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MEDIA RELEASE

Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst welcomes Report of Safeguarding Audit

The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst welcomes today's publication of the report on the Diocese's implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, conducted by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd. The overall audit findings showed 96% compliance, with the Diocese demonstrating that it has fully implemented or substantially progressed in implementing 97 of the 103 indicators that are relevant to its operations, and a further four indicators in the initial stages of implementation. There were twelve audit recommendations, which were all assessed as medium or low priority, and which have all been accepted by the Diocese.

Bishop Shane Mackinlay said: 'This result is an encouraging endorsement of the safeguarding efforts undertaken over many years across the Diocese and its parishes, led with great dedication by its Safeguarding Coordinator and Safeguarding Committee. It shows not only very high levels of compliance with the safeguarding standards, but also a sustained commitment to fostering a culture of safety and care for children, and adults at risk.'

Bishop Mackinlay expressed his appreciation for the work of the ACSL audit team and the confidence that its report would give to those involved in or visiting the Diocese's parishes and agencies: 'Safeguarding is a critical part of the response to what we have learned about the Catholic Church's failures to protect, believe and respond justly to children and vulnerable adults, and the consequent breaches of community trust. I acknowledge the lifelong trauma of abuse victims, survivors and their families. We must do all in our power to prevent this, and a commitment to safeguarding will therefore remain an essential part of the Diocese's mission.'

The Diocese recognises that ensuring the safety and care of children, and adults at risk, requires that safeguarding be an ongoing priority. The audit report provides valuable insights and recommendations on how the Diocese can improve its practices and policies relating to safeguarding issues in areas including risk management, support for parish safeguarding officers, and online safety. The Diocese is committed to continuous improvement in these and other nominated areas and will work to implement the recommendations of the audit report.

The full report is available on the ACSL website, along with further information about the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and ACSL itself: www.cpsltd.org.au/safe-church/church-reports/

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