

- MEDIA RELEASE -

ISMAPNG: Second Safeguarding Audit Passed with Flying Colours

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The Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG) is embedding a strong safeguarding culture, according to a new audit released today by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL).

The audit assessed ISMAPNG's implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS), the national framework for the safety of children and adults at risk across Catholic entities in Australia. The audit was conducted by ACSL in association with Prolegis Lawyers, one of the senior members of the NCSS Auditor panel.

"ISMAPNG was first audited by ACSL in 2020. Since that time several Mercy Ministries have been incorporated into a MPJP. The 2025 audit assessed compliance with NCSS Edition 2, which focused on child safeguarding and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It included the ministries of McAuley Ministries Ltd; Catherine McAuley Services Ltd; Young Mercy Links and Mercy Associates." ACSL CEO Ursula Stephens said.

ISMAPNG governance includes activities in Papua New Guinea. Their self-assessment included a response on how these ministries are embedding a culturally appropriate safeguarding practices that align with the Universal Guidelines Framework (UGF). This Framework builds on Child Safe Principles while reflecting that there are different judicial, legal and cultural considerations and protocols that need to be acknowledged as part of safeguarding approaches. In Papua New Guinea, the legal framework for child protection is the *Lukautim Pikinini Act 2015* with some aspects considered under the *Family Protection Act 2013*.

Dr David Treanor, Director of Safeguarding and Compliance with ACSL was lead auditor and noted "Our interviews with the Sisters and ISMAPNG staff provided valuable insight into how safeguarding is lived across the Institute's ministries."

"ACSL has made three minor recommendations, all of which ISMAPNG leadership has committed to implementing quickly."

Sr Karon Donnellon, ISMAPNG Leader said the audit was a positive experience for the Institute which is undergoing many changes.

"Safeguarding isn't just about complying with standards, it's about caring for all people, and especially anyone who is vulnerable, because the Gospel impels us to do nothing less if we are to be faithful to the teaching and example of Jesus Christ." Sr Karon said.

The full safeguarding audit report for the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea 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.

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