

## - MEDIA RELEASE -

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### **Diocese of Geraldton rises to the safeguarding challenges of their FIFO communities**

The Catholic Diocese of Geraldton has responded to the transient nature of its parish communities and the remoteness of its outposts by ensuring safeguarding information and policies are widely shared and that every parish has a safeguarding officer available to support the local community.

ACSL Chief Executive Officer, Dr Ursula Stephens, said that the audit demonstrated that the Diocese has strong child safeguarding policies and procedures in place.

“I commend the efforts of the Diocesan safeguarding personnel to ensure that policies are being met in practice and commended the integration of safeguarding across the Diocese.”

The Diocese is the largest diocese by land area in Australia, and with 24 parish centres, there is a heavy reliance on volunteers in some small and remote communities, and the importance of understanding diverse cultural issues has been an important strength of the Diocese’s safeguarding approach.

“The recommendations for improvement reflect an acknowledgement of the diverse cultural communities within the Diocese, and an ongoing commitment to understand and implement responsibilities of safeguarding adults at risk,” Dr Stephens said.

ACSL made ten recommendations to improve safeguarding practices within the Diocese. These recommendations were accepted and work is already underway to implementing them.

“I am encouraged by the conclusions of the Diocese’s first audit report and extend heartfelt appreciation to all who committed to building a strong safeguarding culture over many years, and blessings to all who generously dedicated time to participate in the audit process,” Bishop Morrissey said.

“Safeguarding is intrinsic to our faith and Catholic Social Teaching, and we will refine and strengthen our processes so that safeguarding children, youth, and adults at-risk is paramount and at the core of everything we do in the Diocese of Geraldton,” Bishop Morrissey said.

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards provide the framework for Catholic Church entities to build child-safe cultures and to advance the safety and dignity of children and vulnerable people across the Catholic Church in Australia.

The full audit report, is publicly available on the ACSL website at [www.acsltd.org.au](http://www.acsltd.org.au).