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Maronite Eparchy demonstrate commitment to safeguarding

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Key safeguarding policies are in place within the Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania, according to an audit focusing on the safeguarding of children released by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd today.

The audit found that the Eparchy has either implemented or is substantially progressed in the implementation of 100 per cent of the indicators relevant to them under the child-focused National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS).

The audit was undertaken at the invitation of Maronite Eparchy Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, and was completed in 2023 as the eparchy's golden jubilee celebrations drew to an end.

ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens said that NCSS safeguarding audits of Church entities across the country have been undertaken since 2019, and are part of building an organisation's safeguarding capacity by checking that sound and robust processes are in place to keep children and adults at risk safe.

'Our audit of the Maronite Eparchy of Australia is the first audit of an Eastern Rite church, and we were delighted to have the opportunity to spend time with the Maronite Community in Sydney to learn more about their safeguarding strategies in what is a very vibrant, youthful and active Catholic community.'

'While safeguarding approaches will look different in each unique Church context, there are things we know every organisation needs to do to create safe communities for children.'

'For instance, we look at how risks in the physical and online environments have been assessed and mitigated. In the case of the Maronites, we saw excellent work and attention to detail in their risk assessments for physical spaces, ministry programs, and approaches to responding to high-risk individuals.'

'Our audits can help organisations work out where there are gaps, and how they can strengthen their existing processes. In our audit of the Eparchy, we did identify some areas that can be further systematised, such as bringing together their very detailed individual risk assessments for activities into an overarching Eparchy risk register.'

'Our recommendations have been accepted by the Eparchy's leadership and will be implemented in the following months. The Eparchy is now turning its focus to incorporating adults at risk into its safeguarding scope, in line with NCSS Edition 2.'

His Excellency Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, Bishop of the Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania, said, 'We are deeply committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment for all members of our community, especially children and vulnerable adults. The audit conducted by ACSL affirms our dedication to upholding the highest standards of safeguarding.'

'Our Eparchy remains steadfast in its mission to foster a community where every individual feels secure, respected, and cared for.'

View the Maronite Eparchy of Australia's full audit report on [ACSL's website](#).