

2025 Executive Summary

Three yearly External Review of Christchurch Diocese by the National Office for Professional Standards (NOPS)

The progress made since the previous external safeguarding review in 2021 is indication of the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch's commitment to continuing to build a strong safeguarding culture in both its diocesan centre and in the parishes and entities for which it is responsible. The development of this culture is more evident in some parishes and entities than in others. Progress has occurred across all five standards outlined in Standards for Creating and Maintaining a Safeguarding Culture.

Key staff within the diocesan centre have played an important part in this progress. Diocesan leadership have expressed their commitment to continuous improvement and have allocated resources to support it. The experienced safeguarding officer has implemented the recommendations of the 2021 external review in a planned and strategic response.

Diocesan leadership acknowledge the challenges in connecting with local iwi and ensuring that Māori are active partners in decision-making processes related to safeguarding. There will continue to be an emphasis on consultation with local iwi on appropriate use of te reo and practices that value local tikanga. This is also an area of development in Christchurch parishes.

At the diocesan level, the current emphasis placed on review for development and regular safeguarding reporting processes will ensure that progress is sustained within the curia. At the parish level, however, there is some variability in commitment to building strong safeguarding cultures. Although most parishes respond positively to recommendations made in external review reports, accountability processes following diocesan reviews could be strengthened to ensure all parishes are making progress in safeguarding.

The development of written 'business as usual' safeguarding procedures for all five safeguarding standards would ensure sustainability of best practice for both current and future diocesan staff.

During a time of great change in its physical environment, the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch has worked hard to establish safeguarding policies and procedures and is now well placed to sustain these good practices and deepen their application so that there is consistency across all parishes and entities in the diocese.