

- MEDIA RELEASE -

Caritas Australia Audit reveals strong safeguarding culture

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Caritas Australia has successfully embedded safeguarding within its organisational culture, demonstrating a high level of commitment and understanding of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) recently undertook a comprehensive safeguarding audit of Caritas Australia, which involved evaluating the documents, policies and procedures in place at the governance level. ACSL interviewed personnel across numerous roles and locations within the Asia-Pacific region.

Caritas Australia undertook a self-assessment which was followed by a review, discussions with the Board Chairperson, the leadership team and a visit to their administrative centre in Sydney, NSW.

ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens commended the strong leadership exercised by Caritas Australia across their organisation in promoting a safeguarding culture.

“The humanitarian and international development sector is highly regulated, and the ACSL audit framework takes this into account, by moving beyond a compliance focus to one that measures an organisation’s maturity in safeguarding responses. We are impressed by the ways in which Caritas Australia is focused on the wellbeing of program participants and accommodating the diverse cultural needs within their partnerships.

Dr David Treanor, Director of Safeguarding and Compliance with ACSL was lead auditor and noted “There were many opportunities to see the principles of Catholic Social Teaching being imbued in Caritas ministries. Indeed, the commitment by Caritas to the role of Mission Facilitator offers personnel opportunities to connect with faith that encourages justice”

Chair of Caritas Australia Robert Fitzgerald AM has welcomed the findings

“Caritas Australia welcomes the positive outcome of our National Catholic Safeguarding Standards audit report, which demonstrates our ongoing faith-based commitment to protecting the dignity, safety, and wellbeing of all people, especially children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding relies on a whole of organisation commitment to continuous learning and improvement, which is core to who we are as a Catholic agency.”

Through the NCSS audit, ACSL identified some areas for improvement, resulting in minor recommendations that will further embed safeguarding in all aspects of Caritas ministries.

All recommendations have been accepted by Caritas Australia and will be implemented in the next 12 months, along with continued vigilance and awareness of emerging risks.

The report is available on ACSL’s [website](#).