

## - MEDIA RELEASE -

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### **Distance no barrier to safeguarding efforts in Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese**

Bishop Columba-McBeth Green has acknowledged the challenges experienced across the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes to ensure that clergy, parishes and personnel maintain their commitment to safeguarding, following the recent safeguarding audit undertaken by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL).

“We welcome the findings of the audit, which reaffirmed the efforts being made across the Diocese since 2024 to strengthen our safeguarding practices. The audit has provided us with valuable insights, highlighting the areas we can continue to invest in.

As the Diocese extends from Forbes to Broken Hill and to the South Australian and Victorian borders, the logistics of supporting its 20 parish centres adds to the safeguarding challenge.

ACSL Chief Executive Officer Dr Ursula Stephens acknowledged that the Diocese has made commendable progress in implementing the NCSS.

“The Diocese was the subject of a compliance audit by the Office of the Children’s Guardian in 2024, and the ACSL audit was able to confirm that all actions recommended from that audit have been satisfactorily addressed.

“The audit report includes recommendations to further improve its processes over the next twelve months to ensure safeguarding is embedded across the ministries of the Diocese”

In accepting the recommendations, Bishop Columba said the outcomes of the audit are encouraging, but they are not a reason for complacency.

“Rather, they point clearly to the direction we need to take—one with vigilance, accountability, and ongoing formation” he said.

The full ACSL audit report is publicly available on ACSL’s website.