

## - MEDIA RELEASE -

**11 February 2026**

### **Rockhampton Diocese reaffirms commitment to Safeguarding**

The Diocese of Rockhampton has recently completed a review audit of its Safeguarding policies and procedures, as part of its ongoing commitment to building a strong safeguarding culture.

Bishop Michael McCarthy requested the review audit, which was undertaken by ACSL, to reassure the community that the Catholic services in the Rockhampton Diocese have a zero tolerance to abuse of any kind, and that they are keeping up to date with emerging safeguarding risks for children and vulnerable people.

“We had our first external audit in 2020, and developed a continuous improvement plan, based on that audit. Since then, the environment has changed significantly, including new legislation and regulation in place in Queensland in relation to Reportable Conduct schemes and Child Safe Standards, as well as changes in canon law in relation to the protection and care of vulnerable people.”

“We must do whatever it takes to continually ensure that our church environments are safe – parishes, ministries, community services and schools. Vigilance is the key” Bishop McCarthy said.

ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens congratulated the Diocese on its safeguarding commitment.

“This extensive review audit evaluated governance, policies, procedures, and safeguarding practices across this large Diocese and Bishop Michael and the team are to be commended for their leadership, safeguarding culture, and ongoing investment in safeguarding.”

The audit revealed strong maturity in the safeguarding approach across the Diocese.

“Comparing the 2020 results with 2025, there is evidence of a growth and maturity in how safeguarding is embedded in the life of the Church, and the level of inclusive practices is very pleasing.

“We are seeing a stronger take up of professional supervision and pastoral support for clergy, religious and lay people involved in pastoral ministries, as well as a heightened vigilance to emerging safeguarding risks including in e-safety, cyber security, and elder abuse.”

Bishop McCarthy welcomes the results of the review audit which reflects the dedication of clergy staff and volunteers who work to ensure that parishes ministries and services are places of safety, respect and trust.

“We have learned from the review audit and welcome the recommendations made. We remain committed to ongoing improvement and accountability, and to fostering a culture where the dignity of every person is upheld

The full ACSL audit report is publicly available on ACSL’s [website](#)

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*ACSL works with Catholic entities to promote and oversee a nationally consistent, comprehensive and sustainable framework for the protection of children and adults at risk within the Church in Australia.*

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