

- MEDIA RELEASE -

Second safeguarding audit of Presentation Sisters Wagga Wagga shows Congregation fully committed to safety of children

20 December 2022

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) this week published its second safeguarding audit report for the Presentation Sisters Wagga Wagga (PSWW).

The audit, conducted by ACSL, assessed the Congregation's progress in implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS), a framework for the safety and protection of children and adults at risk in Catholic organisations.

The audit commenced in October 2022 and focused on the measures in place to ensure the safety of children and young people in PSWW's work.

The audit found that the religious congregation of Sisters were implementing 99 per cent of the NCSS indicators relevant to their Congregation.

ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens said that this is an outstanding result for the Sisters.

'PSWW have demonstrated, in this their second audit against the NCSS, their deeply embedded and genuine commitment to the safety of all those with whom they interact,' Dr Stephens said.

'After first being audited in 2019 and meeting compliance with 98 per cent of the indicators then, what we have witnessed in this second audit is an even deeper progression of safeguarding awareness.'

'A number of changes within the Congregation, including a change of leadership and the planned transference of a key ministry hasn't lessened their commitment to do all they can to provide a safe environment for children.'

'The recommendations of the 2019 audit have been fully implemented, but the Sisters will take with them three new recommendations which they are committed to implementing in 2023. The recommendations concern their Code of Conduct, enhancing certain human resource processes to emphasise safeguarding, ensuring that personnel are fully empowered to implement best practice complaint handling processes, and upgrading IT practices,' Dr Stephens said.

ACSL's risk-based audit and review framework works to assess practical safeguarding risks for individual entities. The framework considers the mission activity of the entity, the context in which it operates, and its current membership. This means that entities who undergo a self-assessment, review or audit are assessed against the NCSS criteria and indicators that directly relate to them. Entities commit to a three-year cycle for review/audit to support continuous improvement and integrate new legislative requirements and emerging best practice.

ACSL is currently working with a range of other Catholic entities to assess their progress in implementing the NCSS.

The PSWW audit report is available on [ACSL's website](#).

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.