

## **- MEDIA RELEASE -**

### **Ongoing safeguarding vigilance evident in second review of Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions**

**2 May 2025**

A safeguarding review of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions (RNDM) has found the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards are being implemented.

This is the second audit for the small Congregation of Religious Women, whose child safeguarding policies and practices were first assessed by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd in 2020.

Since 2020, the Congregation has devolved governance of a range of ministries and at the time of audit, of the fourteen Sisters residing in Australia, only one Sister remains engaged in ministry with children and adults at risk.

ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens said that the reduced safeguarding risks for the Congregation have been reflected in the nature of the audit and assessment.

‘While a smaller and ageing congregation, the Sisters are still dedicated to safeguarding in their community,’ Dr Stephens said.

‘All personnel interviewed indicated a strong commitment to the values and behaviours encouraged within their safeguarding policies and everyone we spoke to was conscious of the importance of safeguarding for their community’s well-being.’

‘Through our desktop review, we also saw evidence that statutory checks are in place and there is ongoing safeguarding training and information provided to the Sisters.’

‘Our audit team has provided a recommendation to the Congregation’s Leadership focusing on leadership, governance and culture, which will serve to further enhance the very good level of safeguarding practice already in place.’

‘The first part of the recommendation is to ensure that the Congregations’ Code of Conduct is readily accessible via its website. While the Code is currently communicated to personnel, children, families and carers through onboarding or welcome processes, having it available online ensures it is immediately accessible.’

‘The second part of the recommendation is that the Congregation to develop a strong Privacy Policy. While the Congregation’s current record keeping policies do mention the Australian Privacy Principles, a separate policy will help to ensure that sensitive information concerning safeguarding or personal details are handled according to best practice,’ Dr Stephens said.

Sister Catherine Brabender RNDM, Province Leader of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions said that the scale of the ACSL Audit was cognisant of the current reality of the Congregation in size and ministry.

‘To hear the final result that we were 100 per cent compliant was indeed a source of pride in our sisters and staff who were involved in the audit process’, Sr Catherine said.

The full audit report for the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions is available on ACSL’s [website](#).