

Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017: Report of the diocesan audit of the Diocese of Tasmania

November 2025

1 Executive summary

In 2017, the Synod of the Diocese of Tasmania adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 (the **Canon**).

The Canon contains national minimum standards for safe ministry to children in the Anglican Church of Australia, including:

- a national code of conduct that sets out behavioural expectations for ministry with children,
- standards for the screening and training of clergy, and church workers engaged in ministry to children, and
- standards for safe ministry with persons of concern.

The Canon also provides for an audit of compliance by each diocese with the Canon to occur at least once every three years. This audit is referred to as the diocesan audit.

The purpose of this report is to set out the findings of the diocesan audit of the Diocese of Tasmania.

We wish to extend thanks to the officers of the Diocese of Tasmania, particularly Annette Sims, Alan Reader and Tamara Auld, for their assistance over the course of the diocesan audit.

The format of the report follows the standards set out in the Canon. Under each, we set out our findings in respect of our policy assessment of the policies and procedures in place in the Diocese of Tasmania that give effect to the standards in the Canon.

We also set out the results of our material compliance assessment, which is an assessment of whether the Diocese of Tasmania has in practice complied with the standards in the Canon in the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 (the **audit period**).

The approach by the Diocese of Tasmania to compliance with the Canon is informed by the legislative context in which they operate and the administrative systems available to implement and monitor the standards. Where possible this has been taken into account.

For more information about the approach to undertaking the diocesan audit see the document titled 'Diocesan audit framework' dated 27 February 2020 (the **Audit Framework**). For a glossary of terms used throughout this report please see **Annexure A**.

Diocesan code of conduct

In Part 2 of this report, we have assessed whether any 'diocesan code of conduct' of the Diocese of Tasmania contains additional standards or guidelines that are inconsistent with the prescribed code of conduct or any equivalent code of conduct.

We reviewed the version of Faithfulness in Service in effect in the Diocese.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Tasmania does not have any diocesan codes of conduct that contain additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the prescribed code of conduct.

Standards of screening

In Part 3 of this report, we have assessed the policy position of the Diocese of Tasmania against the standards of screening.

The Diocese of Tasmania conducts additional screening of those subject to the standards of screening in the form of police checks, including for those people who are otherwise required to hold a working with children check.

The policies and procedures in place in the Diocese of Tasmania:

- address all of the categories of worker covered by the standards of screening,
- assign responsibility to identified persons to monitor compliance with the standards of screening,
- include a mechanism whereby information about the standards of screening is reported centrally,
- include information about record keeping practices,
- include a system of ongoing monitoring of the screening that has occurred, and
- set out consequences for non-compliance with the standards.

The Diocese of Tasmania requires that candidates for ordination undergo a medical assessment based on a risk assessment relating to the candidate's proposed role and the outcome of the candidate's psychological assessment. We consider this a cogent reason for departing from the standards of screening for candidates for ordination.

One of the advantages of the Canon being widely adopted in the Anglican Church of Australia is the ability to share screening information between Dioceses.

The Diocese of Tasmania provides an exemption for clergy and church workers providing screening information directly to the Diocese where they have been screened in accordance with the Canon by another diocese who shares information with the Diocese of Tasmania.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Tasmania currently has policies and procedures in place that give effect to the standards of screening.



The Diocese of Tasmania does not have any policies and procedures in place that contain additional standards that are inconsistent with the standards of screening.



The Diocese of Tasmania has procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of screening.

Also in Part 3, we have assessed whether the Diocese of Tasmania has complied with the standards of screening in practice throughout the audit period based on the information provided to us by the Diocese of Tasmania.

The following matters are relevant to the findings made in the material compliance assessment:

- the assessment is not an assessment of whether the Diocese of Tasmania has complied with the *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013* (Tas.) as there may be differences between the appointment dates we are assessing and the date someone was first engaged in a regulated activity within the meaning of that act,
- the findings reflect the levels of compliance with the standards of screening in the Diocese of Tasmania during the audit period,
- the standards of screening require that steps occur 'prior to' appointment and accordingly non-compliance does not mean that the screening step has not occurred at all, and
- the material compliance assessment is based on the information available at the time of conducting the diocesan audit, and there may be further information available which would change these results.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening candidates for ordination in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening clergy licensed in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening licensed, authorised or paid church workers engaged in ministry to children engaged in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening safe ministry personnel and professional standards personnel in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

We have also undertaken an assessment of all other current clergy, and church workers engaged in ministry to children to determine if they have a working with vulnerable people check (if required) or a police check.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening all other clergy licensed outside the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening all other current licensed, authorised, paid or volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children outside the audit period, in accordance with the Canon.

As part of our assessment we have identified that the Diocese of Tasmania should record the date that safe ministry assessments have occurred and who has conducted the safe ministry assessment in the relevant database. This information was otherwise able to be confirmed through an assessment of the practice of the Diocese of Tasmania in the audit period.

Overall, the high level of compliance reflects the resourcing that the Diocese of Tasmania has committed to this area. In particular, we consider that the Diocese of Tasmania has successfully integrated the standards of screening into a comprehensive screening system which is well resourced centrally.

Standards of training

In Part 4, we have reviewed the approach of the Diocese of Tasmania to providing accredited training.

The policies and procedures of the Diocese of Tasmania:

- require that the standards of training are complied with prior to clergy and church workers being appointed (or otherwise) to a ministry position,
- require that clergy or church workers not undertake ministry to children until they have been appropriately screened and trained, and
- assign responsibility to identified persons to monitor this and include mechanisms to report non-compliance by clergy and church workers.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Tasmania has policies and procedures in place that give effect to the standards of training.



The Diocese of Tasmania does not have policies and procedures that contain additional standards that are inconsistent with the standards of training.



The Diocese of Tasmania has procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of training.

Also in Part 4, we have assessed whether the Diocese of Tasmania has complied with the standards of training in practice throughout the audit period based on information provided to us by the Diocese of Tasmania.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in training candidates for ordination in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in training licensed clergy in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in training licensed, authorised or paid church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in training volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

There are high levels of completion of training in the Diocese of Tasmania.

During the audit period, the Diocese of Tasmania was transitioning training providers and so the records we have assessed were held across more than one database. Although this did not impact on the outcome of our assessment, we expect that the practical difficulty of multiple databases will resolve in the coming period as more people complete the new training package.

Standards of safe ministry with persons of concern

In Part 5, we have reviewed the approach of the Diocese of Tasmania to safe ministry with persons of concern.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Tasmania has standards and guidelines in place that give effect to the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern.



The Diocese of Tasmania does not have any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern.



The Diocese of Tasmania has procedures in place that effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese of the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance.

Also in Part 5, we have assessed whether the Diocese of Tasmania has complied with the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern in practice throughout the audit period based on information provided to us by the Diocese of Tasmania.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in managing persons of concern in accordance with the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern in the audit period.

Record keeping

We have considered primary source documents provided by the Diocese of Tasmania in accordance with the quality assurance process set out in the Audit Framework.

The Diocese of Tasmania was able to provide information quickly and there was a high level of completeness of information which the audit team considers is indicative of good record keeping practices. The Diocese maintains a central database of information which is regularly updated.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in keeping records with respect to the prescribed standards and guidelines in accordance with the Canon.

Conclusion

Overall, we conclude that the Diocese of Tasmania has adopted policies and procedures that give effect to the standards and guidelines in the Canon.

In terms of its material compliance, a particular strength of the Diocese of Tasmania has been the development of a systems-based approach to screening and training.

This system, and the related policy architecture, has put the Diocese of Tasmania in a strong position to maintain high-levels of completion of the relevant screening and training requirements into the future.

2 Background

The Diocese of Tasmania

Established in 1842, the Diocese of Tasmania is one of the 23 dioceses of the Anglican Church in Australia.

The Diocese of Tasmania encompasses the state of Tasmania.

The Diocese of Tasmania operates parish-based children's and youth ministry, which occurs mid-week and during public worship services on Sunday at many of its 44 parishes.

Some of the parish children's and youth ministries are large, and are supported by significant numbers of volunteer church workers.

Safe Church policy architecture

The policies and procedures discussed in this report relate primarily to the systems in place to promote awareness of any code of conduct, to monitor whether people are adequately screened and trained, and to ensure there are strategies in place to manage persons of concern.

In the Diocese of Tasmania, these policies and procedures are part of a broader safe church policy architecture that includes:

- a risk statement and framework for managing risk, which incorporates obligations around workplace safety and child safety,
- policies and procedures for responding to complaints of child sexual abuse, or sexual misconduct involving a child,
- policies in relation to other vulnerable people, including those who have experienced family and domestic violence, and

- redress options for those who have experienced abuse, including via:
 - the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse, and
 - a Diocesan Pastoral Support and Assistance Scheme (PSAAS), which is managed by the Diocese of Tasmania, and is not limited to those who have experienced child sexual abuse only.

Legislative context

In addition to their internal policies and procedures, the Diocese of Tasmania is subject to legislative obligations in force in Tasmania, including:

- *Registration to Work with Vulnerable Children Act 2013 (Tas.)*,
- *Registration to Work with Vulnerable Children Regulations 2024 (Tas.)*, and
- *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023 (Tas.)*

We discuss the interaction between these obligations and the standards in the Canon in further detail in Part 4 of this report.

The Canon

The object of the Canon is to prescribe a code of conduct and minimum standards and guidelines for safe ministry to children.

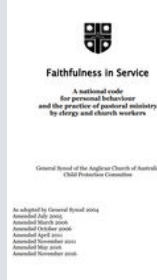
The Canon follows the previous commitments made by the General Synod:

- in 2004, to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare of all people, particularly within its own community (see the Safe Ministry Policy Statement), and
- in 2014, to promote a culture of safety throughout the church (see the Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion).

Diocesan audit

The Canon sets out that there will be a diocesan audit to be conducted at intervals of three years or less (as determined by the Standing Committee of General Synod).

Does any diocesan code of conduct contain additional standards or guidelines that are inconsistent with the **prescribed code of conduct** or any equivalent code of conduct?



Prescribed standards and guidelines

- Does the diocese have standards, and guidelines, that **give effect** to the **prescribed standards and guidelines**?
- Does the diocese have any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent?
- Does the diocese have in place procedures which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers, and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance?
- Have the procedures in all material respects been followed?
- Have accurate records been created and maintained?

The **diocesan audit** involves two kinds of assessment:

The first is an assessment of the policies and procedures of the diocese as compared with the **prescribed code of conduct** and **prescribed standards and guidelines** (the **Policy Assessment**).

The second is an assessment of material compliance with the **prescribed standards and guidelines** (the **Material Compliance Assessment**).

Public reporting of compliance with the standards set out in the Canon is one way in which the Diocese of Tasmania is accountable and transparent about the efforts made by it to improve child safe practices. The audit of adherence by the Diocese of Tasmania to the Canon:

- monitors whether the standards and guidelines set out in the Canon are being implemented,
- is a process to give effect to continuous review and improvement of child safe practices, and
- provides assurance to the public that the Diocese of Tasmania (as part of the Anglican Church of Australia) is committed to safe ministry to children.

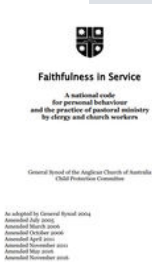
The diocesan audit is consistent with the encouragement of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse for religious organisations to publicly report on the implementation of, and compliance with, standards of safe ministry to children.

As acknowledged in the Audit Framework, each diocese may take a different approach to implementing the standards in the Canon. These approaches may be informed by the legislative context in which they operate, and the administrative systems available to implement and monitor the standards. Where possible we have accounted for these differences in the course of the diocesan audit.

3 Prescribed code of conduct

Prescribed code of conduct

Clergy and church workers in the Diocese of Tasmania (with limited exceptions) are bound to observe the prescribed code of conduct.



The prescribed code of conduct comprises sections 3 and 5 (read in conjunction with section 1 and section 2) of 'Faithfulness in Service: A national code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers' as amended in November 2016.

The prescribed code of conduct reflects the high standards of behaviour expected of clergy and church workers engaged in ministry to children across the Anglican Church of Australia.

Diocesan codes of conduct

As set out in Part 1 above, the diocesan audit involves an assessment as to whether any 'diocesan code of conduct' contains any additional standards or guidelines that are inconsistent with the prescribed code of conduct.

In short, a 'diocesan code of conduct' is any code of conduct relating to safe ministry to children which has been approved by the synod or diocesan council of a diocese. For most dioceses this will be the version of Faithfulness in Service a part of which constitutes the prescribed code of conduct.

Policy assessment

Faithfulness in Service

In 2017, the Synod of the Diocese of Tasmania adopted Faithfulness in Service as the diocesan code of conduct.

The diocesan code of conduct includes additional policy content, in the form of hyperlinks that direct the reader to diocesan policies and procedures, and explanatory statements which provide additional guidance in relation to disclosures and reporting obligations. This additional material does not create inconsistencies with the prescribed code of conduct.

The approach of the Diocese recognises that the material in the prescribed code of conduct includes significant policy guidance that might ordinarily be set out in a safe ministry policy.

Adding additional information around disclosures and reporting obligations ensure that the document is comprehensive. Further, the diocesan code of conduct is an instrument that all volunteers appointed to positions in the Diocese receive training on.

The relevant parts of the version of Faithfulness in Service currently in force in the Diocese of Tasmania are consistent with the prescribed code of conduct.



The version of Faithfulness in Service in force in the Diocese of Tasmania does not contain additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the prescribed code of conduct.

4 Standards of screening

Standards of screening

The standards of screening require that clergy and church workers undergo various screening steps prior to being appointed (or otherwise) to their role. For most clergy and church workers, the standards of screening provide that in order for a person to be appointed (or otherwise) they are required to:

- obtain a working with children check or working with vulnerable people check,
- if this is not required, then undergo a criminal history assessment or risk assessment, and
- undergo the following assessments:
 - a national register assessment,
 - a safe ministry assessment, and
 - where the person was previously authorised for ministry in another Province, diocese or denomination then a church ministry assessment may be required if not reasonably satisfied that this has previously been done.

The Canon limits the categories of church workers subject to the standards of screening to those who are engaged in ministry to children.

Some categories of worker are subject to higher screening standards due to the stage of ministry they are entering, with candidates for ordination as a deacon (sometimes referred to as ordinands) required to undergo a medical assessment and a psychological assessment.

Other categories of worker are subject to alternative screening processes which may also differ across jurisdictions, for example, volunteer church workers are eligible to hold conditional working with children checks or working with vulnerable people checks in jurisdictions other than Tasmania and only need to undergo a safe ministry assessment if they are over the age of 13. Volunteer church workers are not required to undergo a church ministry assessment and are not yet required to be subject to a national register assessment.

Likewise, safe ministry personnel and professional standards personnel, if they have not otherwise been required to be screened by virtue of being a member of clergy or a church worker, are required to undergo a national register assessment.

Definitions

In this report we use the following definitions from the Canon, although the screening step may be defined differently by the Diocese in its policies and procedures. For a glossary of defined terms see **Annexure A**.

church ministry assessment means a reasonable endeavour made to obtain information about the person from the responsible authority, and if obtained consideration of that information

medical assessment means consideration of a medical report of the person by a registered medical practitioner

national register assessment means a check whether there is any information about the person entered in the National Register, and if so consideration of that information

psychological assessment means consideration of a psychological report that includes an assessment of psychosexual maturity of the person by a registered psychologist

safe ministry assessment means consideration of the person's completed Safe Ministry Check, and if applicable referees' completed Safe Ministry Checks

Policy assessment

The diocesan audit is required to assess whether a diocese has:

- standards and guidelines that give effect to the standards of screening (unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so),
- any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the standards of screening, and
- procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of screening.

The policy position of the Diocese is that the Canon contains the primary obligations relating to screening, training and safe ministry with persons of concern.

The policies and procedures of the Diocese of Tasmania that give effect to the standards in the Canon are as follows:

- the Safe Church Communities Ordinance 2024 (the **SCC Ordinance**),
- the Ministry Licences Ordinance 2018 (the **Licensing Ordinance**),
- the Parish Administration Ordinance 2019 (the **Parish Ordinance**), and
- an internal PSU procedure document (**PSU Processes**).

We also refer to some other documents below which are subordinate forms to the policies and procedures, including the safe ministry check documents.

SCC Ordinance

The SCC Ordinance seeks to give effect to the standards and guidelines in the Canon.

The other objects of the SCC Ordinance include to:

- embed the Child and Youth Safe Standards into church life, and
- foster an environment, culture and systems within churches that make them safe places for children and young people.

In summary, the standards of screening contained in the SCC Ordinance are consistent with the standards in the Canon. The SCC Ordinance expressly references the standards of screening in the Canon.

The SCC Ordinance monitors adherence with the standards of screening by:

- establishing a system of screening that requires that a person be endorsed by a relevant officer of the Diocese prior to being permitted to engage in work covered by the Canon,
- requiring that a person go through pre-employment checks including police checks, working with children checks and referee checks for those with roles working with children prior to being endorsed,
- requiring renewal of the endorsement every three years,
- requiring ongoing disclosure of any issue relating to the fitness of a person to engage in that work,
- regulating the types of programs that parishes can provide to those approved by the incumbent of a parish, with programs required to provide a list of all team members,
- a risk management plan and other information relevant to the safety and wellbeing of participants, and
- setting out a system of internal audit of compliance with the SCC Ordinance.

The SCC Ordinance does not require that candidates for ordination undergo a medical assessment. The process for screening candidates for ordination is set out separately.

The Diocese of Tasmania has varied the requirement for candidates for ordination to obtain a medical assessment based on a risk assessment relating to the candidate's proposed role and the outcome of the candidate's psychological assessment. We consider this a cogent reason for departing from the standards of screening for candidates for ordination.

One of the advantages of the Canon being widely adopted in the Anglican Church of Australia is the ability to share screening information between Dioceses.

The Diocese of Tasmania provides an exemption for clergy and church workers providing screening information directly to the Diocese where they have been screened in accordance with the Canon by another diocese who shares information with the Diocese of Tasmania.

We have reviewed the relevant forms and are satisfied they accord with the forms referenced in the Canon. Accordingly, an assessment of those forms would constitute a safe ministry assessment within the meaning of the Canon.

Licensing Ordinance

The Licensing Ordinance requires that in order to be licensed a member of clergy must be endorsed pursuant to the SCC Ordinance.

Parish Ordinance

The regulations to the Parish Ordinance set out the role of Safe Church Communities Co-ordinator who is responsible for:

- the co-ordination and monitoring of all parishioners required to hold an endorsement under the SCC Ordinance,
- facilitating the requirements of the SCC Ordinance that relate to approved programs, and
- reporting on compliance with these obligations to parish council.

The Parish Ordinance also sets out that the consequences of failing to comply with the SCC Ordinance include that a parish has its boundaries or governance arrangements varied by the Diocesan Council.

PSU Processes

The PSU Processes document sets out the procedure for screening and training people prior to an endorsement being issued. The document is an internal document and confirms the steps involving in issuing an endorsement.

The PSU Processes document:

- identifies the relevant safe ministry assessment forms, referred to as a 'Safe Ministry Check',
- provides information about the approach of the Diocese of Tasmania to the practical arrangements for monitoring observance and responding to non-observance of clergy and church workers, and
- sets out the approach of the Diocese of Tasmania to adverse assessments.

In relation to each category of worker, the SCC Ordinance sets out as follows:

	Working with children check	National Police clearance	National register check	Safe ministry check	Medical assessment	Psychological assessment	Church ministry assessment
Candidates for ordination	✓		✓	✓			
Clergy (incl. Bishops)	✓		✓	✓			
Church workers (licenced, authorised and paid)	✓		✓	✓			
Church workers (volunteers)	✓		✓	✓			

✓ Consistent with the standards of screening in the Canon.

Table 1: Standards of screening in the Diocese of Tasmania

The Diocese of Tasmania has a policy position of conducting medical assessments for candidates for ordination where they identify a need to do so. This deviation is cogent and does not create an inconsistency with the standards of screening in the Canon. The Diocese of Tasmania has indicated that they will put this policy position in writing.

✓ The Diocese of Tasmania has procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of screening.

The following findings were made:

✓ The Diocese of Tasmania has policies and procedures in place that give effect to the standards of screening.

✓ The Diocese of Tasmania does not have any policies and procedures in place that contain additional standards that are inconsistent with the standards of screening.

Material Compliance Assessment

General

As part of the diocesan audit we are required to assess whether a diocese has followed its procedures in all material aspects and created and maintained records in a secure manner.

Assessment

As set out above, we have concluded that the Diocese of Tasmania has in place policies and procedures that give effect to the standards of screening in the Canon.

The Diocese of Tasmania was requested to provide information in relation to all categories of worker subject to the Canon and appointed after the audit period, as well as more limited information in relation to all other clergy and licensed authorised or paid church workers.

The diocesan audit has involved a quality assurance process as part of assessing the information provided. To do this we:

- requested access to the files of selected clergy and church workers to confirm that the information provided by the diocese is accurate,
- observed personnel of the Diocese of Tasmania navigating the relevant database in response to our enquiries,
- identified any inaccuracies in the information provided and confirmed this with personnel of the Diocese of Tasmania, and
- determined the impact, if any, that the quality assurance process has on our assessment of material compliance.

We have reviewed the information provided by the Diocese of Tasmania and there was a high degree of accuracy as between the information provided and the primary source information. This is also reflected in our assessment of the record keeping practices of the Diocese of Tasmania.

The Diocese of Tasmania was requested to provide information in relation to all categories of worker subject to the Canon and appointed during the audit period, as well as more limited information in relation to other clergy and licenced authorised or paid church workers.

We have been able to confirm the date clergy and paid church workers were licensed, engaged or appointed in the audit period.

For volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children, we were provided the date that an endorsement was issued as being the relevant date that they commenced in ministry.

We have been able to confirm the actual commencement date for a sample of volunteer church workers. For all other volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children, we have undertaken an assessment of the practice of the Diocese of Tasmania in the audit period. This included observing the systems in place, including the communication that occurs with applicants for endorsement, and with parishes. However, it is important to note that this is a limitation in the audit results.

As part of our assessment, we have identified that the Diocese of Tasmania should record the date that safe ministry assessments have occurred and who has conducted the safe ministry assessment in the relevant database. This information was otherwise able to be confirmed through an assessment of the practice of the Diocese of Tasmania in the audit period.

The audit team was advantaged by attending on site at the Diocesan Office and all queries were responded to by personnel of the Diocese of Tasmania in a comprehensive and timely way.

As part of our material compliance assessment the diocesan audit is required to consider matters that may also be legislative obligations for the Diocese.

It is important to note that the assessment of whether or not a diocese has complied with the standards of screening is not an assessment of whether or not they have complied with their legal obligations.

The standards of screening set out in the Canon require that individuals undergo screening 'prior to' appointment. The date of appointment will not always align with the date they formally commence in a role, which may be after the date of appointment.

The following matters are relevant to the findings made in the material compliance assessment:

- the findings reflect the levels of compliance with the standards of screening in the Diocese of Tasmania during the audit period,
- the standards of screening require that steps occur 'prior to' appointment and accordingly non-compliance does not mean that the screening step has not occurred at all,
- the material compliance assessment is based on the information available at the time of conducting the diocesan audit, and there may be further information available which would change these results, and
- the findings relating to volunteer church workers have involved some sampling and accordingly may not reflect the levels of compliance across all parishes in the Diocese of Tasmania.

Candidates for ordination

We have reviewed the information provided by the Diocese of Tasmania relating to candidates for ordination who were ordained to the diaconate in the audit period.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening candidates for ordination in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

Clergy

We have reviewed the information provided by the Diocese of Tasmania relating to the clergy who were issued a licence in the audit period.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening clergy licensed in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

We have also undertaken an assessment of all other current clergy to determine if they have a working with vulnerable people check (if required) or a police check.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening all other clergy licensed outside the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

Licensed, authorised and paid church workers engaged in ministry to children

We have reviewed information provided by the Diocese of Tasmania relating to people appointed as a licensed, authorised or paid church worker engaged in ministry to children in the audit period.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening licensed, authorised or paid church workers engaged in ministry to children engaged in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

Volunteer church workers

We have reviewed the information provided by the Diocese of Tasmania relating to volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

Church workers in the period

We have also undertaken an assessment of all other people appointed as a licensed, authorised, paid or volunteer church worker engaged in ministry to children to determine if they have a working with vulnerable people check (if required) or a police check.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening all other current licensed, authorised, paid or volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children outside the audit period, in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in keeping records with respect to the standards of screening in the Canon

Safe ministry personnel and professional standards personnel

We have reviewed the information provided by the Diocese of Tasmania relating to safe ministry personnel or professional standards personnel were appointed in the audit period.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in screening safe ministry personnel and professional standards personnel in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

Record keeping

The standards of screening require that the Diocese of Tasmania keeps accurate and complete records of the screening of clergy and church workers, and that these records are created and maintained in a secure manner.

We have considered primary source documents provided by the Diocese of Tasmania in accordance with the quality assurance process set out in the Audit Framework. The Diocese of Tasmania had a high level of completeness of information provided which the audit team considers is indicative of good record keeping practices.

5 Standards of training

Standards of training

The standards of training require clergy and church workers who engage in ministry to children to undergo accredited training in the three years prior to being appointed (or otherwise).

Training is 'accredited training' if it includes the course content set out in the Safe Ministry National Training Benchmarks and is delivered by people who are accredited, or via online training that is accredited, by the diocesan safe ministry authority.

Alternatively, accredited training could be provided by another Church body or organisation that the diocesan safe ministry authority has determined equivalent.

The standards of training do not apply to those who were appointed (or otherwise) prior to 1 January 2018 (as they were not subject to the Canon at the time this occurred).

However, the standards require that after 1 January 2021 all clergy, and church workers who engage in ministry to children, have received accredited training in the last three years.

Policy assessment

The diocesan audit is required to assess whether a diocese has:

- standards and guidelines that give effect to the standards of training (unless there were cogent reasons for not doing so),
- any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the standards of training, and
- procedures in place that effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of training.

For the standards of training, we are also required to assess whether the training is 'accredited', meaning whether it incorporates the content set out in the Safe Ministry Training National Benchmarks.

The Diocese of Tasmania has authorised the use of the following training:

- ChildSafe training modules, augmented by a training module on Faithfulness in Service developed by the Diocese of Tasmania;
- The Ridley Certificate in Child Safety by Ridley College; and
- Australian Childhood Foundation training modules.

Accordingly, on the basis that these training programs are accredited by the diocesan safe ministry authority, we conclude the training constitutes 'accredited training' within the meaning of the Canon.

We have considered their content and observe that they largely address the Safe Ministry Training National Benchmarks. We encourage these training modules to be supplemented by a specific module targeted to the circumstances of the Diocese of Tasmania.

The policies and procedures of the Diocese of Tasmania that give effect to the standards in the Canon are as follows:

- the SCC Ordinance, and
- the PSU Processes.

SC Ordinance

The SCC Ordinance requires all church workers to complete accredited training within three years prior to endorsement, in order to be eligible for an endorsement. Training must be renewed at intervals of not less than three years.

The SCC Ordinance sets out what constitutes accredited training at Schedule 2 to the SCC Ordinance.

PSU Processes

The PSU Processes describe a process by which training occurs as part of endorsing someone for ministry with children.



The Diocese of Tasmania has policies and procedures in place that give effect to the standards of training.



The Diocese of Tasmania does not have any policies and procedures that contain additional standards that are inconsistent with the standards of training in the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the Diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of training.

Material Compliance Assessment

General

The audit team has requested that the Diocese of Tasmania provide us training information in relation to all candidates for ordination, clergy, licensed, authorised or paid church workers and volunteer church workers appointed (or otherwise) in the audit period.

Assessment

During the audit period, the Diocese of Tasmania was transitioning training providers and so the records we have assessed were held across more than one database. Although this did not impact on the outcome of our assessment, we expect that the practical difficulty of multiple databases will resolve in the coming period as more people complete the new training package.

Based on the information provided by the Diocese of Tasmania, we assessed whether each category of worker undertook accredited training **prior to** appointment as follows.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in training candidates for ordination in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in training licensed clergy in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in training licensed, authorised or paid church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in training volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

Record keeping

The standards of training require that the Diocese of Tasmania keeps accurate records of the satisfactory completion of accredited training by clergy and church workers, and that these records are created and maintained in a secure manner.

The soft copy records reviewed by the audit team demonstrated a high degree of accuracy between the records of attendance at training and the date nominated as being the date of training in the individuals record.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in keeping records with respect to the standard of training in accordance with the Canon.

6 Standards of safe ministry with persons of concern

Standards of safe ministry with persons of concern

The standards of safe ministry with persons of concern require that a parish or a congregation take the actions required to implement the process specified in section 5 of the document titled 'Policy for Safe Ministry in a parish where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a Person of Concern' dated 16 June 2017 (**Persons of Concern Policy**).

In the case of a congregation this process may be adapted by the diocesan safe ministry authority so as to apply to a congregation.

The standards of safe ministry with persons of concern came into effect on 1 January 2019.

Section 5 of the Persons of Concern Policy requires that each parish and/or congregation adopts a process consisting of each of the following stages:

- Stage 1 – Identify a Person of Concern
- Stage 2 – Notify the Director of Professional Standards
- Stage 3 – Develop an Interim Safety Plan
- Stage 4 – Decide Whether to Proceed Further
- Stage 5 – Conduct the necessary assessments
- Stage 6 – Establish the necessary safeguards
- Stage 7 – Monitor the arrangements made

Policy assessment

The diocesan audit is required to assess whether a diocese has:

- standards, and guidelines that give effect to the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern (unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so),

- any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the safe ministry with persons of concern, and
- procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the safe ministry with persons of concern.

The Safe Ministry to Persons of Concern in a Parish Policy gives effect to the standards in the Canon.

Safe Ministry to Persons of Concern in a Parish

The Diocese of Tasmania has adopted the General Synod Policy for 'Safe Ministry in a parish where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a Person of Concern.'



The Diocese of Tasmania standards and guidelines in place that give effect to the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern, with cogent reasons provided for departure from the prescribed policy.



The Diocese of Tasmania does not have any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern.



The Diocese of Tasmania has procedures in place that effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese of the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance.

Material Compliance Assessment

General

The audit team has requested that the Diocese of Tasmania provide us de-identified information in relation to Persons of Concern that have come to the notice of the clergy or church workers at any point during the audit period.

Assessment

As part of our assessment, we have considered information provided by the Diocese of Tasmania in relation to persons of concern and discussed the approach with the Director of Professional Standards. We note that there are agreements in place for all Persons of Concern that came to the attention of the Diocese of Tasmania in the audit period.



The Diocese of Tasmania has been compliant in managing persons of concern in accordance with the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern in the audit period.

Record keeping

In respect of record keeping, both hard and soft copies of safety plans are held by the Director of Professional Standards.



The Diocese of Tasmania has kept accurate records in relation to the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern, which have been created and maintained in a secure manner.



Contact

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the audit team to discuss any aspect of this report.

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About Prolegis Lawyers

Prolegis is a specialist law firm that exclusively advises clients around Australia and overseas in relation to the charity, not-for-profit and philanthropic sectors.

Prolegis has experience undertaking compliance audits of large charities and not-for-profit organisations, including denominations and other large faith-based organisations.