

- MEDIA RELEASE -

Safeguarding audit of Sisters of St Joseph finds commitment to safeguarding embedded across Congregation's leadership and ministries

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A safeguarding audit report of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart published this week by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) has found safeguarding practices are understood and embedded across the Congregation's members and key activities.

The audit assessed the Congregation's implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS), a framework to promote the safety of children in Catholic organisations.

The Sisters of St Joseph received a compliance score of 100 per cent against the NCSS, with all relevant NCSS indicators either fully or substantially progressed at the time of audit.

ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens said that it was pleasing to see that efforts to ensure children who come in contact with the Congregation are safe have been prioritised.

'Through our audit processes, including a desktop review of key safeguarding policies and site visits to centres in NSW and South Australia, as well as interviews with a sample of members across the Congregation, we identified solid practices in place' Dr Stephens said.

'For example, we saw great work by the Congregation in their implementation of a thorough safeguarding induction and ongoing training program. The Congregation's Safeguarding Coordinator travels the country to provide training and support to members in different regions.'

'Ongoing training for people who have contact with children is crucial. If personnel do not know what to do, they will not be able to prevent abuse, so it was great to see in our audit that the Sisters of St Joseph have a good program of ongoing safeguarding awareness training.'

'As in any audit, we did identify some areas where the Congregation can tighten their existing processes and have provided two formal recommendations to the Congregation's leadership. These have been accepted and will be implemented over the course of the next 12 months.'

The Sisters of St Joseph's Congregational Leader Sr Monica Cavanagh said she was pleased to receive the outcome of this report:

'The safeguarding of children has always had a unique place in our story and will continue to do so. We would like to acknowledge the commitment of the Sisters and staff for the way in which they have embraced the culture of safeguarding within their ministries. We also thank the professionalism of the ACSL auditors and the clarity of the audit process. The Congregation is committed to implementing Edition 2 of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.'

View the Sisters of St Joseph's audit report on [ACSL's website](#).