

Saint Michael's Catholic Parish



12 Sproule Street - Nelson Bay 2315
Phone Number: 4981 1069 Mobile: 0401 233 650
Email: stmichaelsnb@mn.catholic.org.au
www.nelsonbaycatholicchurch.com
Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A 13 September 2026

We acknowledge the Worimi people – the traditional custodians of this land.
My soul is thirsting for the living God.

WEEKEND MASS TIMES

Reconciliation:
Saturday
4.00pm – 4.45 pm
Saturday Vigil: 5:00 pm
Sunday Mass: 8.30 am
Exposition and
Adoration
One Hour before Mass

WEEKDAY MASS

Tuesday 5.00pm
Wednesday 9.15am
Thursday 5.00pm
Friday 9.15am

NURSING HOME MASSES

Every First Thursday
10.00am Regis Aged Care
Corlette.

Every Second Wednesday
10.30 am Uniting.
Muller Street
Salamander Bay

Every Third Thursday
10.00am Harbourside
Shoal Bay.

PARISH CONTACTS

PARISH PRIEST:

Fr. Anthony Nguyen
Phone: 0420 401 025

PARISH DEACON:

Dcn. Gerard McCarthy

PARISH SECRETARY:

Mrs Dianne Maricic
Parish Office Hours
9.30 am to 3.00 pm
Wednesday to Friday
Phone: 0401 233 650

ST MICHAEL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:

Ms Helen Bourne
Office: 4981 1111

COMMUNITY SAFETY AT OUR MASSES

The following information is to assist
parishioners and visitors:

Face masks are available at the church
entrance.

Hand sanitiser is available at the church
entrance.

Holy Water is available and changed
regularly.

Please take your bulletin home with you
after Mass.

There are two collection plates during Mass.
Thank you for your continued support. The
following option is available:

The First Collection supports Diocesan
Clergy.

The Second Collection supports our Parish.

HOLY COMMUNION

The Communion host can be received in the
hand, and on the tongue with care. Since the latter is deemed high risk, please
proceed to the Priest or Deacon only and at the end of the line.

PERPETUAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Sunday, 13 September, will see parishes across the Diocese of Maitland-
Newcastle commemorate the annual Perpetual Day of Remembrance,
a day set aside to remember those who were subjected to abuse at the
hands of members of the Church, especially clergy and religious.

The day can be troubling for everyone, yet it is important that we do
not shrink from the occasion, from remembering, and from being
prepared to do those things that must be done to honour victims and
survivors and changing our present to ensure that children and
vulnerable adults are safe in our parishes and activities.

The Perpetual Day of Remembrance takes priority over the Twenty
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PRAYER

Saint Michael the
Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our protection against
the wickedness and
snares of the devil;
May God rebuke him,
we humbly pray;
And do thou,
O Prince of the
Heavenly Host,
by the power of God,
cast into hell Satan
and all evil spirits
who roam the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.

**ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - NELSON BAY
PROMOTES SAFEGUARDING, WHICH INVOLVES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
PROACTIVE, COMMON SENSE AND PRACTICAL IDEAS THAT ENSURE THE SAFETY OF
CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS IN OUR COMMUNITY.
SAFEGUARDING PROMOTION: FOR ALL SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS WITHIN THE
PARISH, PLEASE CONTACT: FR. ANTHONY, DEACON GERARD AND
DIANNE MARICIC.**

**AN INVITATION TO OUR PARISH ASSEMBLY SATURDAY 31 OCTOBER 2026
(9.30AM -3.30PM)**

It has been many years since we last gathered for an Assembly, and much has changed in our parish, our community, and the world around us. Our Bishop Michael is encouraging all parishes to connect in prayer, conversation, and reflection on our future direction. A gathering such as this invites us to reflect on our current parish life, celebrate our blessings, and discern together the path God is calling us to follow. Whether you have been part of the parish for many years, have joined us more recently, attend regularly or only occasionally, you are part of our story and you are warmly invited to participate. Through prayer, storytelling, and conversation, we will listen to one another and explore our hopes and dreams for the future. The day will include a briefing from Fr Matthew Muller (Vicar General) on our financial status and the opportunities/challenges that present themselves at this time. I have accepted the support of the diocesan *Mission & Evangelisation* team who will ensure that we have a handful of concrete local actions moving forward. With your support I hope to see a renewed Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council who can lead the inspiration and implementation. Please save the date and consider how you might invite those who will actively contribute now and into the future. Your voice matters and your presence will enrich our important conversations as we discern together the kind of parish we are being called to become. Stay tuned for more information and opportunities to contribute to the planning

VOCATIONS MINISTRY: TURNING DREAMS INTO ACTION

Would you like to play a part in actively encouraging and supporting vocations to the ministerial priesthood, the permanent diaconate, and the consecrated religious life.

If so, you are invited to a meeting to consider establishing a Serra Club in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. This local club would be a member of Serra International, a world-wide organisation, affirmed by the Holy See, which is committed to vocations ministry. This initiative has the support of Bishop Michael.

The meeting will take place on Thursday, 24 September, at 7.00pm, in the Function Room of St Mary of the Cross Parish Hub, 7 Milson Street, Charlestown.

For more information and to lodge your RSVP, please contact the Diocesan Director of Vocations, Fr Anthony Potts (0466 140 066, or email to tony.potts@mn.catholic.org.au).

SAFEGUARDING IN OUR PARISH MEANS ...

St Michael's Catholic Parish – Nelson Bay holds that children, young people and vulnerable adults are a gift from God with an intrinsic right to dignity of life, respect and security from physical and emotional harm. They are to be treasured, nurtured and safeguarded. In line with the Safeguarding Policy of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, our parish has zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and is committed to safeguarding all who interact with the parish through our activities, ministries and services, especially children and adults at risk.

NEXT SUNDAY

**25th Sunday in
Ordinary Time
Year A**

First Reading

Isaiah 55:6-9

Responsorial Psalm

The Lord is near to all
who call him.

Second Reading

Philippians 1:20-24. 27

Gospel

Matthew 20:1-16

PRAYERS PLEASE

In your mercy, please pray for those who have died recently: Anthony Gatt and those whose anniversaries occur around this time: Pacifico Mardo, Edith Irish Paton and for the sick in our parish: Gloria Reyes, Solomon Keys, Ben Hughes, Stephen Ogilvie, Peter Collins, Ron Finch, Damien Brinley, Robyn Harris, Lorraine McCourt, Justin Fox, Joe Garreffa, Brenda and Brian Tucker, Sarlic Trumbli, Clemente Quinajon, David Berkeley, Anna Tan, Johny and Alexander Vella and David Campbell.

Masses will be offered on request. Due to privacy laws, names of the sick and deceased can only be put in the bulletin with the permission of the immediate family.

Names on the Sick List will be removed after 4 weeks unless otherwise advised.

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Safeguarding Sunday 2026: 'Love Protects'

Catholics around Australia will mark Safeguarding Sunday on September 13.

The 2026 theme "Love Protects" recognises that safeguarding is a practical expression of Christian love.

When communities prioritise the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults, they embody the love and care that is at the heart of the Gospel.

"'Love Protects' reminds us that genuine love is demonstrated through action," said chair of the Bishops Commission for Professional Standards and Safeguarding, Bishop Greg Bennet.

"Safeguarding is an essential part of our mission and ministry. It calls each of us to be attentive, accountable and committed to ensuring that every person can participate in the life of the Church safely and with confidence."

Safeguarding Sunday also provides an opportunity to acknowledge the work of clergy, staff, volunteers and safeguarding leaders who work to foster cultures of safety and trust throughout church communities.

Their dedication strengthens the Church's commitment to preventing harm, responding appropriately to concerns and promoting the dignity of every person.

The Church is showing national leadership in safeguarding through:

- Professional development that strengthens the capacity of Catholic organisations
- Reviews, audits and assessments of Catholic organisations
- Management of the Australian Catholic Ministry Register

- Safeguarding awareness, education and communications initiatives

As faith communities gather to mark Safeguarding Sunday, they are encouraged to reflect on the example of Jesus, who welcomed and protected the vulnerable and marginalised. His ministry inspires the Church's commitment to care, respect, and justice.

“Love protects when we listen. Love protects when we act. Love protects when we place the wellbeing of others at the centre of our decisions and our ministry,” Bishop Bennet said.

“Together, we can build communities where every person is valued, respected and safe.”

ENDS

Vocations Ministry: Turning Dreams into Action

**A meeting to organise a club to promote vocations to the ministerial priesthood,
the permanent diaconate, and the consecrated (religious) life in the
Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle**

Would you like to play a part in actively encouraging and supporting vocations? If so, I invite you to a meeting to consider establishing a Serra Club in our diocese. This local club would be a member of Serra International, a world-wide organisation, affirmed by the Holy See, which is committed to vocations ministry. This initiative has the support of our Bishop, Michael Kennedy. To learn more, please take a flyer at the church entrance.

The meeting will be on Thursday, 24 September, at 7pm, in the Function Room of St Mary of the Cross Parish Hub, 7 Milson Street, Charlestown.

To RSVP and for further information, please contact the Director of Vocations:

Fr Anthony Potts

M: 0466 140 066

E: tony.potts@mn.catholic.org.au

When did Serra start?

The first Serra Club was established on the 27 February 1935 in Seattle, Washington USA and there are now over 500 Serra Clubs in 30 countries with over 12,000 members. The first meeting in Australia was held in February 1968 with Clubs formally Chartered in Sydney and Melbourne in January 1970.

When do Clubs meet?

Serra Clubs usually meet once each month although some meet more often. A typical Club meeting includes Mass, a light meal and refreshments, a short formal meeting, guest speaker followed by a topical discussion and adjournment with prayer.

Membership of Serra

Membership is open to all practicing Catholic men and women and permanent deacons. As we all share the responsibility of providing ordained ministers for our communities, membership can help us to fulfil our obligations.

How can I find out more about Serra and the life of Saint Junipero Serra?

Please visit these websites:

www.scanzspac.org

www.serrainternational.org

How can I join Serra?

Please contact the President of your local Serra Club:

Bendigo

Email: tomtomfallon@gmail.com
Telephone: Tom Fallon: 0448 188 343

Melbourne

Email: jshort@ashfordfp.com.au
Telephone: John Short: 0488 663 762

Oakleigh Deanery Melbourne

Telephone: Vincent O'Brien 03 9557 4040
Sale

Email: forestbren@gmail.com

Telephone: Brenda Burditt 0407 441 995

Canberra

Email: psupple@atlasbiz.com.au
Telephone: Pat Supple 02 6286 5952

North Shore Sydney

Email: terry_scanlan@bigpond.com
Telephone: Terry Scanlan 0438 887 295

Wagga Wagga

Email: andrewkennedy615@gmail.com
Telephone: Andrew 0428 475 869

Prayer for Vocations

Heavenly Father, we praise You for Your

goodness and thank You for Your gifts

Help us respond to and live out our

mission in the Church. Assist all Your

people to know their vocation in life and

help them to prepare for it

Call many to be priests, deacons and

consecrated men and women for Your

greater glory, and for the service of Your people

Give those whom You call the grace to

respond generously and to persevere faithfully.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Amen



SERRA VOCATIONS MINISTRY

VOCATIONS!

IS GOD CALLING

YOU

TO MAKE

A DIFFERENCE

IN

VOCATIONS MINISTRY?

The role of Serra International as a worldwide lay organisation committed to vocations ministry is affirmed by the Holy See.

What do we do?

Our Serra Club works with their Arch/Bishop and their Vocations Director to encourage and support vocations to the ministerial priesthood, the permanent diaconate and the consecrated life.

Serrans pray daily for new vocations to the priesthood, the diaconate and the consecrated life and for the perseverance of existing vocations. We also encourage others to pray daily for vocations and to attend an extra Mass, Adoration or pray a Rosary one day each month especially for vocations.

Other activities include: organising Parish Vocations Coordinators, visits to seminaries, arranging speakers on topics of importance for Catholics, appreciation dinners for priests, deacons and consecrated men and women, celebrating milestones with seminarians and support for retired priests.

On the last Saturday of each month Serra members around the world say the Rosary especially for vocations. Rosary prayer rings are provided for members and friends of Serra who like to walk and say the Rosary.

Recent special activity:

Arranging for the Chalices and Paten of retired Bishop David Waker to be refurbished on the 60th anniversary of his priesthood.

Our Objectives/Mission

To foster and promote vocations to the ministerial priesthood of the Catholic Church as a particular vocation to service and to support priests in their sacred ministry.

To encourage and affirm vocations to the diaconate and the consecrated life in the Catholic Church and

To assist its members to recognise and respond in their own lives to God's call to holiness in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

Future Activities

- Continue to work closely with our Arch/Bishop and our Vocations Director
- Encourage the establishment of new Serra Clubs and increased membership of existing clubs
- Continue to celebrate seminarian milestones
- Continue to attend and celebrate all ordinations
- Continue to arrange annual Christmas dinners for all those with a Church vocation
- Encourage the appointment of Vocations Coordinators in all parishes to:
 - ◊ Increase participation in adoration and prayers for vocations
 - ◊ Increase support for Vocations Awareness Week activities
 - ◊ Encourage regular featuring of vocations prayers in the prayers of the faithful
 - ◊ Encourage priests to speak about their love for their vocation
 - ◊ Support the introduction of Priesthood Sunday activities

Our Name

A Franciscan missionary Saint Junipero Serra was the 18th century founder of a string of Californian mission stations. Like Father Serra, the Serrans of today put faith into action. Whether through meetings, vocational programs, or personal involvement in school, parish and diocesan activities, Serrans accept the challenge of fostering vocations and encouraging spiritual growth.

Our Inspiration

Father Serra's missions were established along El Camino Real, which linked his Church-centered communities up and down the California coastline. By linking clubs throughout the world, Serra International supports all Clubs in their mission. Father Serra's motto was:

"Always go forward and never turn back"



Saint Junipero Serra 1713-1784, was canonised in Washington DC by the Holy Father Pope Francis, on 23rd September 2015. His feast day is celebrated on 1st July.

Safeguarding National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

https://www.acsltd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/National-Catholic-Safeguarding-Standards-Edition-2_FINAL_December2022.pdf

Our Commitment

Saint Michael's Catholic Parish Nelson Bay Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is committed to the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable persons. We are committed to creating a safe environment for children and vulnerable persons within our Parish and its ministries.

We unhesitatingly endorse and adopt the Safeguarding Commitment Statement made by the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, a copy of which can be found in the narthex, or entrance, to our church.

The Rights of the Child

As with all peoples, children have human rights across the full spectrum of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Because children are recognised as having particular inherent needs and dependencies, they also have particular rights.

Both the Commonwealth of Australia and the Vatican (Holy See) ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in November 1990. This is the central international instrument that underpins both Australia's and the Church's approach to safeguarding children. The Australian Human Rights Commission's child-friendly summary of children's rights states that children have the right to:

1. be treated fairly no matter what
2. have a say about decisions affecting them
3. live and grow up healthy
4. have people do what is best for them
5. know who they are and where they come from
6. believe what they want
7. privacy
8. find out information and express themselves

9. be safe
10. be cared for and have a home
11. education, play and cultural activities
12. help and protection if they need it.

The Office of Safeguarding

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promoting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults — particularly those who participate in the life of the Diocese as part of our faith communities in parishes, in our diocesan systemic schools, early education centres and out-of-school hours care service, as part of our welfare and community services through CatholicCare and other diocesan ministries.

The Office of Director of Safeguarding has been established by decree, issued by the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle.

The Office of Safeguarding is an integral part of the Diocese, reporting directly to the Bishop's Office. The Office of Safeguarding is placed outside the Diocese's services, programmes and parishes, overseeing their safeguarding standards in operation. The Office of Safeguarding works with NSW Police, the Office of the Children's Guardian, the Department of Community and Justice and other statutory authorities and specialist authorities within the Catholic Church in Australia to fulfil its responsibilities and maximise the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

The Office of Safeguarding supports the Diocese, as an institution of the Catholic Church in Australia, to promote and uphold the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For more information on the Office of Safeguarding, and to access a range of safeguarding material, visit the [Office of Safeguarding website](https://www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au/).
<https://www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au/>

Safeguarding Resources

[Child protection padlet for Primary Students](https://padlet.com/childprotection/resources-for-primary-school-students-ta8uzzgbz8vkvu0) <https://padlet.com/childprotection/resources-for-primary-school-students-ta8uzzgbz8vkvu0>

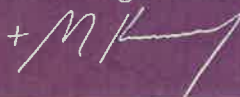
[Child protection padlet for high school students](https://padlet.com/childprotection/resources-for-high-school-students-nh1jukq19j6cby33) <https://padlet.com/childprotection/resources-for-high-school-students-nh1jukq19j6cby33>

[Child protection padlet for parents, carers, and teachers](https://padlet.com/childprotection/resources-for-parents-carers-jqddlxahc0zswvk4)
<https://padlet.com/childprotection/resources-for-parents-carers-jqddlxahc0zswvk4>



Our commitment

As the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle I expect us all to be attentive to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child and vulnerable person in everything we do in the name of the Church. Each one of us is responsible to ensure we are aware of the signs of abuse, that we know how to respond to a disclosure of abuse and we know how to report our concerns. Most importantly, I require every worker in the Diocese to be prepared, should the situation ever arise, to call out the unsafe or abusive behaviour of colleagues and workmates. The conduct we walk past is the conduct we have condoned.



The Diocese is committed to:

- ▶ Fostering communities of safeguarding, including open and respectful communication about issues of safeguarding with individuals, families and groups
- ▶ Upholding the dignity and rights of all children and vulnerable persons and empowering them to have their voices heard
- ▶ Training all workers in safeguarding knowledge and skills including indicators of abuse, supporting people to disclose abuse and reporting abuse
- ▶ Working closely with statutory authorities to report alleged abuse and support them to investigate those allegations
- ▶ Developing our risk assessment and management systems for all diocesan activities and personnel
- ▶ Developing the breadth and depth of our auditing and compliance regimes
- ▶ Implementing and maintaining compliance with the NSW Child Safe Standards and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

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Pope Francis has called all of us in the Catholic Church “to assume responsibility for preventing cases of abuse and to work for justice and for healing”. I now amplify and specify the Pope’s message. The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle takes a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. Every one of us must each day commit ourselves individually and collectively to safeguard each child and every vulnerable person to whom we minister and interact with.

MOST REV BISHOP MICHAEL KENNEDY



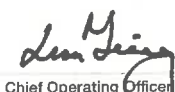
Vicar General & Chancellor
Fr Matthew Muller



Vicar General
Fr Greg Barker



Chief Executive Officer
Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
Sean Scanlon



Chief Operating Officer
Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
Lisa Tierney



Director
CatholicCare Social Services Hunter-Manning
Gary Christensen



Head of
Catholic Schools
Steven Lemos



Director of
Safeguarding
Sean Tynan



Director
Pastoral Ministries
Teresa Brierley



Executive Director
St Nicholas Early Education
David Healy



SAFEGUARDING IN OUR SCHOOLS

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle represents the Catholic Church in a region extending from Lake Macquarie to Taree and as far inland as Merriwa and Murrurundi. The Diocese supports and oversees almost 60 schools employing thousands of staff, engaging with many thousands of volunteers and educating over 20,000 students.

The schools of Maitland-Newcastle strive to be supportive environments where every student has an opportunity to grow academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally. Catholic schools are committed to being safe places for all children and vulnerable persons. Staff and volunteers undergo the appropriate screening checks, safeguarding training, other induction processes and ongoing formation and training to maximise child safe practices across our schools.

Diocesan schools display safeguarding material, including poster sized commitment statements (set out over the page), child-friendly safeguarding information, contact details for reporting abuse as well as brochures providing specific safeguarding information and guidance.

Many schools in Maitland-Newcastle have one or more dedicated '*promoters of safeguarding*' who support the local school community to address the ongoing issues of compliance to the safeguarding standards set by both Church and the NSW government.

The Office of Safeguarding supports diocesan schools:

- ▶ with the provision of an intake service that analyses concerns for children and vulnerable persons, providing advice and support to school staff and parents, ensuring statutory reporting obligations are met and ensuring appropriate follow up to complaints, when warranted
- ▶ with the provision of direct support and advice to school personnel and the provision of templates, tools and other resources for schools to use to promote compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and NSW Child Safe Standards
- ▶ by coordinating the diocesan wide *Promoters of Safeguarding* Network for school promoters
- ▶ by providing both face-to-face and online safeguarding training for all school personnel
- ▶ by conducting investigations of school staff who are alleged to have abused a child or vulnerable person, or breached their professional standards
- ▶ by undertaking risk assessments and helping develop risk management plans for individual students or other members of the school community assessed as posing a *real and appreciable risk* to children or vulnerable persons in the school.

Parish

Reporting Obligations



Clergy, staff and volunteers who work in parishes have reporting obligations related to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable persons. These reporting obligations exist to protect children and vulnerable persons from abuse or other harm that may occur while they are in the care of the organisation or elsewhere. Reports often need to be made to more than one agency, as the following chart explains.

NSW Police Force  Make a report to police if the matter involves conduct towards a child that you suspect may be criminal in nature. For emergencies call 000 For police assistance and general enquiries call 131 444 	Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)  Communities & Justice Make a report to DCJ if you suspect a child is at risk of significant harm. Types of abuse include neglect, sexual, physical and emotional. Call the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 	Reportable Conduct Scheme  Office of the Children's Guardian The Office of Safeguarding is responsible for notifying the OCG of any reportable allegations against staff, certain volunteers and contractors within 7 working days. 	Catholic Church Obligations  Vos Estis Lux Mundi says that the lay faithful can but clergy must promptly report allegations of abuse against a child or vulnerable person to the Bishop, through the Office of Safeguarding (refer right). Allegations against clergy are reported to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF). If the alleged abuse involves an Ordinary or you are otherwise concerned, you may refer the complaint to Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd. 	Organisational Reporting Obligation  Report all matters to the Office of Safeguarding by calling 4979 1390 or emailing childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au or via the Report Abuse Function on our website. officeofsafeguarding.org.au 
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If you're not sure if you need to make a report, please speak with your Parish Priest/Leader as a priority or contact the Office of Safeguarding on 4979 1390 or email childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au



Safeguarding audit report for the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

Media Statement: Safeguarding audit report for the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
28 February 2024

A rigorous safeguarding audit of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has assessed a 98 per cent compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) according to the audit report published by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) today.

Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle, the Most Reverend Michael Kennedy asked that the audit be particularly rigorous. ACSL partnered with Prolegis Lawyers, an independent legal firm, in the audit. Thirty-four per cent of the Diocese's parishes were visited as were three schools and the Diocese's head offices. Over 100 people were also interviewed.

The ACSL-Prolegis audit of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle found that 96 (98 per cent) out of the 98 relevant indicators were 'Developed and Embedded' or 'Developed'.

The auditors made seven recommendations to improve safeguarding practices within the Diocese. These recommendations were accepted in full by the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, and work has already commenced on implementing them. Audit recommendations are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation. There are no Priority 1 (high priority) recommendations for the Diocese.

ACSL Chief Executive Officer, Dr Ursula Stephens, said that the audit demonstrated that the Diocese has comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures. She acknowledged the efforts of the Diocesan safeguarding personnel to ensure that policies were being met in practice.

"Without doubt, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle demonstrates it is committed to addressing the Church's sad history in this area. Across the Diocese and in every

Ministry, strong safeguarding practices are evident. Our recommendations for improvement reflect the contemporary aspects of safeguarding regulation, and, given the far-reaching commitment to safeguarding demonstrated, I expect these protocols will soon be addressed," said Dr Stephens.

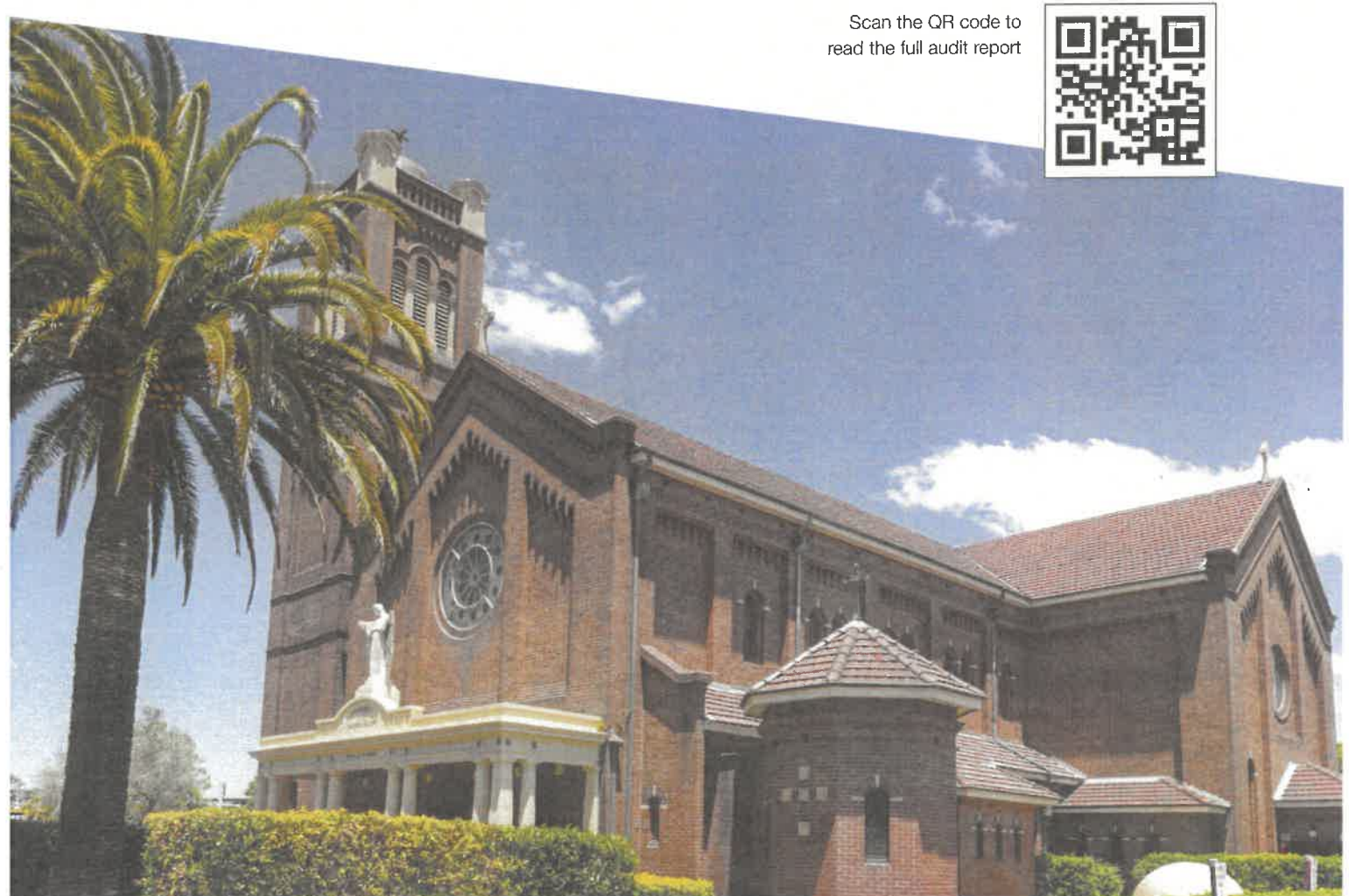
The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle comprises 38 parishes in the Hunter-Manning region with 66 active or retired clergy, over 5,500 paid staff operating from more than 100 locations and more than 5,000 volunteers undertaking a variety of ministries within the Diocese. The Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle is Michael Kennedy, installed on 17 March 2023.

Bishop Kennedy said that he was particularly pleased with the auditors' summary judgement that said that "the Diocese is successfully implementing and embedding a culture of safeguarding throughout its organisation."

Bishop Kennedy also said "There is more to do. As Bishop, I assure you that over the coming years the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will maintain its current momentum and will continue to refine and improve our safeguarding knowledge and practices, so that the safeguarding of each child and every vulnerable person is a wholly integrated and intrinsic part of everything that we do in our Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle."

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 and vulnerable people across the Catholic Church in Australia.

Scan the QR code to
read the full audit report



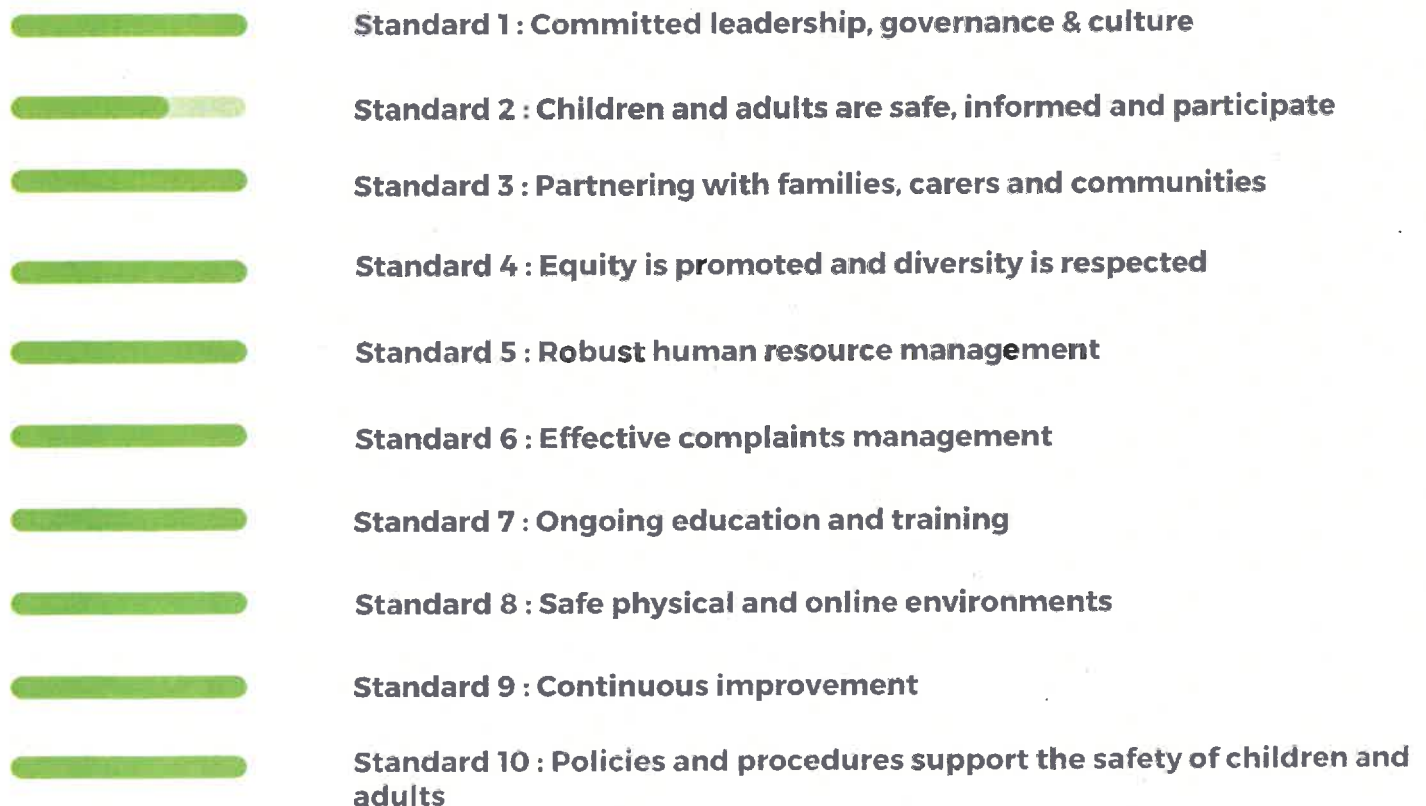
Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

NCSS Overview



The audit activities of Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd and Prolegis Lawyers found that the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has demonstrated compliance with 98 per cent of the indicators relevant to their operations under the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Edition 2 (NCSS). This means that implementation of 96 out of a possible 98 indicators were either progressed or substantially progressed when reviewed against our compliance assessment scale.

As a full audit entity, the Diocese was assessed against Standards 1-10 of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Edition 2, assessing safeguarding compliance for both children and adults at risk. Here are the results against each Standard, showing the degree to which the requirements of each Standard have been implemented. A fully dark green line shows where the standard has been assessed as implemented, while a light green line indicates where there is still progress to be made in order to fully embed the Standard:



This safeguarding audit was conducted by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd and Prolegis Lawyers between October 2023 - January 2024 and assessed compliance against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Edition 2. The NCSS seek to build a culture of shared responsibility for safeguarding and to ensure that policies, practices and codes of behaviour work in unison to prevent, detect and respond appropriately to potential or actual incidents of abuse.

In this context, the audit processes we have undertaken are intended to provide reasonable assurance that safeguarding controls have been designed appropriately and are operating effectively. Accordingly, our review provides a point-in-time assessment of the safeguarding practices implemented by the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and the extent of its compliance with the requirements of the NCSS.

The ACSL certification represents a three-year partnership with organisations to support continuous improvement. This certification is valid until January 2027.

Our commitment

As the Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle I expect us all to be attentive to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child and vulnerable person in everything we do in the name of the Church. Each one of us is responsible to ensure we are aware of the signs of abuse, that we know how to respond to a disclosure of abuse and we know how to report our concerns. Most importantly, I require every worker in the Diocese to be prepared, should the situation ever arise, to call out the unsafe or abusive behaviour of colleagues and workmates. The conduct we walk past is the conduct we have condoned.

+ M Kennedy

The Diocese is committed to:

- ▶ Fostering communities of safeguarding, including open and respectful communication about issues of safeguarding with individuals, families and groups
- ▶ Upholding the dignity and rights of all children and vulnerable persons and empowering them to have their voices heard
- ▶ Training all workers in safeguarding knowledge and skills including indicators of abuse, supporting people to disclose abuse and reporting abuse
- ▶ Working closely with statutory authorities to report alleged abuse and support them to investigate those allegations
- ▶ Developing our risk assessment and management systems for all diocesan activities and personnel
- ▶ Developing the breadth and depth of our auditing and compliance regimes
- ▶ Implementing and maintaining compliance with the NSW Child Safe Standards and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

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Pope Francis has called all of us in the Catholic Church "to assume responsibility for preventing cases of abuse and to work for justice and for healing". I now amplify and specify the Pope's message. The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle takes a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. Every one of us must each day commit ourselves individually and collectively to safeguard each child and every vulnerable person to whom we minister and interact with.

MOST REV BISHOP MICHAEL KENNEDY

[Signature]
Vicar General & Chancellor
Fr Matthew Mules

[Signature]
Vicar General
Fr Greg Barker

[Signature]
Chief Executive Officer
Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
Sean Scanlon

[Signature]
Chief Operating Officer
Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
Liam Tierney

[Signature]
Director
CatholicCare Social Services Hunter-Manning
Gail Christopher

[Signature]
Head of
Catholic Schools
Steven Louisa

[Signature]
Director of
Safeguarding
Sean Tyrna

[Signature]
Director
Pastoral Ministries
Teresa Buckley

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Executive Director
St Nicholas Early Education
David Healy