

- MEDIA RELEASE -

Commitment to safeguarding in overseas ministries among significant findings of De La Salle Brothers safeguarding audit report

16 September, 2021

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) has today published the safeguarding audit report of the De La Salle Brothers District of Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea.

The audit found that the De La Salle Brothers (DLSB) have implemented 91 per cent of the indicators relevant to their operations under the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, a national framework for the protection and safety of children in Catholic organisations.

ACSL Chief Executive Officer Dr Ursula Stephens said that this is a particularly impressive result for a religious institute with complex and diverse ministries across Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea.

“Through our audit procedures, which covered a sample of ministries across four countries and included interviews with 20 Brothers, we found a strong commitment to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.”

“This was evident through the fact that key safeguarding documents have been distributed to all ministries, translated into local languages, and are required to be acknowledged and signed by all Brothers, staff and volunteers. Crucially, there is oversight of safeguarding activities across the four countries through the work of a dedicated safeguarding officer and safeguarding committee.”

“Within Australia, DLSB have governance over primary and secondary schools as well as the charity yourtown, which operates a range of services for children and young people, including Kids Helpline, Australia’s most prominent telephone and online counselling service for young people.”

“Given the Australian schools and yourtown are subject to existing regulation and external accreditation, we do not re-audit them under our framework. They were however required to provide declarations to us regarding the accreditation and audit processes that are in place, and were subject to extensive interview by our audit team.”

“The recognition and community standing of these services is an indication of the commitment of DLSB to child safeguarding. Feedback on safeguarding practices is encouraged, monitored and any issues addressed.”

“We’ve also identified areas of improvement for DLSB and have provided tailored recommendations to strengthen child safeguarding practices throughout their operations.”

“For instance, despite the number of areas where DLSB are already implementing the Safeguarding Standards, they are yet to develop a formal Safeguarding Implementation Plan that is documented and actionable. From here, DLSB have committed to using the findings and recommendations of the report to create a Safeguarding Implementation Plan, which will include monitoring and self-audit processes,” Dr Stephens said.

The full safeguarding audit report of the De La Salle Brothers is available on the Church Reports page of [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.