

Audit reports for the Archdiocese of Brisbane and Diocese of Darwin released

Tuesday 17 December 2019

Safeguarding audits of the Archdiocese of Brisbane and the Diocese of Darwin have revealed a high level of compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) according to two audit reports published by Catholic Professional Standards Limited (CPSL) today.

Archdiocese of Brisbane

The Archdiocese of Brisbane comprises 98 parishes in South East Queensland with 285 active or retired clergy, approximately 16,000 paid staff operating out of 40 offices and more than 10,000 volunteers undertaking a variety of ministries within the Archdiocese. The Archbishop of Brisbane is Mark Coleridge, installed on 2 April, 2012.

The CPSL audit of the Archdiocese of Brisbane found that the Archdiocese had either implemented or was substantially progressed in the implementation of 87 (84 percent) out of the 104 indicators relevant to them under the NCSS.

A total of 18 recommendations have been accepted by the Archdiocese of Brisbane to strengthen their safeguarding practices. Audit recommendations are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation. There are no Priority 1 (high rated) recommendations for the Archdiocese.

CPSL CEO Sheree Limbrick said that the audit showed that the Archdiocese has comprehensive child safeguarding policies and procedures, with only one NCSS Indicator (relating to the implementation of cultural safety training) yet to be addressed.

“Many of the recommendations we have given to the Archdiocese of Brisbane relate to streamlining processes, consolidating documentation and ensuring that the Archdiocese maintains good oversight of the large number of parishes and ministries under its governance to ensure consistent safeguarding practices across the Archdiocese,” said Ms Limbrick.

Diocese of Darwin

The Diocese of Darwin is the face of the Catholic Church in the Northern Territory, comprising 18 parishes which geographically cover almost the whole of the Northern Territory - an area of 1,352,212 square kilometres. The Diocese has 25 active or retired clergy, 7 paid staff working in the diocesan office and more than 500 volunteers across the Diocese. The Bishop of Darwin is Charles Gauci, installed on September 26, 2018.

The audit of the Diocese of Darwin found that the Diocese had implemented (or was substantially progressed in the implementation) of 92 (89 percent) of the 103 indicators relevant to their operations under the NCSS.

Thirteen recommendations to improve safeguarding policies and practices have been accepted by the Diocese of Darwin. There are no Priority 1 (high rated) recommendations for the Diocese.

Ms Limbrick said that the audit of Diocese of Darwin demonstrated that there is committed leadership at the highest levels of the Diocese to make child safeguarding a priority, evident through a dedicated “safeguarding children” webpage on the diocesan website, the formation of a Bishop’s Advisory Council



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and efforts from the Diocese to make families and communities aware of safeguarding matters in the Church.

“Moving forward, the Diocese of Darwin will need to address cultural safety training, which so far has not been addressed. This is very important given the multicultural nature of the Diocese. The Diocese will also need to work to ensure that annual performance appraisals of personnel factor in safeguarding, and that volunteers undergo appraisals too,” Ms Limbrick said.

The NCSS, based on recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, provide the framework for Catholic Church entities to build child-safe cultures and to advance the safety and dignity of children across the Catholic Church in Australia.

The safeguarding audit reports of the Archdiocese of Darwin and the Diocese of Darwin are the final two to be published by CPSL in 2019. CPSL is working with a range of other Catholic entities to assess their progress in implementing the NCSS and will release further audit reports as they are completed.

The full audit report for the Archdiocese of Brisbane is available on CPSL’s website [here](#).

The full audit report for the Diocese of Darwin is available on CPSL’s website [here](#).

Catholic Professional Standards Ltd is a not-for-profit public company, limited by guarantee. It was established by the leadership of the Catholic Church during the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to develop national safeguarding standards, to audit the compliance of Church Authorities with those standards and to publicly report the results. CPSL has a lay Board of Directors with sole responsibility for the content and publication of audit reports.

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