

## **- MEDIA RELEASE -**

### **De La Salle Brothers safeguarding audit highlights positive safeguarding culture across Australian and overseas ministries**

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A safeguarding audit completed by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd has found that the Trustees of De La Salle Brothers are successfully implementing and embedding a culture of safeguarding throughout its diverse organisation.

ACSL's audit team assessed implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) for children and adults at risk, with the report finding that 100 per cent of the indicators relevant for De La Salle Brothers were either developed and embedded or developed across the organisation at the time of the audit.

The audit was completed by ACSL from January to March this year, and included ministry site visits in NSW, Queensland and Papua New Guinea (PNG).

ACSL Chief Executive Officer Dr Ursula Stephens said being able to visit an education ministry in PNG provided practical insight into how the Congregation is managing safeguarding responsibilities in a different cultural context.

'What we saw in PNG were some great processes and a positive culture in place to bring attention to safeguarding,' Dr Stephens said.

'While PNG has a Child Safety Act, the regulations vary substantially from Australia. Nevertheless, our interview with personnel in PNG showed that they understood their safeguarding responsibilities and connected these with core Lasallian values of respect for all persons and an inclusive community.'

'As well as our visit to PNG, we spent time with Australian-based children's ministries under the governance of De La Salle.'

'Some of these are large and well-known national programs which engage with children and young people who are marginalised within society and have complex needs. We observed that the Congregation has put good systems and processes in place to monitor the needs and wellbeing of children and young people, and a strong commitment to safeguarding was apparent in our meetings with counsellors and program leaders.'

'With 95 Brothers currently living across the De La Salle Brothers jurisdictions of Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and PNG, we have identified a need for the Brothers to develop an overarching safeguarding implementation plan that can capture and work on mitigating risks across all ministries, with oversight at the Congregational level.'

'We've provided three key sets of recommendations in our report which cover a range of elements in the NCSS where we see scope for improvement. The De La Salle Brothers have accepted all our recommendations, and we will be checking in to monitor the status of implementation over the next 12 months,' Dr Stephens said.

This is the second NCSS audit for the De La Salle Brothers. The Congregation was previously audited by ACSL against the child-focused NCSS Edition 1 in 2021.

The full audit report for the De La Salle Brothers is available on ACSL's [website](#).