

- MEDIA RELEASE -

ACSL launches new safeguarding portal for Australian Church entities

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A new portal launched today by ACSL will help Catholic organisations measure their progress in applying the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS).

Marking the launch of the portal, ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens described it as a crucial resource for entities wanting to understand where their current safeguarding standards are in relation to best practice.

“It is intuitive, easy to navigate and use and will be invaluable to safeguarding personnel everywhere. The portal we have developed will help Catholic entities to meet their own legislative safeguarding requirements in a timely way,” Dr Stephens said.

The NCSS, against which entities using the portal will assess themselves, create a framework for Catholic entities to promote the safety of children and adults at risk. The Standards outline the policies and activities that will prevent, respond to, and support reporting of concerns of abuse.

“The Standards are mapped to the National Child Safe Principles and incorporate recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Portal users will notice that the provisional text of the second edition of the Standards is used. This edition includes measures to support adults at risk who also engage with Church ministries, in response to issues raised in the Royal Commissions into Aged Care and Disability,” Dr Stephens said.

“Entities can work through the requirements of the Standards online and attach supporting documentation as evidence. The portal will generate a progress plan for organisations working towards accreditation and reporting. All the key documentation is in one place, so tasks can be allocated to staff, and progress recorded.”

“The portal allows users to monitor their progress in implementing the Standards. Those seeking accreditation against the NCSS will be able to use the portal in preparing for a review or audit.”

“Access to the portal will be free of charge of ACSL subscribers, which includes dioceses, religious institutes and MPJPs”.

“As more Church entities engage with the portal, it will provide a good overview of where the Church as a whole is doing well in safeguarding, and where there is still work to be done. This is an important evidence base for us to draw on, to report on the work that has been undertaken in the last five years to make the Church a safe place for all people.”

“We invite Church Authorities to register for the portal and start a self-assessment as soon as they are able. This is a great step forward for Catholic entities and we’re excited by the enthusiastic response we have received already from entities keen to use the portal,” Dr Stephens said.

For questions about the NCSS Accreditation Portal, please email Dr David Treanor, Manager of Audit and Review at assess@acsltd.org.au.

ACSL works with Catholic entities to promote and oversee a nationally consistent, comprehensive and sustainable framework for the protection of children and adults at risk within the Church in Australia.