

- MEDIA RELEASE -

Evidence of A Culture of Safeguarding a feature of Diocese of Wollongong Safeguarding Audit

A Safeguarding Audit of the Diocese of Wollongong indicates that the Diocese is committed to continuing its commitment to creating safe environments for children and adults-at-risk.

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

“The Diocese of Wollongong is encouraging and supporting all parishes, ministries and agencies to embed safeguarding culture through incremental change, ensuring a sustainable cultural change for the future.”

The extensive audit evaluated governance, policies, procedures, and safeguarding practices across Diocese parishes. ACSL commended the Diocese for its leadership, safeguarding culture, and ongoing investment in safeguarding.

The audit team can confirm there is a robust safeguarding culture is promoted at the highest levels of the Diocese. There is a commitment by the Diocesan leadership to safeguarding in their rhetoric, actions and practices - evidenced through their language, signage, website and policy framework.

Bishop Brian Mascord welcomed the findings, noting that safeguarding is fundamental to the mission of the Church.

“This result reflects the dedication of our clergy, staff, and volunteers who work each day to ensure our parishes, ministries, and services are places of safety, respect, and trust. We remain committed to ongoing improvement and accountability, and to fostering a culture where the dignity of every person is upheld.”

Director of Professional Standards and Safeguarding, Asante Viswasam, said “the result demonstrates the effectiveness of the Diocese's integrated approach to safeguarding, and it is the goal of the Diocese to ensure that incremental change leads to the natural embedding of safeguarding in the fabric of all pastoral works and ministries of the Diocese. The ACSL recommendations provide a framework for our continuous improvement, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to ensure that our Diocese is a safe place for everyone to know, love and serve God.”

The Diocese has already commenced work on implementing the recommendations in the report, completing some of the significant recommendations before report publication, and will continue supporting all parishes, ministries and services to embed the NCSS in daily practice.

The full ACSL audit report is publicly available on ACSL’s website, reflecting the Diocese’s commitment to openness and accountability.