

## - MEDIA RELEASE -

### **Safeguarding audit report of Archdiocese of Sydney published**

**16 August 2024**

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) has today published a safeguarding audit report for the Archdiocese of Sydney.

The audit focused on the safeguarding initiatives put in place by the Archdiocese of Sydney for children and adults at risk by assessing implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). The audit was undertaken by ACSL in partnership with Michael Elphick & Associates and Woods Consulting between January and July 2024.

The audit found that 91 per cent of the NCSS indicators relevant to the Archdiocese of Sydney had either been fully embedded or substantially progressed at the time of audit.

Speaking after the report's publication, ACSL Chief Executive Dr Ursula Stephens said that the audit has identified several areas of good practice as well as highlighting some areas for improvement.

"Our audit approach is strengths-based, and we certainly saw many areas where the Archdiocese is demonstrating best practice. One area in particular we recognised as outstanding were efforts to combat modern slavery by the Anti Slavery Taskforce, which aims to safeguard a section of adults at risk who are often overlooked in workplaces."

"Audit processes also showed a high-quality body of safeguarding resources developed by the Archdiocese including training programs, protocols, and procedures, which are made available to all parishes and agencies."

"Our continuous improvement audit approach also helped us to identify some potential changes that can be made to enhance the quality and safety of activities. We noted that the Archdiocese is a complex governance environment with multi-faceted operational arrangements and challenges. Further efforts to enhance collaboration and oversight between the central function and its related entities such as parishes and agencies, can reduce safeguarding risk."

"Our audit team identified examples of good practice as well as opportunities for improvement across NCSS key capability areas, and we are pleased to advise that the Archdiocese has committed to implementing responses to each recommendation area over the next 12 months."

"We would like to thank the Archdiocesan leadership team and all those involved in the audit for their candour and cooperation throughout this process," Dr Stephens said.

The Archdiocese serves almost 600,000 Catholics, across 137 parishes, with 300 priests and played a vital role in the Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, by developing and supporting safeguarding responses that have been adopted across the New South Wales Province.

View the Archdiocese of Sydney's full audit report on [ACSL's website](#).