishop, Stewardship, Safeguarding (Chancery and Parishes), Clergy, Marriage Tribunal, Mission Broken Bay (including Confraternity of Catholic Doctrine), Vocations, Communications, Joseph House, and the Permanent Diaconate. The Diocese has Diocesan Consultors and Trustees, a Council of Priests, and a Diocesan Finance Council. It does not have a seminary. The Chancery, which oversees the pastoral and administrative governance of the Diocese, is located in Pennant Hills.

The 2021 National Catholic Census indicates the Diocese has a Catholic population of 205,207 people (20.5% of total population) with a median age of 44 years. Of this population, 19.3% are aged 0-14 years. 17,250 members live alone, 53,831 people were born overseas and 3,272 people do not speak English well.<sup>2</sup> Indonesian, Filipino, Chinese, South American, Italian, and Tongan are among communities represented in the Diocese.

Child sexual abuse perpetrated by clergy and lay people has historically occurred within parts of the Diocese (notably the Gosford and Epping Carlingford parishes). The Diocese recognises that trauma resulting from abuse continues to impact members of the Diocese. It seeks to honour and address this legacy through ongoing reflection and continual improvement of its contemporary safeguarding practice.

### 1.4 In scope assessment

The Diocese was assessed by ACSL as a Church entity required to undertake a full NCSS audit. For further details of the risk-based audit framework, refer to the [ACSL website](#).

There are 10 NCSS Standards, 48 NCSS Criteria and 104 NCSS Indicators. The vast majority

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<sup>2</sup> National Centre for Pastoral Research, *Diocesan Social Profile, Diocese of Broken Bay*, July 2023.

of the NCSS Indicators cover both children and adults at risk.<sup>3</sup> However, for this audit, it was agreed with ACSL that the Diocese should only be assessed against NCSS Indicators (or aspects of Indicators) relating to children noting that the audit commenced prior to 30 June 2024.<sup>4</sup>

The audit scope, as agreed between the Diocese and ACSL, included:

1. Desktop review of the Diocesan safeguarding policies and procedures and documentation supplied as evidence of progress in implementing the NCSS.
2. Site visits (which included interviews with key personnel and inspection of critical safeguarding records):
  - Administrative headquarters to review documents and meet with key Diocesan leaders.
  - Seven (7) parishes,<sup>5</sup> including some in the care of religious orders, a large youth ministry and parishes with overseas priests.
  - Mission Broken Bay, Joseph House, and Cultural Ministries.
  - In person interviews of personnel from across the Diocese including the Bishop, 14 priests in ministry,<sup>6</sup> Deacons and seminarians,<sup>7</sup> a 25% sample of lay personnel.

Catholic Schools Broken Bay and CatholicCare Broken Bay (each of which has its own Safeguarding Office) were not included in the audit scope. Both agencies completed an ACSL Declaration which have been submitted to ACSL by the Diocese.

## 1.5 Audit approach

The audit approach was designed to provide reasonable assurance that safeguarding controls have been designed appropriately and are operating effectively in the Diocese. The audit report provides a point-in-time assessment of the safeguarding practices implemented by the Diocese and the extent to which they meet the requirements of the NCSS.

The assessment of the Diocese's implementation of the NCSS Indicators was determined using a four-point Compliance Assessment Scale developed by ACSL (Appendix 1). The scale was applied having regard to the Diocese's overall performance. The findings of the assessment are detailed in sections 2 and 3 of the report. Our recommendations, and the Diocese's responses, are contained in section 4.

A key component of the audit involved reviewing the Diocese's NCSS Self- Assessment,

<sup>3</sup> The scope of NCSS Edition 1, released in 2019, was limited to children. NCSS Edition 2, released in 2022, expanded the scope to also cover adults at risk.

<sup>4</sup> Correspondence from ACSL to Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay (Confirmation of Audit Scope), 9 February 2024. On 4 March 2024, ACSL further advised the Diocese, "The auditor ought to ONLY assess you on NCSS v1 as per the scope ACSL sent. This means that some Indicators (for example, 2.3) are assessed as 'not applicable'. Further, when an Indicator refers to children and adults at risk (for example, 2.1) only the children's aspect of that Indicator ought to be assessed."

<sup>5</sup> This number represents 27% of the Diocese's parishes.

<sup>6</sup> ACSL initially advised that 26 priests should be interviewed but agreed in correspondence with the Diocese on 15 May 2024 that this number could be reduced to 14 (more than 25% of the 60 priests in ministry across the Diocese).

<sup>7</sup> ACSL initially advised that three Deacons should be interviewed. The Diocese advised ACSL on 10 May 2024 that interviews had been scheduled with one Deacon and two seminarians.

which provided the Diocese with an opportunity to document evidence of their compliance with the NCSS Standards. The Diocese provided an extensive amount of documentation including policies, procedures, protocols, guidelines, factsheets, training materials and other resources which was reviewed during June 2024 ahead of undertaking site visits. Not all of this material is directly referred to in this report, but it has collectively informed our assessment of the Diocese against relevant NCSS Indicators.

Fieldwork was conducted between 2 July and 8 August 2024. The audit commenced with a joint opening meeting with Most Rev Anthony Randazzo (Bishop), Very Rev Dr David Ranson (Vicar General), and Ms. Jodie Crisafulli (Head of Safeguarding).

The parishes of Chatswood, Epping Carlingford, The Lakes, Gosford, Warnervale, and North Harbour, as well as the Diocese’s Korean Chaplaincy, were selected for visits/interviews to assess the implementation of safeguarding practices. The parishes were selected in consultation with the Diocese to provide a good sample of parishes from the various deaneries, including a parish in the care of a religious order (North Harbour – the Augustinians). Prior to our visits, each parish and the Korean Chaplaincy provided documents as evidence of their NCSS compliance, which we reviewed. The type and amount of documentation differed but all parishes provided a completed Parish Safeguarding Checklist and Safeguarding Action Plan.

During the parish visits, we interviewed priests and key Parish staff and volunteers with responsibilities for specific safeguarding requirements and children’s ministries. We also inspected Parish records. In our interviews with personnel, we focused on assessing their knowledge and understanding of the dimensions of safeguarding most relevant to their specific role and the area of the Diocese they work in. While all personnel should have a sound level of safeguarding competence, it is unrealistic and unnecessary to require “everyone to know everything.”

From the Chancery, we interviewed (in addition to the opening meeting involving the Bishop referred to above):

- Very Rev Dr David Ranson (Vicar-General)
- Ms. Jodie Crisafulli (Head of Safeguarding) and Safeguarding staff
- Ms. Kelly Paget (Head, Mission Broken Bay, and Chancellor)
- Ms. Alison Newell (Head, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine - CCD) and CCD staff
- Ms. Christine Wearne (General Counsel – Governance and Legal) and Risk and Compliance staff
- Fr. Sam French (Head, Vocations and Joseph House), and Vocations staff, Deacon and seminarians
- Mr. Neil King (Course developer and trainer engaged by the Diocese to map and develop Safeguarding training against standards and introduce a new Learning Management System)

On 2 September 2024, we met with the Vicar-General and Head of Safeguarding to brief them on the audit findings and discuss the draft report. After incorporating feedback received from the Diocese on 16 September 2024, the report was finalised and provided to ACSL on 20 September 2024. It is publicly available on the Publications and Reports page of the [ACSL website](#). The Diocese has also committed to publish the report on its website.



## 1.6 Disclaimer

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

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

Signed:



Julianna Demetrius  
**Director, Demetrius Consulting**  
*Accredited ACSL Auditor*

## 2. Audit findings

***The audit indicated that the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay has successfully implemented and embedded a strong culture of safeguarding that complies with the NCSS Standards.***

Of the 104 NCSS Indicators, five are not relevant to the Diocese's operations (1.3.2, 5.5.2, 5.6.1, 5.6.2 and 5.6.3), one (9.3.2) was not relevant because this was the Diocese's first NCSS audit, and three relate only to adults (2.1.2, 2.3.1, 7.3.1).

Therefore, the Diocese was assessed against 95 of the 104 NCSS Indicators. Of these indicators, 91 (96%) were assessed as 'developed and embedded' and four (4%) were assessed as 'developed'.

**The audit found that the Diocese has fully implemented ('developed and embedded') 91 Indicators (96%) and substantially implemented ('developed') four (4) Indicators (4%) – see Table 1.**

**Table 1: Summary of NCSS Assessment**

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	16			
2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate	6	2	4			

3: Partnering with families, carers and communities	6	0	6			
4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected	4	0	4			
5: Robust human resource management	22	4	18	2		
6: Effective complaints management	19	0	19			
7: Ongoing education & training	11	1	10	2		
8: Safe physical and online environments	7	0	7			
9: Continuous improvement	6	1	5			
10: Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults	6	0	6			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>4</b>		
		%	<b>100%</b>			

The key audit findings are summarised below. Although we assessed the Diocese's performance against every relevant indicator (as shown in Table 2), the commentary under each NCSS Standard below is not intended to exhaustively document this performance. Rather, it is intended to paint a broad picture of how the Standards are being implemented and highlight key themes and some examples of good practice identified by the audit.

### General observations

The Diocese's approach to safeguarding is characterised by strong leadership, robust governance and mature systems and practices. This approach exceeds compliance and consists of proactively embedding the NCSS Standards in everyday practice.

Across the parts of the Diocese within the audit scope, it was evident that all personnel approached the audit generously and with integrity, recognising that it is an important accountability and continuous improvement mechanism and often thanking the audit team for the opportunity to participate and be heard. We were satisfied that all personnel demonstrated a solid understanding of how to uphold safeguarding principles when carrying out their work and where to seek further assistance if required.

The breadth and depth of evidence provided by the Diocese in support of its NCSS Self-Assessment is indicative of the maturity of its safeguarding framework. An extensive catalogue of relevant policies, procedures, training materials, resources and documented examples of safeguarding practice were supplied. The materials supplied by individual parishes provided valuable additional evidence of how the safeguarding framework is being locally implemented. After reviewing the materials and visiting parishes, it was evident that they were often 'hard markers' when assessing their own performance.

While the nature and capacity of individual parishes differ, there is no doubt about their overall commitment to safeguarding. Some parishes have a more sophisticated approach than others, but they are all achieving compliance with the NCSS Standards by embedding fundamental safeguarding measures within their everyday practice. The most obvious difference between

the parishes consists of the extent of their respective engagement with children and young people through ministry. This is informed by factors including the size and demography of each parish, creative appetite, and availability of resources (including volunteers). Those parishes which have more extensive engagement with children and young people naturally have a higher risk profile than those parishes with less engagement, but they are also better able to demonstrate how they are meeting key NCSS Standards – particularly Standards 2, 3 and 4.

More than a decade on from the establishment of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, it is timely for entities which have built a very strong safeguarding culture - such as the Diocese of Broken Bay - to now reflect on what the next stage of safeguarding should look like.

The findings of the audit suggest that the main challenge and opportunity for the Diocese is to continue investing in what might be described as the more nuanced aspects of safeguarding – consistently engendering a welcoming and inclusive spirit within local parish communities, raising the voices and participation of children and young people, and honouring the legacy of historical abuse in the Church in ways that continue to be meaningful and impactful, particularly within those parishes where abuse has been established. Pleasingly, these are all areas of priority that the Diocese’s leadership has already identified.

It will be important for the Diocese to remain cognisant that as younger clergy and personnel come on board, they will not necessarily have the same level of awareness of the history of Church abuse and the legacy of the Royal Commission as those who have been involved in previous years. For them, the need for some aspects of the Diocese’s safeguarding framework may be less readily clear, even as they come to their work with much more educated attitudes and practices than those which existed in the past. For this reason, and against a background where there is also a regular turnover of volunteers and evolving cultural diversity among the Diocesan workforce and lay communities, the Diocese will need to continue to exert strong and creative leadership to sustain its strong safeguarding culture.

## **2.1 NCSS Standard 1 – Committed leadership, governance, and culture**

*“The work can’t become static – that’s when risk increases.”* – Most Rev Anthony Randazzo, Bishop

*“Safeguarding is not an add-on.”* – Very Rev Dr David Ransom, Vicar General

*“With Fr Greg everything is very transparent – always clear comments about child safety, very upfront about the necessary issues. He makes it clear that it’s everyone’s responsibility.”* – Parish volunteer

- The Diocese’s implementation of Standard 1 is exceptional. The executive team speak about and reflect on safeguarding with personal conviction. Clear examples were provided of their collaboration to drive and embed safeguarding across the Diocese. Beyond the Diocese, they also show leadership which is helping to lift safeguarding practices across jurisdictions and indeed, internationally. For example:
  - The Diocese played a leadership role in establishing the NSW/ACT Province Safeguarding Community of Practice.
  - The Diocese has MoUs with several religious institutes that reside in the Diocese for the provision of safeguarding training

- The Diocese provides safeguarding support to Wilcannia Forbes Diocese under a formal arrangement.
- The Diocese participates on the Office of the Children’s Guardian’s Religious Sector Community of Practice and Historical Allegations Working Group.
- The Vicar-General is on the Bishops’ Commission for Professional Standards and significantly contributed to the development by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference of the national code of conduct for pastoral ministry in the Catholic Dioceses – Integrity in Our Common Mission.
- The Head of Safeguarding has twice been invited to be a facilitator at the International Safeguarding Conference in Rome and is on the Professional Standards Panel for the Marist Brothers.
- Along with representatives of the Archdiocese of Sydney and the Diocese of Parramatta, the Head of Mission Broken Bay and Chancellor developed a national network and hosted national gatherings for World Youth Day (WYD) Lisbon in 2023. She was also asked to chair a subcommittee of the National Liturgical Council convened to develop rituals and liturgical resources for parishes to use on Safeguarding Sunday, with recommendations presented to the Bishop’s Council for Liturgy.
- The Head of Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) is regularly approached by colleagues from other Dioceses for advice and to request copies of their resources. CCD convenes a quarterly group of representatives of other faith groups which is aimed at supporting them to meet safeguarding requirements.
- The Bishop has a prominent safeguarding presence. A six-minute video address by the Bishop about safeguarding features prominently on the Diocese’s safeguarding webpage, as does the Bishop’s annual letter to the clergy and lay faithful about safeguarding. Many personnel spoke about the Bishop’s strong leadership and vision in this area.
- In February 2023, the Bishop introduced a new annual Diocesan Safeguarding Awareness Framework to replace the previous celebration of Safeguarding Month. This framework is intended to increase awareness of personal and collective ongoing responsibility as a Church community to be vigilant in safeguarding. It seeks to embed safeguarding within everyday practice all year around, as distinct from promoting safeguarding messages at a particular time each year. The approach also allows each ‘agency’ of the Diocese to implement the focus in a way that suits them and their stakeholders.
- The theme for 2023, Leadership and Accountability, was incorporated into annual safeguarding training of clergy. This year’s theme is Domestic and Family Violence and a related video address by the Bishop features on the Diocese’s safeguarding webpage. It was encouraging during the audit to hear so many of the parish priests refer to the Bishop’s video messages and how they incorporate them in their own services.
- The Diocese has a strong safeguarding governance structure which is clearly articulated in the Diocesan Safeguarding Office Charter, which also incorporates the Diocesan Safeguarding Commitment. The Charter, which was reviewed and updated in 2022, sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Diocese’s Safeguarding Offices, Safeguarding Executive, and Safeguarding Strategic Advisory Panel. The Charter is a somewhat unique document and is an important accountability tool.

- The Safeguarding Strategic Advisory Panel is an important mechanism of accountability, transparency and continuous improvement. Examples were provided of how the Panel has informed the Diocese's safeguarding approach. The Diocese recognises that an ongoing challenge is to ensure it consistently leverages the panel's expertise to inform the Diocese's work, rather than only reporting back to the panel about that work.
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Strategic Plan 2023-2025 is an overarching plan aligned with the Bishop's vision for safeguarding. It focuses on common safeguarding initiatives across the Diocese and is supported by operational plans for Chancery, Catholic Schools and Catholic Care.
- The Diocese has well developed risk management protocols in place but is currently reviewing its Risk Management Framework to streamline policies and procedures and make them simpler to use (see Standard 9). This year the Diocese is also investing in enhancing risk management capacity in local parishes by developing a Risk Assessment Tool Kit and providing tailored training and support (see Standard 8).
- The Diocese has a well-developed Code of Conduct which was recently reviewed and aligns with the requirements of Standard 1. It is supported by a user-friendly resource which outlines the Diocese's expectations of personnel who work with children and young people.
- The Vicar General and Head of Safeguarding regularly review safeguarding data across the whole Diocese to identify trends. The safeguarding leads from Chancery, Catholic Schools and CatholicCare are required to report data quarterly. The nature of this data, which is also provided to the Safeguarding Strategic Advisory Panel, is identified in the Diocesan Safeguarding Office Charter.
- The Diocese's three 'agencies' (Chancery, Catholic Schools and CatholicCare) each produce an annual safeguarding report which highlights the key safeguarding activities undertaken in that year and presents high level safeguarding data, including analysis of key trends. The reports are presented to the Bishop, Vicar-General and Safeguarding Strategic Advisory Panel. This is an important measure that promotes accountability and transparency. While the reports contain sensitive data that is not suitable to share publicly, it would be valuable for the Diocese to draw on them to produce a high-level safeguarding annual report which promotes the good safeguarding work that has been carried by the Diocese each year.
- Parish priests, staff and volunteers were all very familiar with the Chancery's Safeguarding Office and indicated they felt confident in and well supported by them. It is clear that the Safeguarding Office has a close, practical relationship with parishes, which includes regularly visiting them and providing training and other support. The safeguarding lead was known by name by almost all personnel we spoke to in the parishes. Catechist Coordinators in parishes also spoke highly of the leadership and support they receive from CCD centrally.
- Parish priests have in one way or another developed means to promote safeguarding messages to their parishioners. Examples we identified include tailored homilies, survivor memorials and distribution of safeguarding materials to parishioners, volunteers and parents of children participating in children's ministry activities. All parishes had safeguarding materials prominently displayed in parish offices and churches.
- Leadership is also apparent among Parish teams through staff and volunteers who are playing an active and enthusiastic role in helping to shape areas of children's ministry

and related safeguarding processes. Most parishes have a safeguarding coordinator/liaison person. As discussed under Standard 2, there is scope for a more consistent approach by parishes to growing ministry for children and young people so as to increase their participation and opportunities for their voices to be heard.

- After many years of celebrating the Liturgy of Lament to honour victims and survivors of abuse in the Church, the Diocese is reviewing how to honour victims and survivors in a way that continues to be meaningful and impactful, having recognised that there is an inherent risk of being seen to ‘tick a box’ if it does not do so. We support the Diocese’s initiative in this area.

*In the Vicar-General’s parish of Chatswood, personnel told us that he has surrounded himself with a team of confident, outspoken individuals from whom he consistently seeks input and feedback about a range of issues, including directions in children’s ministry and safeguarding. Personnel are empowered to recommend and lead initiatives. For example, the Parish projects officer identified that a children’s playgroup would be a valuable way of enhancing the parish’s child and family friendly culture, and she led its implementation. Even though the parish priest is also the Vicar-General, he doesn’t ‘flex that power’ – as one staff member told us. This approach is aligned with the emphasis within Integrity in Our Common Mission on consulting widely, seeking consensus and providing feedback where possible and appropriate, and promoting the autonomy and voice of others.*

*Fr Jim McKeon, the Parish Priest at Epping Carlingford, has demonstrated a strong and proactive commitment to acknowledging the legacy of Church abuse, including by a former priest within the parish several decades ago. Over many years he has delivered apologies and homilies on the theme of safeguarding. For the parish’s 50th anniversary, a memorial to victims and survivors was established in the church garden. Fr McKeon stressed with the audit team that openly and sensitively acknowledging historical abuse, and what the Church has done to address it, is an important way of building trust and confidence within the parish community to speak up and know they will be heard if they have a safeguarding concern.*

*“Together we can truly be the kind of church in which all people are kept safe, and nobody is left lying at the gate. Together we can be the kind of church which Christ calls us to be and which we celebrate at St Gerard’s.”<sup>8</sup>*

## 2.2 NCSS Standard 2 – Children are safe, informed and participate

*“Here there is a strong focus on building safeguarding into ministry while being careful not to frustrate ministry.” – Assistant Priest*

*The main thing is to prioritise the goal of creating a safe space, community building and participation over just the music component.” – Parish Choir Director*

- The Diocese’s Rights of the Child Framework, launched in 2020, articulates its commitment to upholding children’s human and spiritual rights. The nine rights incorporated by the framework (which includes a booklet, poster and video) are:
  1. Be treated fairly and equally.
  2. Voice their thoughts when decisions are being made about them.
  3. Live and grow in a healthy and clean environment.
  4. Find out information and express themselves.
  5. Be protected, no matter their ability, language, belief or who they are with.

<sup>8</sup> Homily for 25 September 2022.

6. A safe and loving home with clothes to wear and food to eat.
  7. Privacy to enjoy and protect their life story.
  8. Go to school and receive an education.
  9. Know who they are and where they come from.
- A child-friendly Rights of the Child booklet has been distributed to parishes. Parishes told us this resource and other materials are provided in parish ‘welcome packs’ and to children (and their families) who participate in children’s ministry activities. We also received positive feedback about the ‘My Body Safety Rules’ postcard developed by CatholicCare, which was distributed to all parishes in 2022.
  - To supplement the Code of Conduct, the Diocese has produced a booklet, ‘Expectations of Attitudes and Behaviours when engaging with children and young people in your role’ and rolled out training on the resource to parishes and Chancery staff. This very user-friendly resource includes a forward by the Bishop and adopts the ‘traffic light’ system of categorising encouraged and discouraged behaviour. It also includes tips for engaging children and young people. Several parishes told us this is a great resource for staff and volunteers.
  - With the Diocese of Parramatta and Archdiocese of Sydney, the Diocese collaborated to produce a resource to encourage parishes to grow the participation of young people in their communities. The Diocese’s safeguarding webpage includes a range of other age-appropriate resources for engaging with children and young people, including a child-friendly version of the Diocesan Commitment to Safeguarding which is displayed by parishes. The parishes we visited all had age appropriately safeguarding information prominently displayed and referred to safeguarding materials they provide to children who participate in children’s ministry activities.
  - CCD makes a prominent contribution to the Diocese’s efforts to comply with Standard 2. Age-appropriate safeguarding themes and materials, as well as strategies to encourage and listen to ‘the voice of the child’ are incorporated into Special Religious Education (SRE) curriculum delivered in public schools. We reviewed a number of materials and were impressed by their quality.
  - The SRE curriculum also incorporates information about age-appropriate information about safe and respectful relationships. The Diocese’s safeguarding webpage also makes a number of resources on this theme available.
  - The Diocese promotes information about abuse prevention programs and related support services in a variety of ways, including on its website and via parish communications (such as bulletin boards, foyer materials and newsletters). This year’s Safeguarding Awareness theme is domestic and family violence, and significant efforts have been invested in equipping parishes to publicise available supports.
  - We closely examined the children’s ministry activities taking place in the parishes that participated in the audit. Some parishes are more vibrant than others in terms of the activities they are providing to engage children and young people and there are a range of reasons for this including parish size, demography, the availability of resources (including volunteers) and appetite for creativity and risk. It was positive to hear that some parishes have already identified that it would be beneficial to enhance their children’s ministry and have taken steps to achieve this – for example, Manly Vale has recently recruited a music director with the aim of engaging children through music activities, and North Harbour has teamed up with Manly Vale to tap into its youth ministry given the parishes are closely located.

- Ultimately, it is within parish communities that the Diocese has the greatest opportunity – and responsibility – to promote children’s safety and participation. There is a need to guard against parishes restricting their ministry with children and young people as a well-intentioned but misguided means of managing risk. The Diocese should continue to encourage parish leadership to be comfortable with some risk and confident to manage it – building on the good work that has been done this year in piloting the Parish Risk Assessment Toolkit.
- More broadly, the Diocese should consider how it can further encourage parishes to grow ministry for children and young people. We recommend the Diocese establishing a ‘Community of Practice for children’s ministry’ that would assist parishes with less developed children’s ministries to explore untapped opportunities and learn from parishes who are more advanced in this area. In this regard, the parish will be assisted by the survey of parish ministry conducted in February this year by Mission Broken Bay, and by the evidence provided by parishes which participated in the audit.

*Chatswood Parish has introduced ‘Youth-in-Council’, which brings together senior students from the two Catholic secondary colleges in the parish, to discuss matters important to them as young people. The first Youth-in-Council focused on the theme of ‘belonging’ and was highly successful, leading the Parish to commit to holding the gatherings twice yearly in future so that young people have the experience of directly participating in, and shaping, the future of their local Church.*

*At The Lakes Parish, a children’s choir was established in November 2023. The Director of Music brainstormed with Kur-in-gai Parish which is already experienced in this area of ministry. In May this year, the Director of Music at The Lakes surveyed participating children during a rehearsal to find out what makes them feel safe. The survey included three simple questions: ‘What do you like about choir?’, ‘What makes you feel safe here at choir?’ and ‘Does anything worry you here?’ The children were thanked for their participation and their answers were documented. They were reminded to talk to their parents or a trusted adult if they ever felt worried or unsafe. At pick up time, the children and their parents were shown the safeguarding resources at the front of the church and given a Safeguarding Standards booklet and postcard to take home. Following the survey, the parish decided that in future, children and their families would be given these resources when they join the choir, together with a welcome letter outlining the Parish’s safeguarding measures.*

*“A lot of children get quite nervous about meeting new children in groups, so I say to parents, if any part of the program is making your child anxious, come to me so that we can put in place things to deal with it, and the child can enjoy the experience. Making the experience as positive as it can be for the child, is also part of safeguarding” – Parish Sacramental program coordinator*

*Gosford Parish has a large and vibrant youth ministry which includes three weekly youth groups, categorised by age, for primary and high school aged children and young people. There are currently seven youth leaders who have all met safeguarding screening and training requirements. All are required to meet with the Parish Priest, sign a copy of the Parish Agreement, and attend Mass weekly. At the start of each term, there is a meeting at which safeguarding issues and messages are discussed. Parental permission and sign in and sign out procedures are implemented. Safeguarding posters are displayed in the youth group meeting rooms. Documented risk assessments have been completed for each of the youth groups using the Parish Risk Assessment Tool Kit.*



### 2.3 NCSS Standard 3 – Partnering with families, carers and communities

*“Safeguarding is embedded into our culture because it’s a good thing to do. We see the fruits of everyone’s efforts in our circle of safeguarding.” – Parish worker.*

*“I volunteer here because felt like it’s very transparent and upfront.” – Parish worker.*

- The Bishop and Vicar General communicate a strong commitment to leading a Diocese that is welcoming and collaborative.
- In 2022, the Diocesan Safeguarding Awareness theme was Safeguarding in Families which focused on encouraging families to connect and bond with children. Safeguarding in Families packs were delivered to all parishes and the Korean Chaplaincy. Families were invited to share with the Diocese their experience of how they connected in the form of a story, a video or a photo. Entries were compiled into a collage and shared via BBNeighbourhoods – the Diocese’s weekly newsletter. The Bishop also launched a Diocesan Safeguarding Prayer.
- At the parish level, families and others are encouraged to participate in keeping children safe. This is done in a variety of ways, including providing safeguarding resources to families of children participating in children’s ministry activities, addressing parents of children participating in Sacramental programs, obtaining parental consent for children to participate in activities and welcoming parents to be present during these activities, signage reminding parishioners of protocols (such as children needing to be accompanied to the toilet by a parent. Additionally, the Sacramental Programs Delivered in Private Residence Policy requires parents to actively engage and supervise their child/ren. Given that all parishes deliver Sacramental programs, there would be benefit in the Diocese ensuring that parishes provide consistent safeguarding resources to families of children participating in these programs.
- All the parishes we visited had safeguarding resources prominently displayed, including posters identifying who parishioners can contact (within the parish and Diocese) if they have questions or concerns. One Parish we visited introduces its staff and volunteers at a special mass. Some parishes also provide ‘welcome packs’ to new parishioners which include safeguarding information, and/or publish this on their own website and in parish bulletins. The websites of the parishes we visited all have links back to the Diocese’s safeguarding webpage.
- It is a matter for each parish to identify the most effective ways to elicit family and community views and feedback about safeguarding – there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to recommend. In some parishes, safeguarding is a standing agenda item for their Parish Council. In other parishes, volunteers who lead children’s ministry activities seek to engage more informally with families about any questions they have or feedback they may wish to provide. A significant number of the volunteers who run children’s ministry activities in parishes are not surprisingly parents themselves and have direct input into the parish’s safeguarding approach through these roles and also play an informal role in informing other parishioners of relevant procedures and practices.
- The Diocese is prolific in promoting and participating in activities that raise awareness of abuse and the rights and dignity of children. The Safeguarding Framework, through which a theme is identified for specific focus each year, is one of the ways it does this. The Diocese publicises and participates in a range of annual activities, such as International Day of Families, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Day, National Child Protection Week, Safeguarding Sunday, and National Children’s

Week. We also viewed examples of Parish bulletins containing messages about children’s rights and safety. In Gosford, the principals of the local Catholic schools come together annually at a mass where they reaffirm their commitment to keeping children safe.

- We observed that some parishes are particularly good at communicating a welcoming and inclusive culture via their website. For example, Chatswood provides a PDF ‘welcome pack’ and also has information about the various practical ways it strives to be a child friendly Parish. The website also includes contact details for all key staff and volunteers. The overall ‘vibe’ is inviting and inclusive. We recommend that the Diocese should strongly encourage all parishes to develop, publish and distribute a ‘welcome pack’ similar to this resource.

*Gosford Parish holds an information night for parents of children undertaking the Sacrament of Confirmation. The program leaders are introduced and the police and WWCC screening checks they have had are explained. Parents are given a copy of the Diocese’s booklet on ‘Expectations of Attitudes and Behaviours when engaging with children and young people’. The requirement for parents to attend the program with their children is also made clear.*

*During the Diocesan preparations for 2023 World Youth Day (WYD), pilgrims and their families were provided with opportunities and encouraged to ask questions and contribute to discussions about the Diocese’s approach to safeguarding and any concerns. A specific formation session was dedicated to this purpose and a WYD email address was also set up for parents/carers to ask questions or provide feedback. Families were also informed, in a variety of formats, about the WYD leadership structure and the roles and responsibilities of WYD leaders providing support to pilgrims. The WYD Support Team met with the families of children to plan for their specific needs whilst on pilgrimage.*

*In 2022, Chatswood Parish held workshops with the parish community which led to the formation of a ‘Parish-in-Council’ to “represent a sustained, prayerful reflection on our Mission as a faith community and how we might give life to this.” It was decided the Parish-in-Council would occur three times a year. Each occasion consists of a five-hour gathering, beginning with a shared meal, leading to a Liturgy of the Word, unfolding to formation on charisms and then ‘Conversation in the Spirit’. At each ‘Parish-in-Council’ session so far, over 100 members of the parish community have been involved. The group has identified five pastoral priorities: Creating a Sense of Belonging for All; Participating in the Life of our Parish; Igniting Young Hearts; Reaching out with Love; Serving our Community. At the end of 2023, the Parish Priest published a ten-point strategy responding to the community’s discernment in practical ways. The Parish-in-Council concept has attracted local and international interest.*

*To be as inclusive as possible, during the afternoon the children of families that may participate enjoy their own “Kids-in-Council” which provides an age-appropriate opportunity for them to contribute to the areas of discussion by the Parish-in-Council. The Parish engages a professional child-minding service so that their own staff can contribute to these formative sessions.*

## **2.4 NCSS Standard 4 – Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected**

*“I love my role - it’s a nice welcoming atmosphere here. There is a strong sense of warmth here at St Pats.” – Parish volunteer welcoming coordinator*

- The Diocesan Safeguarding Commitment Statement addresses inclusiveness of vulnerable and diverse communities and experiences that increase risk of abuse. The Safeguarding Awareness Framework also draws awareness to specific areas of risk – for example, this year’s theme is Domestic and Family Violence. In 2019, disability inclusion was selected as the focus of Safeguarding Month. The Diocese has provided targeted training for Chancery staff and clergy on risk of harm categories and circumstances that increase a child’s vulnerability to harm.
- A video and brochure about making complaints is available on the Diocesan website. We recommend that the Diocese also publishes its Complaints Handling Policy on the website. If the Diocese believes it is not suitable to be a public document, it should develop content for the website which explains how people can expect the Diocese to respond if they make a complaint.
- The Diocese’s safeguarding policies and protocols, together with training, recognise barriers that may prevent abuse from being disclosed or appropriately responded to. The Diocese has distributed Practice Guides on Signs of Abuse & Risk of Harm to Children, Managing Complex Enquiries and Responding to a Safeguarding Concern. The Diocese provides and promotes multiple complaint avenues (including at the parish level, Safeguarding Office and to external agencies).
- The Diocese has translated a number of policies, procedures and resources into Korean and other languages and plans to translate complaint handling resources into other languages, although even in very culturally diverse parishes, most people we spoke with indicated that English is generally well understood. The Diocese’s decision to focus on Korean resources to date reflects the prominence and needs of the Korean Chaplaincy.
- The Korean Chaplaincy also regularly uses popular Korean messaging app – KAKAO – to receive and issues messages, which has greater functionality in terms of graphics/images and is widely used throughout the Korean community (as opposed to alternatives such as WhatsApp).
- The Diocese has sensibly sought to tap into existing organisations that have close connections with culturally and linguistically communities to engage with these communities. The Diocese is also assisted by having culturally diverse clergy. The presence of these clergy in particular parishes often attracts parishioners from the same cultural backgrounds to attend, even if they do not live locally, which helps to overcome any potential language barriers.
- In 2024, the Chancery personnel attended mandatory training with Mr Patrick Fox from Catholic Missions. The workshop was based on the Cultural Orientations Model and aimed at assisting participants to understand their own cultural preferences and gaps when interacting with others. The Diocese anticipates that as part of the current safeguarding training projects, modules on cultural diversity will be developed and we would encourage this.
- The Diocese’s Rights of the Child Framework is an excellent resource, explaining its commitment to children’s human and spiritual rights. The Diocese publishes and distributes a number of child friendly safeguarding resources, including resources developed by other organisations such as the National Office of Child Safety.
- The Diocesan leadership’s vision is for parishes to be places of inclusion without discrimination by practicing a welcoming approach. The Diocese also drew to the audit team’s attention the Ad Clerum issued by the Vatican on Sacramental practice for transgender children, which states that transgender children or adolescents can receive

Baptism.<sup>9</sup> Parishes told us that children from same sex couple families participate in Sacramental programs.

- The Diocese’s work to promote equity and respect diversity is most overtly apparent in its schools. Although Catholic Schools are outside the audit scope, it is worth noting the work done by the agency to develop the ‘Created and Loved’ guidelines on identity and gender for schools. The guidance, which is still in draft but anticipated to be finalised later this year, has been informed by expert advice from the Safeguarding Strategic Advisory Panel, theologians, and other stakeholders. Although intended to support schools, in practice the guidance enunciates the Diocesan position on these complex issues and is a practical commitment to upholding the values espoused by Standard 4.

## 2.5 NCSS Standard 5 – Robust human resource management

*“We need safe people and safe structures.” – Parish Priest.*

- The Diocese has extremely robust recruitment, engagement and screening systems and processes for staff, clergy and volunteers. This was evident in documentation reviewed and in consultations with Chancery and local parishes. CCD has its own very robust systems that meet Diocesan requirements as well as those expected by the Department of Education. The audit team saw evidence that these systems are being implemented exceptionally well. To better reflect the important role that CCD’s ‘Administration Officers’ are playing in this area, we recommend the position be re-named ‘Compliance Officer’ – a simple but important symbolic change.
- The Diocese’s website and recruitment materials contain prominent and consistent messages about its commitment to safeguarding. At a parish level, it was particularly pleasing to hear about steps taken to ensure safe and suitable volunteers are engaged (including personal meetings with the Parish priest being required) and to review examples of volunteer engagement letters that clearly outlined role dimensions and safeguarding requirements. In some parishes, these included tailored messages from the parish priest.
- The Diocese’s recruitment and screening procedures and processes (including Working with Children Checks and National Policy History Checks) are fully and clearly documented and include checklists and monitoring systems. All personnel are required to be screened according to the dimensions of their role. The ‘authority to recruit’ process includes an assessment of the expected level of contact with children and the probity screening that is required.
- Both Chancery and parishes have recruitment and screening responsibilities, and these are well defined and documented. The Diocese has developed a range of resources to assist parishes, including the Parish Employment Took Kit and the Parish Volunteer Engagement Tool Kit. Parish priests receive training on recruitment and engaging volunteers. It was pleasing to see parishes actively bringing forward evidence of how they are implementing safeguarding requirements.
- WWCC, NPHC, Safeguarding Declarations, ACMR and other screening documentation is electronically and physically maintained. Chancery undertakes a quarterly review of probity checks for clergy and employees. Parishes are required to maintain the Child

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<sup>9</sup> Dicasterium Pro Doctrina Fidei, Answers to Several Questions from His Excellency, the Most Reverend José Negri, Bishop of Santo Amaro, Brazil, Regarding Participation in the Sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony by Transgender Persons and Homosexual Persons, 31 October 2023.

Related Activity Parish Register which identifies the roles (paid and volunteer) that require a Working with Children Check and records verification and renewal information. Parishes are visited and audited annually to ensure compliance.

- The Diocese's Safeguarding Education and Training Policy requires safeguarding training for all Chancery staff, clergy, and parish workers in child-related roles (see Standard 7) prior to commencing in roles. The Diocese's leadership team undertakes the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders.
- The Vocations Director provided comprehensive evidence of safeguarding requirements and processes for seminarians, including (but not limited to) screening, induction and training. There is a four-stage process that must be completed before an individual becomes a student of the Diocese. The first stage involves an informal suitability assessment. The second stage involves a meeting with the Bishop, who makes a decision about whether the assessment should proceed further. Stage three involves a very detailed assessment, which includes (but is not limited to) verification of identity, obtaining a psychological profile of the individual together with references, screening checks and declarations. The final stage involves being affirmed if the Bishop authorises this after being advised by others including the Vicar General, Vocations Director, Head of Deaconate formation program, and Parish representative.
- Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities. The Pastoral Supervision for Clergy Framework documents the requirements for clergy which are consistent with the requirements of NCSS Standard 5. The Diocese has subscribed to the ACSL Catholic Ministry Formation Register and this register is managed and maintained by the Director of Vocations.
- On-going and integrated formation for clergy with both canonical and civil safeguarding requirements is well developed in the Diocese. A Peer Supervision Session Proposal Summary has been drafted by CatholicCare to address peer supervision for newly appointed clergy. Performance appraisals do not yet exist for clergy, and this is being considered by the Diocese, which we support.
- The Diocese has a system and processes to assess the safeguarding credentials and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy, religious and lay ministers. Compliance with these processes, which include the Visiting Clergy Register maintained by parishes, is audited and the results are assessed by a roundtable chaired by the Vicar General and attended by the Safeguarding Office and Secretariat for Clergy. Refresher training to parish personnel about the Visiting Clergy Register was provided in February 2023.
- There are thorough documented processes in place to ensure that clergy from other countries are thoroughly screened. The Diocese provides safeguarding induction over a staged six month period for newly arrived clergy. The Secretariat for Clergy supports overseas clergy, and they have access to a cultural competency course (piloted in 2022 with newly appointed clergy).
- One issue that arose during our visits to parishes was that there appears to be considerable duplication of record keeping in hard and electronic copy. For example, we were told that parishes are maintaining the Visiting Clergy Register in hard copy, but that the content then has to be entered into a spreadsheet for auditing purposes. Additionally, we understand that information locally recorded in Parish Child Related Activity Register spreadsheets is then re-entered into the centralised PACS database.

- This is both an inefficiency and quality control issue as it increases the risks of errors being made and impedes ‘real time’ oversight by the Diocese. We understand that one of the reasons this approach has been taken is to accommodate some parish staff who feel less comfortable using databases. However, over time, we recommend that it is phased out and that as far as possible, the Diocese adopts centralised electronic record keeping systems. We understand the Diocese is already considering the adoption of a QR code system for visiting clergy and has consulted with other Dioceses, including Maitland Newcastle which has adopted such a system. We recommend the Diocese implements a QR code system.
- In this regard, Parish staff who have greater confidence with electronic record keeping could be engaged as ‘change champions’ to play a mentoring role. The time that is saved by staff on duplicative administrative processes can be spent on more active safeguarding and community engagement activities.

## **2.6 NCSS Standard 6 – Effective complaints management**

- The Diocese has a mature complaints management framework which is established by the Diocesan Complaints Handling Policy (CCD has a separate Complaints Policy which is requirement of the Department of Education). Clergy and Chancery and parish workers were provided with dedicated training on the Complaints Handling Policy in 2022 and the Diocese intends to develop further online training options as part of the current safeguarding training project.
- The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned with the Diocesan Code of Conduct, Vos Estis Lux Mundi, National Response Protocol, and Integrity in Our Common Mission. The Diocese has a separate policy for Risk of Significant Harm Mandatory Reporting which is supported by a factsheet. There are also factsheets about reporting crimes to police and notifying reportable conduct to the Office of the Children’s Guardian. All documents are available on the Diocese intranet.
- The Complaints Handling Policy is supported by detailed complaint management protocols which provide clear guidance about how different types of complaints will be escalated, risk assessed, managed and responded to by the Diocese and allocates associated responsibilities. Civil claims are managed by the Diocesan General Counsel who consults closely with the Vicar General and Head of Safeguarding. The Safeguarding Office manages all other safeguarding complaints, including National Redress Scheme applications, that relate to Chancery and parishes. The Diocese has guidelines for managing National Redress claims and Direct Personal Response applications.
- The Complaints Handling Policy acknowledges power imbalances and outlines how conflicts of interest will be managed. The Diocese has adopted an approach where any serious allegations involving clergy are investigated by a suitably credentialed external investigator with significant experience in handling safeguarding investigations. All reportable conduct investigations undertaken for the Diocese have been endorsed by the Office of the Children’s Guardian without any further action required.
- There is a prominent option on the Diocese’s website for people to report safeguarding concerns online to the Diocese, together with information about reporting abuse to police and the Department of Communities and Justice and the National Redress Scheme. CCD’s webpage also has an online reporting option. Parish webpages are being reviewed to ensure links to back to the Diocese’s online reporting option. All churches display the ‘Who to report a concern to’ poster.

- It was pleasing that all parish staff we met with demonstrated a clear understanding of how to identify a safeguarding complaint or concern and how to appropriately respond.
- Pastoral support and care are provided to people who have experienced child sexual abuse. Training about trauma informed care has been provided to Safeguarding Office staff and clergy. The Diocese also has processes in place to ensure respondents to complaints are supported and treated fairly. The Diocese's various complaint management protocols provide guidance about both practice areas.
- The Diocese has systems and protocols in place to ensure all abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referrals are recorded in online databases and physical file locations and stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act.

## 2.7 NCSS Standard 7 – Ongoing education and training

*“Safeguarding training has evolved from being fairly reactionary to proactive and this has led to a more positive reaction from those we’re training. It’s very important that staff get positive affirmation about what they’re doing right and can do.” – CCD Regional Coordinator*

*“Safeguarding shouldn’t quell evangelisation or community building but needs to be strongly in the formation of who you are. It allows you to engage freely if you know what those boundaries are.” – Seminarian*

- The Diocesan Safeguarding Education and Training Policy sets out the safeguarding training requirements for clergy, seminarians, aspirants for Diaconate Formation, Chancery workers, and parish workers and volunteers. The Safeguarding Office maintains a safeguarding training register for Chancery and parishes.
- This year the Diocese has engaged a Course Developer and Trainer (CDT) to assist with reviewing, mapping and redeveloping safeguarding training in the Chancery and parishes against the NCSS Standards. A new Learning Management System is planned to incorporate all safeguarding training modules and allow training participation to be better tracked. It is anticipated that this will significantly enhance the Diocese's safeguarding training capacity and 'user friendliness'.
- We heard positive feedback about the approach to inducting new clergy which involves them visiting the Safeguarding Office to meet the team and have a tailored safeguarding training session. There is also a mandatory annual training session for clergy which often features guest speakers. Additional training is provided for clergy appointed as Parish Priest.
- We also received very positive feedback about the strong training framework that is in place for catechists in public schools and the support for professional development provided by CCD. A strength of the training for catechists is that in addition to safeguarding through a 'civil' lens, it addresses spiritual safety and child development. Catechists are also required to engage in a valuable self-reflection survey. The quarterly magazine for catechists produced by the Diocese, Connections, was highlighted as a valuable source of information and informal professional development relevant to safeguarding.
- The Diocese would like to enhance the training that is provided to parish staff and volunteers. At present, all new parish staff, as well as volunteers who are in child-related roles, complete a mandatory online induction module and receive a

safeguarding induction pack. Less formal education mechanisms include the dissemination of information through the weekly BB Neighbourhoods publication by which the Diocese communicates with parishes. The current mapping and redevelopment work is exploring how training could be supplemented. One initiative being considered is an annual forum for volunteers. If this is pursued, there would be benefit in focusing the forum on sharing and celebrating best practice in parishes, rather than only on policy and procedural issues, as this would provide an opportunity for participants to learn from each other about what is already working well and could be adapted elsewhere.

- In 2024, the Chancery personnel attended mandatory training with Mr Patrick Fox from Catholic Missions. The workshop was based on the Cultural Orientations Model and aimed at assisting participants to understand their own cultural preferences and gaps when interacting with others. The Diocese anticipates that as part of the current safeguarding training projects, modules on cultural diversity will be developed. In this regard, it would be valuable to ensure the modules incorporate awareness of the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with religious institutions, including the Catholic Church. (It is noted that cultural safety training is also delivered in the Diocese by Catholic Schools and CatholicCare which are outside the audit scope).
- While all Diocesan personnel should value and respect the principal of cultural safety, it is arguably most important that the Diocese finds ways to continually communicate the priority it places on creating welcoming and relational environments – especially in parishes. Engagement with different communities needs to be organic and responsive - otherwise it can become tokenistic and patronising.

## 2.8 NCSS Standard 8 – Safe physical and online environments

*“The Risk Assessment template is awesome and makes you feel supported in your role – I felt like I didn’t just have to figure it all out on my own.” - Parish children’s ministry volunteer*

- The Diocese is in the process of amending its Safeguarding Risk Management Action Plan as part of comprehensive work to review its overall Risk Management Framework. In the meantime, risk assessment and management are well embedded in other policies, procedures and practice resources.
- This year, the Chancery developed and piloted an interactive Parish Activity Risk Assessment Tool Kit with training and support provided by Mission Broken Bay which oversight ministry. Mission Broken Bay is the point of contact for parishes requiring assistance in relation to risk assessing ministry activities.
- Parishes selected to be in the audit scope have participated in the pilot, which started in May, and at the time of our visits had either completed risk assessments for all their child related activities or were in the process of doing so. Copies of completed risk assessments, which are approved by parish priests, were provided to us.
- The Diocese intends to fully roll out the Tool Kit to all parishes, incorporating feedback from the pilot parishes, later this year. In rolling out the Toolkit more broadly, there is an opportunity for the Diocese to share examples of the risk assessments that have already been completed by parishes participating in the pilot. The Toolkit should also be incorporated into the online ‘one stop shop’ safeguarding resource for parishes that we have recommended (see Standard 10) if the Diocese accepts these recommendations.



- Wherever possible, interactions between children, and between children and adults, take place in open or visible spaces within line of sight of another adult. There was a high level of consciousness about this in the parishes we visited. For example, reconciliation for children takes place either within the open church or in a room with a glass panel and parishes have arrangements in place to ensure that children are safe when vesting as altar servers – either separate rooms for children, or protocols that require children to vest separately to adult clergy. Parents are welcomed to be present at all times. In most cases, children’s ministry activities are also run by more than one adult (in one parish we visited, only one adult volunteer runs activities, but they are held in open, and the presence of parents is encouraged and welcomed). We viewed examples of consent and sign in forms for children’s ministry activities.
- The Diocesan Social Media and Acceptable Use of Electronic Communication policies address online safety as does the Parish Activity Risk Assessment Toolkit. The Diocese also has a factsheet for employees and volunteers about engaging online with children and a consent form for children’s participation in online forums. From parishes that participated in the audit, we received examples of consent forms for children’s ministry activities which sought permission for children to be photographed and for images to be shared on social media.
- The Safeguarding Office assists parishes to manage risks associated with individuals in the parish who may pose a risk to children, such as parishioners who are known to have committed child related offences and wish to attend Mass. It developed a ‘Known Offender Safety Agreement’ which has been used by parishes as needed, with the support of the Safeguarding Office. The Safeguarding Office is currently developing a Managing a Person Associated with Causing Risk in a Parish Policy to assist with this process.
- Across the Diocese, internet use is monitored and managed by Daraco. The Acceptable Use of Electronic Communication Policy includes a warning of monitoring and disciplinary measures if unacceptable use occurs. The Diocese is currently undertaking a cybersecurity assessment.
- Third Party Hire Agreements include a clause about compliance with child protection legislation. All employment contracts (including with contractors) require compliance with safeguarding responsibilities. The audit team viewed examples.

## 2.9 NCSS Standard 9 – Continuous improvement

*“Sometimes negative events prompt us to review how we do things – an opportunity to self-evaluate and grow. The culture was already here when I arrived – I have just worked on further strengthening it.”* – Most Rev Anthony Randazzo, Bishop

- The Diocese has a strong culture of continuous improvement, driven by the Diocesan leadership’s shared vision and collaborative relationship and governance structures. The Diocesan Safeguarding Strategic Plan identifies ‘Achieving Practice Excellence and Continual Improvement’ as a key element of the Diocese’s safeguarding framework.
- The Diocese has conducted annual Self Assessments against the NCSS. Safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed at least every three years, and the outcomes documented, including in the Diocese’s safeguarding annual reports which are prepared by Chancery, Catholic Schools and CatholicCare. These reports are provided to the Bishop and Vicar-General as well as the Safeguarding Strategic Advisory Panel. We

reviewed the two most recent reports completed by Chancery and were impressed by the depth and rigour of information and analysis provided.

- The Diocese’s Strategic Safeguarding Advisory Panel is an important structural mechanism for driving continuous improvement, particularly in relation to benchmarking Diocesan safeguarding policy and practice and providing best practice advice. Both the Diocesan Safeguarding Strategic Plan 2023 - 2025 and the Chancery & Parishes Operational Plan (2022-2024) was reviewed by this panel.
- The audit team identified clear examples of current strategic continuous improvement initiatives, for example:
  - Revising and updating the Diocese’s Risk Management Framework with the aim of making it more fit for purpose and simpler to navigate and developing related guidelines and training tailored for Chancery and parishes. This work has involved consultation with Chancery and parishes. The Diocese has also decided to establish an external Audit and Risk Committee to replace the Diocesan Risk Management Governance Executive.
  - Engaging a Course Developer and Trainer (CDT) to assist with reviewing, mapping and redeveloping safeguarding training in the Chancery and parishes against the NCSS Standards. A new Learning Management System is planned to incorporate all safeguarding training modules and allow training participation to be better tracked. It is anticipated that this will significantly enhance the Diocese’s safeguarding training capacity and ‘user friendliness’. This work has included consultation with other Dioceses about their LMSs.
- The Safeguarding Office works closely with parishes to continuously build safeguarding capacity:
  - In previous years, parishes completed assessments developed by the Safeguarding Office and a gap analysis was performed by the Safeguarding Office to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Since the commencement of NCSS Edition 2, parishes have used a version of the ACSL Parish Checklist (tailored by the Safeguarding Office to include the Indicators most relevant to parishes) and these assessments have informed the progressive development of their safeguarding action plans.
  - Since 2022, the Safeguarding Office has visited parishes frequently to provide support with areas including probity screening and record keeping.
  - This year, the Diocese has developed and is trialling a Parish Activity Risk Management Toolkit to support parishes to consistently assess and manage risks when running activities and events – parishes in the trial are providing feedback to the Diocese to inform refinement of the Toolkit. The Director Mission Broken Bay and Chancellor has done considerable work with parishes to increase their understanding and confidence in relation to risk management.
- Measures are in place to ensure safeguarding incidents and complaints are considered by leadership to identify systemic issues or patterns and support continuous improvement:
  - Records of complaints are entered into Registers and the Child Protection Database for child-related complaints.
  - A reportable conduct investigation checklist aids in ensuring systemic issues are identified.

- Safeguarding Managers report quarterly to the Head of Safeguarding about safeguarding complaints, incidents and systemic issues.

## **2.10 NCSS Standard 10 – Policies and procedures support child safety**

- The Diocese has a very comprehensive suite of safeguarding policies and procedures which satisfy NCSS requirements. They address the identification of child safety issues, how and to whom they must be internally and externally escalated, and what the overall response by the Diocese should involve including key investigative practice issues such as procedural fairness and supporting alleged victims and the subject of allegation during the investigation process.
- Policies and procedures are regularly updated. The Safeguarding Office holds a Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Guideline Register which includes due dates for review. In addition, safeguarding policies and procedures are included in the Diocese’s Master Policy Register maintained by the Stewardship Office.
- All policies and procedures are published on the staff intranet. All Chancery and parish workers (including volunteers) in child-related roles receive an induction pack which includes safeguarding policies and procedures. The Diocese’s webpage also includes links to key safeguarding policies, procedures and resources.
- The Diocese has actively sought to encourage ‘policy into practice’ by supplementing these documents with ‘user friendly’ practice guides and factsheets etc. While the intention underpinning this effort is commendable, a downside is that it has led to a proliferation of resources that can appear overwhelming and more difficult to navigate, particularly for parishes. The Diocese had already identified this as an issue prior to the audit and advised the audit team that it intends to invest in consolidating and streamlining its policy and procedure framework.
- As part of this work, there is an opportunity for the Diocese to review and enhance its Practice Guide – Safeguarding Responsibilities of the Parish Priest so that it can function as an online (with the option to print) ‘one stop shop’ explaining everything parishes need to know about safeguarding and linking to relevant policies and procedures.
- The Diocese has processes in place to monitor how its safeguarding policies and procedures are being implemented. The implementation of the Parish Safeguarding Checklist provides a means for the Chancery to oversight implementation. The close relationship between the Safeguarding Office and parishes also enables safeguarding staff to identify and address any practice issues. In addition, more formal measures, including regular audits of Visiting Clergy procedures, and the Child Related Activity Register Census, provide oversight.
- The NCSS Standards are identified as a core component of the Diocese’s safeguarding framework in the Diocesan Safeguarding Office Charter. They are also promoted and published on the Diocese’s safeguarding webpage. Safeguarding training promotes the NCSS Standards, and the Safeguarding Parish Checklist emphasises their practical implementation. The work of the Diocese’s Safeguarding Strategic Advisory Panel is underpinned by the guiding principles of the NCSS.
- The Diocese provides various opportunities for its personnel to reflect on their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback. For example, all safeguarding and training modules promote questions and discussion, an annual safeguarding reflection day and quarterly safeguarding practice meetings are held for safeguarding personal across the Diocese, and the Pastoral

Supervision framework for clergy outlines the importance and benefits of reflective practice. Parishes also regularly seek advice and provide direct feedback to the Safeguarding Office about policies and procedures.

### 3. Assessment of compliance with NCSS Indicators

Table 2: 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 entity has a Child Safeguarding Policy that is approved and endorsed by the Church Authority and/or relevant leadership body and is publicly available.	✓			
1.1.2	The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, is widely displayed and made publicly available.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.2 - A culture of safeguarding children and adults is championed and modelled at all levels of the entity from the top down and bottom up.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
1.2.1	A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by the Church Authority and leaders by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone;</li> <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 safeguarding 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 that accountability for the safeguarding of children and adults is clear.	✓			
1.3.2	Where the Church Authority's governance includes activities in countries other than Australia, these Standards are applied wherever possible, considering cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.	Not applicable			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Criterion 1.4 – The entity's Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural standards towards children and adults.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
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 made available to all personnel, children, adults, 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>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;</li> <li>individuals who are elderly, are living with disability, are suffering from an illness, or who are 'at risk';</li> <li>individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds;</li> <li>children in out of home care, or those who 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.					
<b>Criterion 1.5 – The entity's risk management plan focuses on preventing, identifying, and mitigating safeguarding risks to children and adults.</b>		<b>Developed &amp; Embedded</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Yet to Develop</b>
1.5.1	The Risk Management Plan considers the needs of children and adults with diminished capacity, and how and when adults at risk make informed choices (dignity of risk).	✓			
1.5.2	The Risk Management Plan incorporates procedures to assess, evaluate, review, and oversee safeguarding of children and adults at risk within its ministry and/or service.	✓			
1.5.3	There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report, and review risks.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
We note that the Diocese is reviewing and updating its Risk Management Framework to make it more accessible and practical. See Recommendation 1. The Diocese has recently piloted a Parish Risk Assessment Toolkit. Of the parishes participating in the pilot, not all had yet completed documented risk assessments of all their children's ministry activities at the time of the review. See Recommendation 14.					

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.					
<b>Standard 2</b>		<b>Children and adults are safe, informed and participate</b>			
<i>Children and adults are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously</i>					
Criterion 2.1 – Children and adults at risk engaged in an entity’s ministry and/or services are informed about their rights, including safety, decision making, participation and how a complaint will be managed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
2.1.1	Age-appropriate strategies are used to engage with 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.	Not applicable			
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> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. Children’s ministry is more developed in some parishes than in others. See Recommendation 3.					
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 indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 2.3 - The importance of relationships and social connections for adults at risk is recognised and encouraged, helping them to 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.	Not applicable			

<b>Observations:</b> N/A					
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 indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Standard 3</b>		<b>Partnering with families, carers and communities</b>			
<i>Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults.</i>					
Criterion 3.1 – Parents, carers and/or guardians participate in decisions affecting their child, or adults with diminished capacity		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.1.1	The entity encourages parents, carers and/or guardians to take an active role in monitoring the safety of those engaged in the ministry and/or service.	✓			
<b>Observations</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 3.2 – Families, carers and communities are engaged with and are provided information about the entity’s approach to safeguarding.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.2.1	Families, carers and communities are encouraged to contribute to discussions about safeguarding approaches.	✓			
3.2.2	Safeguarding information is provided and widely available, including contact details of the Safeguarding Committee and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s).	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 3.3 - Families, carers and communities are informed about the entity’s operations and governance; and have an opportunity to have a say in the safeguarding policies and practices.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.3.1	Processes are in place to engage families, carers and communities about their views on safeguarding policies and practices.	✓			
3.3.2	Families, carers and communities are aware of the roles and responsibilities of personnel providing ministries and/or services directly to children and adults at risk.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Criterion 3.4 – The entity raises community awareness of the dignity and rights of all children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
3.4.1	The entity promotes and/or participates in activities which raise awareness of abuse prevention and the rights and dignity of children and adults at risk.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Standard 4</b>		<b>Equity is promoted and diversity is respected</b>			
<b><i>Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice</i></b>					
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 procedures address barriers that may prevent a disclosure of abuse being made; and that hinder personnel from recognising and responding appropriately.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 4.2 – Children and adults have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that promote inclusion, are culturally safe, and accessible.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
4.2.1	Information about complaints processes and support are provided in culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand formats.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. The Diocese does not currently make the Complaint Handling Policy available on its website. See Recommendation 5.					
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. We note that the Diocese’s current training project is considering additional modules to support cultural competency. See Recommendation 10a.					



Standard 5		Robust human resource management			
<i>People working with children and adults are suitable and supported to reflect child safeguarding values in practice</i>					
Criterion 5.1 – A strong commitment to safeguarding underpins an entity’s recruitment.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.1.1	The commitment to safeguarding and 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 and/or adults at risk and appropriate safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.2 – Personnel have current clearances (for example working with children checks) and/or equivalent background checks relevant to their role.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.2.1	All personnel are required to have a background check and 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	✓			
5.2.3	Records of all checks are maintained and monitored in accordance with legislation, for all personnel.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. At present parishes are using local spreadsheets to record the information required by the Parish Child Activity Register and this then needs to be re-entered into the Diocese’s PACS database which is inefficient and a potential quality control issue. See Recommendation 6a.					
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	Church Authorities and their leadership team undertake the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Introductory Session for Leaders.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.4 - Ongoing supervision and people management includes an emphasis on safeguarding responsibilities.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

5.4.1	Professional supervision, mentoring, and annual performance reviews for personnel include a focus on safeguarding responsibilities.	✓			
5.4.2	Annual performance reviews for personnel include child safeguarding responsibilities relevant to their role [refer to Indicator 5.5.4].		✓		
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicator are mostly in place. We note the Diocese is considering annual performance reviews for clergy and support this measure. See Recommendation 7a.					
Criterion 5.5 – Before and during seminary and religious formation, candidates are appropriately screened and supported, including processes for ongoing formation, support and supervision of clergy and religious.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.5.1	The Church Authority seeks professional support in screening candidates for seminary/ formation programs and before ordination/profession of vows. This includes a responsibility to enquire if an applicant or candidate has previously withdrawn or been exited from another seminary or formation program.	✓			
5.5.2	Seminary and initial formation programs have robust screening processes for candidates, including external psychological and psychosexual assessments.	Not applicable			
5.5.3	Ongoing integrated formation for clergy and religious addresses both the canonical and civil safeguarding requirements. For priests, this would include supporting their fidelity to the Church’s teaching regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the inviolability of the Sacramental Seal.	✓			
5.5.4	All clergy and religious in full-time ministry participate in at least 6 hours, with the optimum being 10 hours of professional/ pastoral supervision each year. Clergy and religious not in full-time ministry participate in 6 hours of reflective practice activities each year.	✓			
5.5.5	All clergy and religious in ministry, undertake ongoing professional development and regular appraisals.	✓			
5.5.6	All newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least five years post ordination or final profession		✓		
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the Indicators are in place. In relation to 5.6, it is noted that a Peer Supervision Session Proposal Summary has been drafted by CatholicCare to address peer supervision for newly appointed clergy. See Recommendation 7b.					
Criterion 5.6 - The curriculum for seminary and formation programs for clergy and religious includes safeguarding knowledge and skills development of candidates to understand and lead initiatives for safeguarding children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.6.1	Seminary and initial formation programs build candidates’ knowledge and skills in a range of areas to support safeguarding children and adults.	Not applicable			
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs include developing pastoral responses to victims and survivors of abuse.	Not applicable			

5.6.3	Seminary and initial formation programs identify how to avoid abuse of power and the development and/or reinforcement of clericalist attitudes and behaviours.	Not applicable			
<b>Observations:</b> N/A.					
Criterion 5.7 – The movement and credentialing of those in ministry is appropriately managed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
5.7.1	A system to assess the safeguarding credentials (good standing) and manage the movement of all seminarians, clergy, religious and lay ministers between different seminaries, formation programs and other Church entities is in place.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the indicator are in place. We note that the Visiting Clergy Register is currently maintained by parishes in hard copy with information then required to be re-entered into a spreadsheet for auditing. This is an inefficiency and potential quality control issue. See Recommendation 6b.					
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.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
<b>Standard 6</b>		<b>Effective complaints management</b>			
<i>Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities and personnel.</i>					
Criterion 6.1 - The entity's Complaints Handling Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.1.1	Policies and procedures address mandatory reporting obligations.	✓			
6.1.2	There are clear procedures that provide step-by-step guidance on the response and action to be taken for different types of complaints, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breaches of Codes of Conduct;</li> <li>• disclosures, allegations, or concerns of current abuse of a child;</li> <li>• an adult bringing forward a complaint of</li> </ul>	✓			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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 Complaints Handling Policy outlines how perceived or actual conflicts of interest are managed.	✓			
6.1.4	The Complaints Handling Policy acknowledges that power imbalances may exist between the complainant and respondent and has strategies in place to address this.	✓			
6.1.5	The Complaints Handling Policy spells out who has responsibilities in relation to handling complaints and when procedures are enacted.	✓			
6.1.6	Abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referrals are recorded, and confidential information is stored, protected and retained according to the Privacy Act, and for 50 years.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.2 - The Complaint Handling Policy is understood by children, adults, families, carers, and personnel, and focuses on the rights of children and adults at risk.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.2.1	The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures demonstrate how the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk are prioritised.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.3 - Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.3.1	The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned, and operates in conjunction, with the Code of Conduct, HR, and other policies.	✓			
6.3.2	The Complaints Handling Policy commits to an initial risk assessment if a complaint of abuse is received, to identify and minimise any risk to children and adults. Ongoing risk assessments are conducted throughout investigation processes.	✓			
6.3.3	Complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.	✓			
6.3.4	Trauma-informed and victim-centred support and care is offered to any child or adult who has experienced or is alleging abuse.	✓			
6.3.5	Sharing information relating to complaints adheres to the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant legislation.	✓			

6.3.6	The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures empower and support personnel to raise, in good faith, concerns and allegations about unacceptable behaviour towards children and adults by other personnel.	✓			
6.3.7	Where a complaint related to the sexual abuse of a child or adult against clergy or religious is substantiated under a civil standard, the Church Authority undertakes a risk management process to determine the appropriate action, in keeping with Church protocols.	✓			
6.3.8	Where a cleric or religious is convicted of a canonical offence relating to sexual abuse, the respondent is to be prohibited from the exercise of ministry until such time as the process for imposing a penalty is completed by the relevant dicastery.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.4 - The Complaints Handling Policy includes the process of reporting complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, requiring cooperation with any statutory or contractual processes.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.4.1	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concerns and complaints of child abuse occurring within an entity be reported to the appropriate statutory authority/ies;</li> <li>concerns and/or complaints of serious offences 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 are noted.					
Criterion 6.5 – The Church Authority ensures mechanisms are in place to support complainants of child and adult sexual abuse.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.5.1	Appropriate pastoral care is provided to complainants.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.6 - The Church Authority ensures respondents facing allegations are supported and monitored.					
		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
6.6.1	Appropriately trained personnel are engaged in consultation with the respondent to counsel and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent.	✓			

6.6.2	Arrangements are in place to monitor, supervise and support a respondent, where there is a complaint, until (and if) the Church Authority no longer has this responsibility.	✓			
<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>					
<b>Criterion 7.1 - Personnel are trained and supported to implement the safeguarding policies and procedures.</b>		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.1.1	Personnel are provided regular education and training on safeguarding policies and procedures.	✓			
7.1.2	The entity's induction and refresher Safeguarding of Children and Adults training must 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 relevant to their role.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b>					
Requirements of the Indicators are in place. We note that the Diocese is currently mapping and reviewing its safeguarding training against the NCSS Standards and working towards implementing a Learning Management System with enhanced capabilities. See Recommendations 10 and 11.					
<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.</b>		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 Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 7.3 – Personnel are supported to recognise the factors that contribute to adult abuse, with a focus on adults at risk.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.3.1	<p>Education and training programs include materials addressing factors that may place adults at risk of abuse, building knowledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand the nature and impact of adult abuse;</li> <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 how power imbalances can be exploited; and</li> <li>• understand what could make specific adults at increased risk of abuse.</li> </ul>	N/A			
<b>Observations: N/A</b>					
Criterion 7.4 - Personnel have the information and skills to respond effectively to safeguarding risks, concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.4.1	Education and training programs equip relevant personnel to appropriately respond to and support anyone bringing forward concerns, disclosures, and allegations of abuse.	✓			
7.4.2	Personnel receive training on information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures.	✓			
7.4.3	<p>Personnel receive training on reporting obligations under Commonwealth, State/Territory legislative and canon law, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reporting suspected criminal behaviour to police; mandatory reporting to child protection authorities; Reportable Conduct Scheme;</li> <li>• reporting to other regulatory authorities or government departments; and,</li> <li>• Canonical reporting requirements</li> </ul>	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 7.5 - Personnel receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and adults.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
7.5.1	Cultural safety training is provided to equip personnel to create, culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.		✓		

7.5.2	Training is provided to relevant personnel to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds and how to create safe environments for people from these groups.		✓		
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**Observations:**

There are opportunities for the Diocese to identify additional ways to support personnel to have cultural competency and this is being considered as part of the current safeguarding training project. See Recommendation 10.

<b>Standard 8</b>	<b>Safe physical and online environments</b>
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*Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed.*

Criterion 8.1 – The Safeguarding Risk Management Strategy addresses both physical and online risks, without compromising the individual’s right to privacy or wellbeing.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.1.1	Both physical and online risks are addressed within the provision of ministry and/or services including risks arising from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child;</li> <li>ministries and/or services such as counselling, home visits, outreach, one-to-one tuition, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction and mentoring;</li> <li>potential physical contact between the penitent and the confessor where the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated;</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	The entity’s policies require the safe use of online applications for children and adults to learn, communicate and seek help.	✓		
8.1.3	Personnel are involved in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks to children and adults.	✓		

**Observations:**

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

Criterion 8.2 - The online environment is used in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policy.	Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.2.1	Personnel access and use online environments in line with the entity’s Code of Conduct, Privacy Act and relevant communication protocols.	✓		



8.2.2	The online environment is monitored, and breaches are managed in accordance with disciplinary, or other relevant policies and reported to the leadership.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 8.3 - Risk management plans address the range of settings, activities, and physical environments in which ministry and/or service occur.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
8.3.1	A process is in place to assess and manage risk if the organisation becomes aware of the presence of someone who poses an unacceptable risk to others within their ministry and/or service.	✓			
<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 organisation’s facilities appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 9		Continuous improvement			
<i>Entities regularly review and improve implementation of their systems for keeping children and adults safe.</i>					
Criterion 9.1 - The safeguarding practices for the protection of children and adults at risk are regularly reviewed.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.1.1	The Safeguarding Implementation Plan outlines how safeguarding practices are monitored and reviewed, and how this information is reported.	✓			
9.1.2	The Church Authority monitors the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and co-ordinates annual local self-assessment checks.	✓			
9.1.3	The Safeguarding Policy is subject to review at least every three years and outcomes of this review are documented.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 9.2 – Concerns and complaints are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures in safeguarding practices.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop

9.2.1	All individual incidents or complaints relating to safeguarding practices and/or failures are considered by the leadership to identify systemic patterns and support continuous improvement.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 9.3 - The Church Authority reports on the findings of its safeguarding reviews.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
9.3.1	The findings of relevant reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to are reported to stakeholders.	✓			
9.3.2	The findings of audits or reviews undertaken or validated by ACSL are made public.	Not applicable – this is the first NCSS audit			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted. The Diocese plans to publish this audit report on its website.					

<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> The Diocese has identified that it would be beneficial to consolidate and streamline its safeguarding policy and procedure framework to make it more accessible, particularly for parishes. The audit team identified an opportunity to develop an online (printable) 'one stop shop' safeguarding handbook for parishes. See Recommendations 15 and 16.					
Criterion 10.3 - Best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development and review of policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.3.1	There are processes in place to monitor how safeguarding policies and procedures ae being implemented.	✓			

10.3.2	There is a process in place to develop and review safeguarding policies and procedures.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 10.4 - Church leaders champion and model best practice implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.4.1	The Church Authority and leaders promote the NCSS and enact all policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 10.5 - Personnel understand and implement the policies and procedures.		Developed & Embedded	Developed	Developing	Yet to Develop
10.5.1	Personnel are encouraged to reflect on their understanding and practical implementation of policies and procedures and provide feedback.	✓			
<b>Observations:</b> Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

## 4. Audit recommendations

The audit recommendations are outlined below, together with the Diocese's response. Each recommendation has been categorised by priority against the scale in Appendix 2. Against a background where the Diocese is already performing very strongly, our recommendations aim to achieve further enhancements and, in some cases, to formally document and prioritise actions which the Diocese has indicated it is already implementing or considering. Commentary relating to the recommendations is contained in section 2. Where a recommendation is relevant to more than one Standard, this has been indicated.

Where no recommendations have been made in relation to a particular Standard, the Standard is not reproduced below.



### Standard 1: Committed leadership, governance and culture

*The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture*

<b>Recommendation 1</b>	<b>Priority 3</b>
<p>The Diocese should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) prioritise finalising the review of the current Risk Management Framework and make changes aimed at streamlining the policies and procedures</li> <li>b) provide training and support to personnel about the updated Risk Management Framework.</li> </ul>	

Also relevant to Standard 8		
<b>Agreed Action</b>	The Diocese will finalise the review of the current Risk Management Framework and provide training to personnel of the revised Risk Management Framework. It is intended to roll this out across all parishes through the first half of 2025 through Deanery workshops.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Area: Administration and Finance Broken Bay – Governance and Legal in collaboration with Clergy and Parishes Broken Bay.	
<b>Due date</b>	30 June 2025	
<b>Recommendation 2</b>		<b>Priority 3</b>
<p>The Diocese should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) publish this audit report on its website.</li> <li>b) publish a high-level annual safeguarding report on its website, drawing on the internal safeguarding annual reports prepared by Chancery, CatholicCare and Catholic Schools which includes headline safeguarding data indicators, significant developments and initiatives undertaken in the period (including implementing the recommendations in this report).</li> </ul>		
<b>Agreed Action</b>	The Diocese will publish the Audit Report on the Safeguarding area of the Diocesan website, when accepted by the ACSL Board. Safeguarding Broken Bay will work with Catholic Schools Broken Bay and CatholicCare Broken Bay to develop an annual safeguarding report for 2024 that details headline data, significant developments, initiatives undertaken and include the plan for implementation of the recommendations made in this report.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Area: Safeguarding Broken Bay.	
<b>Due date</b>	30 June 2025	



## Standard 2: Children and adults are safe, informed and participate

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

<b>Recommendation 3</b>		<b>Priority 3</b>
<p>The Diocese should establish a ‘Community of Practice for children’s ministry’ to assist parishes with less developed children’s ministries to explore untapped opportunities and learn from parishes who are more advanced in this area. (This should include having regard to the risk assessments undertaken with associated activities – see Recommendation 14).</p>		
<b>Agreed Action</b>	The Diocese will invite Parishes to be part of a Communities of Practice for Children’s Ministries and facilitate the sharing of best practice and ideas between parishes. This will commence after the completion of the rollout of the Parish Activities Risk Assessment Tool (recommendation 13).	

<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Areas: Mission Broken Bay and Safeguarding Broken Bay.
<b>Due date</b>	30 June 2025



## Standard 4: Equity is promoted, and diversity is respected

*Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.*

<b>Recommendation 4</b>		<b>Priority 3</b>
<p>The Diocese should strongly encourage all parishes to develop, publish and distribute a 'welcome pack' similar to the resource developed by Chatswood Parish.</p> <p><i>Also relevant to Standards 2 and 3.</i></p>		
<b>Agreed Action</b>	It has been previously noted in recent parish surveys that formation in the Ministry of Welcome and development of the same is a priority across Parishes. This recommendation will be taken up as part of a wider development of Parish Welcome Ministry. It is a priority for the outreach of Mission Broken Bay in 2025.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Area: Mission Broken Bay.	
<b>Due date</b>	End of 2025	
<b>Recommendation 5</b>		<b>Priority 3</b>
<p>The Diocese should publish the Complaints Handling Policy on its website. If the Diocese believes it is not suitable to be a public document, it should develop content for the website which explains how people can expect the Diocese to respond if they make a complaint (translations should also be made available).</p> <p><i>Also relevant to Standard 6.</i></p>		
<b>Agreed Action</b>	The Diocese will review its current Complaints Handling Policy and make it available on the Safeguarding page of the Diocesan website. It is agreed that the current Complaints Handling Policy, as well as the Code of Conduct, require simplification in order to be effective. These reviews will form a priority for People and Participation in the first half of 2025.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Area: People and Participation.	
<b>Due date</b>	30 June 2025	



## Standard 5: Robust human resource management

*People working with children and adults are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice*

<b>Recommendation 6</b>	<b>Priority 3</b>
The Diocese should:	

<p>a) phase out local systems used by parishes to complete the Parish Child Related Activities Register and implement a centralised Diocesan database that can be accessed by parish and Chancery staff.</p> <p>b) phase out local hard copy Visiting Clergy Registers and implement a QR code system for capturing the required data about visiting clergy.</p> <p><i>Also relevant to Standard 8.</i></p>		<b>Priority 3</b>
<b>Agreed Action</b>	<p>The Diocese will research technological options for a new centralised system for Parishes to complete the Parish Child Related Activities Register. The Parish Child-Related Activities Register is a particular development for the Diocese of Broken Bay. It has been found to be invaluable. The question now is how to ensure that it is ‘live’ through the development of the right technology.</p> <p>An interdiocesan project across the Dioceses of Greater Sydney is exploring the feasibility of a QR Code facility to render the Registers of Visiting Clergy ‘live’ rather than historical. The Diocese of Broken Bay continues with active participation in this project.</p>	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Area: Safeguarding Broken Bay in collaboration with Vicar General.	
<b>Due date</b>	<p>For the Child-Related Activity Register: 30 June 2025</p> <p>For the replacement of the Sacristy Registers for Visiting Clergy: March 2026</p>	
<b>Recommendation 7</b>		<b>Priority 3</b>
<p>The Diocese should:</p> <p>a) implement performance appraisals for clergy, starting with parish priests which have a focus on civil and canonical safeguarding requirements</p> <p>b) finalise and implement the draft Peer Supervision Session Proposal Summary to address peer supervision for newly appointed clergy.</p>		
<b>Agreed Action</b>	<p>The Diocese will continue to explore various models for clergy appraisal and encourage participation in these instruments, noting that some have already been undertaken with great benefit to the participants.</p> <p>The Peer Supervision Session for newly appointed clergy was implemented in 2021-2022 and has concluded, being replaced with regular dinner sessions with the Vicar General.</p>	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Area: Clergy and Parishes Broken Bay in collaboration with the Vicar General.	
<b>Due date</b>	End of 2025	
<b>Recommendation 8</b>		<b>Priority 3</b>
<p>The Diocese should change the name of the CCD role ‘Administration Officer’ to ‘Compliance Officer’ to better reflect the dimensions of the role.</p>		
<b>Agreed Action</b>	The Diocese will request a review of the role descriptions for the CCD Administration Officers with a view to change their titles to include ‘compliance’.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Area: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD).	
<b>Due date</b>	December 2024	



## Standard 7: Ongoing education and training

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

<b>Recommendation 9</b> The Diocese should prioritise completing its safeguarding training review against the NCSS Standards: a) ensuring appropriate modules are developed/refined to meet relevant criteria and Indicators (including 4.3, 7.1.2, 7.2.1, 7.4.1, 7.4.2, 7.4.3, 7.5.1, 7.5.2). b) with regard to the good practice initiatives outlined in this report c) with consideration given to enhancing ongoing safeguarding training for parish staff and volunteers  <i>Also relevant to Standard 4.</i>		<b>Priority 3</b>
<b>Agreed Action</b>	The Diocese will continue to prioritise the safeguarding training review of the NCSS standards, with particular regard to the content of this report, and will develop a safeguarding training program framework which includes safeguarding training for relevant parish staff and volunteers.  The Diocese will develop further multi-lingual resources in Safeguarding and develop training modules for various cultural communities, particularly for the Korean Community, the Filipino Community and the Indonesian Community.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Area: Safeguarding Broken Bay in collaboration with Mission Broken Bay.	
<b>Due date</b>	End of 2025	
<b>Recommendation 10</b> The Diocese should prioritise completing the build and implementation of a new Learning Management System.		<b>Priority 3</b>
<b>Agreed Action</b>	The Diocese will continue to prioritise the implementation of a new Learning Management System for the Chancery and Parishes.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Area: Safeguarding Broken Bay in collaboration with the Vicar General and the NSW/ACT Province of Bishops Safeguarding Community of Practice.	
<b>Due date</b>	31 July 2025	
<b>Recommendation 11</b> As part of ‘refresher’ safeguarding awareness, the Diocese should hold an annual forum for parish staff and volunteers. The forum should focus on sharing and celebrating safeguarding and children’s ministry best practices.  <i>Also relevant to Standard 2.</i>		<b>Priority 3</b>
<b>Agreed Action</b>	The Diocese will ensure as a pastoral priority a reflection on the practice of children’s ministry across the parishes through various mechanisms of survey, collaboration and training. This will involve collaboration with the development of the new Religious Education curriculum in Catholic Schools Broken Bay and the practice of the pedagogy of the Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Areas: Mission Broken Bay and Safeguarding Broken Bay.	

<b>Due date</b>	30 June 2025
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### Standard 8: Safe physical and online environments

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

<b>Recommendation 12</b>	<b>Priority 3</b>
The Diocese should finalise and implement its draft Managing a Person Associated with Causing Risk in a Parish Policy together with suitable training about its application.	

<b>Agreed Action</b>	The Diocese will review and continue to develop the draft policy and include this in the safeguarding training program.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Area: Safeguarding Broken Bay.
<b>Due date</b>	22 April 2025

<b>Recommendation 13</b>	<b>Priority 3</b>
The Diocese should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) adjust the Parish Risk Assessment Tool Kit to reflect feedback provided by parishes participating in the pilot.</li> <li>b) roll out the Parish Risk Assessment Tool Kit to all parishes</li> <li>c) in rolling out the Tool Kit to other parishes, provide training to support its implementation, including examples of risk assessments already completed by parishes to cross-promote good initiatives and ongoing collaboration</li> </ul>	

<b>Agreed Action</b>	As with Recommendation 1, the Diocese will finalise the review of the current Risk Management Framework and provide training to personnel of the revised Risk Management Framework. It is intended to roll this out across all parishes through the first half of 2025 through Deanery workshops.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Areas: Administration Finance Broken Bay (Legal and Risk) and Clergy and Parishes Broken Bay with collaboration with Safeguarding Broken Bay.
<b>Due date</b>	30 June 2025



### Standard 10: Policies and procedures support the safety of children and adults

*Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.*

<b>Recommendation 14</b>	<b>Priority 3</b>
The Diocese should consolidate and streamline its safeguarding policies, procedures, protocols and resources to make them easier to navigate.	



<b>Agreed Action</b>	The Diocese will review the safeguarding policies, procedures and resources to make them easier to navigate.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Areas: Safeguarding Broken Bay and People and Participation.	
<b>Due date</b>	30 June 2025	
<b>Recommendation 15</b>	<p>The Diocese should develop an interactive, online (printable) handbook for parishes which assists clergy, staff and volunteers to allow easier navigation of all relevant safeguarding policies, procedures and resources in the relevant contexts (creating a 'one-stop-shop' resource).</p> <p><i>Also relevant to Standards 5 and 8.</i></p>	<b>Priority 3</b>
<b>Agreed Action</b>	The Diocese will develop an interactive, online (printable) handbook for parishes containing relevant safeguarding policies, procedures and resources. This is linked to Recommendation 14 and will not be able to be achieved until after the policy review is completed.	
<b>Responsibility</b>	Mission Area: Safeguarding Broken Bay.	
<b>Due date</b>	End of 2025	

## Appendix 1: Compliance Assessment Scale

	<b>General</b>	<b>Processes &amp; Systems</b>	<b>People &amp; Resources</b>
<b>Yet to Develop</b>	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.
<b>Developing</b>	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.
<b>Developed</b>	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.
<b>Developed and embedded</b>	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 2: Audit finding priorities

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

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

## Appendix 3: 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>	<p>means any person aged 18 years and over who is at increased risk of experiencing abuse, such as people:</p> <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/who have any other impairment or adversity that makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from abuse.</li> </ul>
<b>Allegation</b>	<p>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”.</p>
<b>Audit</b>	<p>means a mechanism to assess how a Church Authority, ministry or entity governed by a Church Authority, is implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.</p>
<b>Australian Catholic Bishops Conference</b>	<p>means the assembly of Bishops of Australia exercising together certain pastoral offices for the Catholics of Australia.</p>
<b>Bishop</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Canon law</b>	<p>means the revised code of canon law promulgated by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in 1983 and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches as promulgated in 1990 and any other universal or legislation promulgated by the competent ecclesiastical authority.</p>
<b>Canonical Offence</b>	<p>means canonical crimes of sexual abuse committed by clerics and religious are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts.</li> <li>• performing sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person.</li> <li>• the production, exhibition, possession, or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography, as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions.</li> </ul> <p>The canonical crimes/delicts/offences committed by clerics or religious as stated in Art. 1 §1 a) of Vos Estis Lux Mundi.  Definition of vulnerable person as stated in Art. 1 §2 b) of Vos Estis Lux Mundi: “means: any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence”. This definition is captured by the term ‘Adult at risk’ within the NCSS.</p>

<b>Catholic Religious Australia</b>	CRA is the conference of major superiors comprising leaders of religious institutes and societies of apostolic life within the Catholic Church in Australia.
<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>	<p>means:</p> <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 PJPS the competent authority in accordance with the statutes.</li> <li>• for any other Church entity, the senior authority within the organization in accordance with its rules.</li> </ul>
<b>Church Protocols</b>	means official procedures or system of rules which govern the affairs of the Catholic Church in Australia, for example, Vos Estis Lux Mundi and the National Response Protocol.
<b>Civil Standard</b>	the most common standard of proof relates to civil proceedings, which is the balance of probabilities (incorporating the principles from Briginshaw v Briginshaw) – which means it is more probable than not that what the person says happened is true (in criminal cases, the standard is proof beyond reasonable doubt).
<b>Clergy</b>	includes bishops, priests and deacons.
<b>Clergy and religious from countries other than Australia</b>	means any cleric or member of a religious institute who is specifically recruited or welcomed from overseas by a Church Authority or entity.
<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.
<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>Consecrated Life/Institute of Consecrated Life</b>	is an association of faithful in the Catholic Church erected by canon law whose members profess the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience by vows or other sacred bonds (as defined in the Code of Canon Law under canons 573–730). Apart from being a member of an institute, consecrated life may also be lived individually; the Catholic Church recognises, as forms of individual consecrated life that are not members of institutes, namely that of hermits and consecrated virgins.
<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.
<b>Dignity or Right to Risk</b>	refers to enabling individuals the right (or dignity) to take reasonable risks. It recognises that restricting this right can stifle the individual’s growth, self-esteem and the overall quality of life: ‘Given that an individual's personal dignity is manifested, in part, by their ability to remain autonomous, and being autonomous engenders risk-taking. Inhibiting an individual's ability to take risks erodes their dignity. Dignity of risk is therefore the principle of allowing an individual the dignity afforded by risk-taking, subsequently enhancing their personal growth and quality of life.’ (Joseph E Ibrahim and Marie-Claire Davis, ‘Impediments to Applying the “Dignity of Risk” Principle in Residential Aged Care Services: “Dignity of Risk” in Residential Aged Care’, Australasian Journal on Ageing 32, no. 3 (September 2013): 188–93)
<b>Diminished capacity</b>	means if an adult needs to make a decision and is unable to carry out any part of this process (as listed below), they have impaired decision-making capacity. There are three elements to making a decision:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>	means a diocese, archdiocese, ordinariate or personal prelatry of the Latin Church and an eparchy of an Eastern Church.
<b>Disability (persons with)</b>	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.)
<b>Diversity</b>	means a range of people who have various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, and interests.
<b>Diverse sexuality</b>	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.
<b>Elder abuse</b>	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.
<b>Emotional abuse (adults)</b>	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.
<b>Emotional abuse (children)</b>	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.
<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 and other adults 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> </ul> poor standards of care.
<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> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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.
<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 in the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards to denote the statutory screening requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. There is not yet a single national framework setting out requirements for 'working with children' checks. Each State/Territory in Australia has its own system. They are one part of a Church entity's recruitment, selection, and screening practices.
<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.