

First audit report of Church entity against new National Standards published

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Catholic Professional Standards Limited (CPSL) has today published its first audit report of a Church entity that is subject to the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS).

The NCSS, based on recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, provide the framework for Catholic Church entities to build child-safe cultures and to advance the safety and dignity of children across the Catholic Church in Australia.

The Presentation Sisters of Wagga Wagga (PSWW) is the first church entity to be audited under the NCSS. Comprising 38 sisters in the Wagga and Sydney region and 17 Papua New Guinean National sisters in the Aitape region, the Sisters involved in active and public ministry work with other organisations as skilled counsellors, prison chaplains, advocates, school breakfast program and support volunteers. As the number of Sisters in active ministry has declined, the congregation has established partnerships with universities, not for profit organisations and schools to continue their mission. PSWW no longer has governance of any ministries providing services directly to children.

CPSL has made 12 recommendations to PSWW to strengthen their safeguarding practices as a result of the audit fieldwork which was conducted in April 2019. Recommendations are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation – there are no priority one (critical/urgent) recommendations arising from the audit of PSWW.

The final compliance assessment (completed at the end of June 2019) concluded that PSWW had fully implemented or was well progressed in the implementation of 61 (98%) of 62 indicators relevant to their ministries and operations.

“The PSWW leadership team has been open, transparent and fully engaged throughout this audit,” said CPSL CEO, Sheree Limbrick.

“Our work with the Presentation Sisters of Wagga Wagga revealed a long-term, active commitment to implementing strong safeguarding policies and processes coupled with consistent awareness and knowledge among the Sisters and staff of their responsibilities.”

“Our audit framework is designed to not just assess what is currently in place within an entity, but to also provide constructive input to an organisation about how and in what practical areas they can improve their practices and increase their capacity to build organisational resilience and maintain a focus on preventing abuse of children. The feedback our audit team provided to the Sisters was openly received and readily committed to and acted upon,” Ms Limbrick said.

CPSL is currently working with a range of other Catholic entities to assess their progress in implementing the NCSS and will progressively release further audit reports as they are completed.

Read the audit report in full [here](#).

Catholic Professional Standards Ltd is a not-for-profit public company, limited by guarantee. It was established by the leadership of the Catholic Church during the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to develop national safeguarding standards, to audit the compliance of Church Authorities with those standards and to publicly report the results. CPSL has a lay Board of Directors with sole responsibility for the content and publication of audit reports.

Media contact: Katherine Beavis 0400 825 954 / 1300 603 411