

- MEDIA RELEASE -

Best Practices in Safeguarding a feature of Hobart Archdiocese

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Through strong pastoral relationships, the Archdiocese of Hobart has successfully embedded safeguarding within its culture, demonstrating a high level of engagement and understanding of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and the commitment to ensuring the Church is a safe place for children and adults at risk of abuse.

The recent Safeguarding Audit was undertaken by ACSL, and involved evaluating the documents, policies and procedures in place and supported by the Safe Communities Office of the Archdiocese.

The audit involved discussions with the Archbishop, Chancery staff and leaders and visits to six parishes across Tasmania. The audit team also met with representatives of CatholicCare Tasmania, Catholic Education Tasmania, Loreto Community Housing, St Joseph Affordable Homes and Blueline Laundry.

The Archdiocese of Hobart established Safe Communities in 2019, an initiative designed to protect children and adults at risk, with a focus on creating and maintaining a safe community for everyone, leading to the name "Safe Communities". In using the term "community", the Archdiocese indelibly links safeguarding as everyone's responsibly and it has worked.

"Safeguarding has to be in our DNA (Diocesan Normal Awareness); it is not something added on or extra," Archbishop Anthony Ireland has stated.

ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens commends the Archbishop and the Archdiocese, saying that several areas of good practice were observed during the audit.

'A key strength of the Archdiocese's safeguarding practice is the strong collaborative relationships between the Safe Communities Office and the parishes; by working together to adopt appropriate safeguarding strategies the risk of harm to children and adults at risk is significantly reduced. The active engagement of the Vicar General, Fr Shammi Perera, in the Safe Communities Office has also contributed to modelling and building the strong safeguarding culture.

The interviews with personnel in the Archdiocese reveals "The commitment of the Catholic social services agencies of the Archdiocese to respect and protect children and families through trauma-informed care, and to provide supported employment and training opportunities is also to be commended".

'Through our audit we identified some areas for improvement, resulting in minor recommendations that will further embed safeguarding in all aspects of the Archdiocesan ministries,' the audit report states.

Auditors commended the diocesan Safe Communities Team for their unwavering commitment and tireless work in protecting the dignity, safety, and wellbeing of all entrusted to their care. Their faithful service reflects the Gospel call to care, responsibility, and justice in action.

All recommendations have been accepted by the Archdiocese and will be implemented in the next 12 months, along with continued vigilance and awareness of emerging risks.

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