

NATIONAL CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

Safeguarding Self Report Validation

ORDER OF DISCALCED NUNS (GOONELLABAH)



AUGUST 2023

Report prepared by:



A safe Church for everyone

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd acknowledges the lifelong trauma of abuse victims, survivors and their families, the failure of the Catholic Church to protect, believe and respond justly to children and vulnerable adults, and the consequent breaches of community trust.

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd is committed to fostering a culture of safety and care for children, and adults at risk.

This report is available on the Publications and Reports page of the [ACSL website](#).

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Background

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) was established in 2020, to bring together the work of Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL), the Australian Catholic Centre for Professional Standards (ACCPS) and the Australian Catholic Ministry Register (ACMR). ACSL is a company limited by guarantee, owned by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia, and the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons.

ACSL is committed to fostering a nationally consistent culture of safety and care throughout the Catholic Church in Australia. This includes providing a range of services to support the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS), a framework for the protection and care of adults at risk and children. ACSL maintains the NCSS, undertakes risk-based audits and reviews of Church entities, and publishes reports which demonstrate a Church entity's commitment to the NCSS.

ACSL is committed to ongoing learning in our own work. Through reflection and dedication to continuous improvement, we seek to further our understanding of how we can support a culture of safeguarding in all Church organisations.

ACSL's core values are leadership, integrity and compassion. These values guide the way we work and inform cultural change within the Catholic Church and the wider community. We take our duty to care for and protect all children and adults at risk seriously and have zero tolerance for abuse of any kind.

ACSL Risk Based Review Framework

ACSL is aware that some religious congregations have ministries that involve direct contact with children and adults at risk while others do not. In religious congregations that have direct involvement with children, audits of child safeguarding have been undertaken by measuring their practice compliance against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). Where a religious congregation no longer has, or never had ministry involving children or adults at risk and has not received any allegation of sexual abuse, the Church Authority will complete a Self-Report against the NCSS which will be validated by ACSL. The size, age and activity profiles of religious congregations can vary significantly and ACSL accepts that it is rational that the form of review needs to be tailored to the profile of each Church Authority, especially where the ministry with children or adults at risk is limited or non-existent. The procedure for assessment of safeguarding practice with such congregations is set out in the report.

The purpose of this review remains the same as all NCSS audits: to confirm that a Church Authority's current safeguarding practices comply with the NCSS. The safeguarding practices of a Church Authority are reviewed through an examination of policy and procedures, and through interviews with key personnel involved both within and external to the Church entity.

This report contains the findings of the Review of Child Safeguarding Practice in the Disalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah undertaken by ACSL.

The findings of the review have been shared with the Prioress along with any recommendations arising from the findings. There have been no allegations of any forms of abuse in respect to deceased or living Sisters of the Order. The review assessed the Sisters documentation on the NCSS

Self-Assessment Portal. The review also interviewed the Prioress on several occasions. The review therefore is primarily based on policies and procedures made available to the ACSL review team via the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal plus interviews with key personnel involved in the safeguarding process within the Order.

Introduction

The Discalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah are an enclosed, contemplative community of nuns whose lives are dedicated to prayer for the needs of the Church and the whole world. The Sisters live according to the Rule of Carmel, which was first used by the hermits living on Mount Carmel in the Holy Land in the early thirteenth century; and their way of life was established by Saint Teresa of Jesus, at Avila, Spain, over 450 years ago.

The monastery, Our Carmel of the Child Jesus of Prague and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Goonellabah, was founded on 25th April 1966 from Dulwich Hill Carmel, Sydney. In 1966, the founding sisters travelled by train from Sydney to Casino, where they were welcomed by Father Donnelly on behalf of Bishop Farrelly and by many local people. They completed the remaining 32 kilometres to Lismore by car - Goonellabah is just outside Lismore, and often called "Lismore Carmel".

Goonellabah, meaning red flame tree, is an Aboriginal name for an attractive tree that flourishes in the local area. The monastery church is part of Saint Carthage's Cathedral Parish, Lismore, and parishioners can attend daily Mass.

Profile of Members

There are thirteen sisters in ministry including two sisters in formation. There are also three 'Aspirants' – one woman lives in the monastery and two live-out and join the community as required by the congregation's constitution which dictates the parameters of their monastic routine.

As previously stated, the Discalced Carmelite Nuns are enclosed, and the Sisters focus is on providing compassion and healing through their prayers. There is physical separation from the public by means of a grille partition in each chapel and grilles in each of the parlours. The Sisters follow a strict rule and spend their day in prayer and maintaining the monastery grounds. If children of the public or family members visit, they are only allowed into the parlour if accompanied by an adult and are separated by the grille. The community receive verbal requests and requests through letters for prayers. ACSL are advised that the Diocese of Lismore commitment and policy statements are visible to the public in the parlours, outlining that the Sisters take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

The monastery has no employees; however, they have an 'Extern sister' who meets people and provides reception services, accesses provisions in the local community and is the contact for maintenance. The sister has a valid WWCC and participated in an information training session on child safeguarding in the Diocese of Lismore.

When a priest visits the chapel to celebrate Mass or offer a retreat, he must present the relevant documentation affirming that he is a priest in good standing and is approved to minister through the Diocese. Child safeguarding notices of the Lismore diocese are visible in the chapel and in the parlour.

Overall Audit Findings

Assessment of the implementation of NCSS has been determined using a four-point maturity scale¹. Our assessment indicates that Disalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah has fully implemented or has substantially progressed in the implementation of 53 (100%) of the 75² indicators which are relevant to their ministry.

The key findings from the audit are summarised below.

NCSS Standard 1 – Committed leadership, governance and culture

The Disalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah observe a strict ministry of prayer as an enclosed monastic congregation. The Sisters live under an Apostolic constitution and have adopted the Diocese of Lismore's safeguarding framework.

A risk assessment has been completed for the Sisters and the 'Extern' Sister. The 'Extern' Sister is the person who has contact with the local community and any visitors that may call to the monastery.

The Disalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah have a Community Code of Conduct which details how Sisters are expected to live in Community. The Sisters also utilise the Diocese of Lismore's Code of Conduct for their engagement with the wider community. The Community Code of Conduct would benefit from a complaint strategy, for example, if a Sister needed to report a breach of the Community Code, to whom does she address the complaint? The Diocesan Code of Conduct is yet to address the needs of distinct groups of persons (e.g. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons) or outline the importance of power imbalances.

The Disalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah also use a generic email address and ACSL recommends the Diocese provide the congregation with a Diocese of Lismore domain name address for their ministry and monitor their IT. Since the audit exit meeting, the congregation have started to use the 'flowerofcarmel' domain name for their email address.

NCSS Standard 5 – Robust human resource management

The Disalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah do not have any paid or unpaid employees. There is an 'Extern' Sister who receives any visitors and accesses the local community on behalf of the Sisters to attend to grocery and other necessary tasks. This Sister has a WWCC.

There are two novices – women who are in the early stages of formation to take formal profession vows to live as Disalced Carmelite Nuns. There are three Aspirants who are in the early of formation to discern if they are being called to the contemplative life. One Aspirant lives with the Community and the other two women visit at the required times. Whilst some safeguarding formation is provided to these women, ACSL would recommend that the Postulants and Sisters participate in the annual refresher training provided by the Diocese in safeguarding to maintain currency in safeguarding practices. If these women take final vows, they will need to have a mentor for five years following final profession.

¹ Refer Appendix A for definitions of the maturity scale used for the Compliance Assessment.

² Of the 64 NCSS Indicators applicable to Self-Report Church Authorities, 11 of these are not relevant to the operations of the Disalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah.

NCSS Standard 6 – Effective complaints management

The ACSL audit does not re-assess the outcomes of individual complaints. The audit focuses on reviewing current complaint management practices, including policies and procedures in place to prevent, detect, report and respond to all incidents and complaints, and the associated training, awareness and education available for all personnel.

There have not been any allegations of abuse against any member of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah and as such there has been no contact in relation to these matters between the Order and Diocesan or the civil authorities. Consequently, there was no case management material examined during this review.

The Discalced Carmelite Nuns adopt the Diocese of Lismore' Information and Record Keeping Policy and Procedure.

ACSL noted the requirement to maintain safeguarding records for a minimum of 50 years and the details referring to a person who acts as a 'whistleblower' have yet to be fully developed. ACSL discussed these issues with the Diocese of Lismore which was timely since the latter are currently reviewing the safeguarding policies as part of the review cycle. The Diocese have undertaken to update the processes to comply with the NCSS.

The table below shows the overall compliance assessment for each of the Standards.

National Catholic Safeguarding Standard	# NCSS indicators	Not Relevant to Discalced Nuns - Goonellabah	Assessment of Compliance			
			Managed & measurable	Defined & developed	Initial / Ad hoc	Not addressed
1: <i>Committed leadership, governance & culture</i>	17	4	11	2	-	-
5: <i>Robust human resource management</i>	23	7	11	5	-	-
6: <i>Effective complaints management</i>	24	-	23	1	-	-
TOTAL	64	11	45	8	-	-
			53 (100%)			

ACSL's recommendations are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation³.

There are no Priority 1 (high rated) audit recommendations for the Order of Discalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah.

There are two Priority 2 (medium rated) audit recommendations for the Order of Discalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah.

There are three Priority 3 (low rated) recommendations, which are detailed in Section 3 of this report.

³ Refer Appendix B for definitions of the Priority ratings used for audit recommendations.

Each recommendation also contains the Order of Discalced Carmelite Nuns Goonellabah response to the audit findings, including associated management actions.

We would like to thank the Prioress and members of the Diocese of Lismore Safeguarding Team who were involved in the audit for their cooperation and assistance.

Assessment of NCSS Indicators Policy and Procedures Document

Standard 1		Committed leadership, governance and culture			
<i>Child safeguarding is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture</i>					
Criterion 1.1 - The entity publicly commits to child safeguarding and takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
1.1.1	The Safeguarding Policy is approved and endorsed by the Church Authority and/or relevant leadership body and is publicly available.	✓			
1.1.2	The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, is widely displayed and made publicly available.		✓		
Observations:					
1.1.2 The Sisters use the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and statement. The statement is not available on the OCD Nuns website and the sisters use a generic email address for their ministry. Refer recommendation #1 .					
Criterion 1.2 - A child safeguarding culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the entity from the top down and bottom up.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
1.2.1	A strong safeguarding culture is created and maintained by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting safeguarding, and the dignity and rights of everyone; • emphasising that safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility; and • actively monitoring safeguarding compliance and risk management. 	✓			
1.2.2	Where required a leadership-led Safeguarding Committee is appointed to oversee the effective ongoing implementation of safeguarding procedures and practices.	Not applicable			
1.2.3	A Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) is appointed with clearly defined responsibilities for safeguarding roles and responsibilities.	Not applicable			
1.2.4	Personnel understand that good safeguarding practices are everyone's responsibility and are encouraged to contribute to the organisation's safeguarding practices.	✓			
Observation					
The entity is an enclosed order and are not engaged in public ministry nor do children attend the monastery unaccompanied.					
Criterion 1.3 - Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of a Child Safeguarding Policy across the entity's activities.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
1.3.1	Governance arrangements are transparent and include safeguarding roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability for the safeguarding of children and adults is clear.	✓			
1.3.2	Where the Church Authority's governance includes countries other than Australia, the NCSS are applied	Not applicable			

	wherever possible, taking into account cultural differences and local jurisdictional issues.				
Observations:					
Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.4 - A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for personnel on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
1.4.1	The Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance and expected standards of behaviour.	✓			
1.4.2	The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and communicated to personnel, children, adults, families, and carers.	✓			
1.4.3	The Code of Conduct takes into account the needs of all children and adults, paying particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. individuals who are elderly, are living with a disability, are suffering from an illness or who are vulnerable. individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. children in out of home care or who are homeless; and children and adults of diverse sexuality. 		✓		
1.4.4	The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.		✓		
Observations:					
The Sisters have two Codes of Conduct: their Community Code, and a Diocesan Code of Conduct. The Codes do not take into account the needs of distinct groups of persons or outline the importance of power imbalances. Both Codes will need to be updated to include the needs of these distinct groups. Refer recommendation #2 .					
Criterion 1.5 - The entity has risk management strategies focusing on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
1.5.1	The Risk Management Plan considers the needs of children and adults with diminished capacity, and how and when adults at risk make informed choices (dignity of risk).	✓			
1.5.2	The Risk Management Plan incorporates procedures to assess, evaluate, review and oversee safeguarding of children and adults at risk within its ministry and/or service.	Not applicable			
1.5.3	There is a documented program to regularly identify, monitor, report and review risks.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the Indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 1.6 - Personnel understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
1.6.1	Information sharing and record keeping policies and	✓			

	procedures are documented and communicated to personnel.				
1.6.2	Information sharing and record keeping policies and procedures align with best practices.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Standard 5		Robust human resource management			
<i>People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safeguarding values in practice</i>					
Criterion 5.1 - Recruitment, including advertising, interview questions, referee checks and personnel pre-employment screening, emphasises child safeguarding.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
5.1.1	The commitment to safeguarding and zero-tolerance are explicit in advertising, screening and recruitment for personnel.	✓			
5.1.2	Recruitment and screening procedures and processes.	✓			
5.1.3	Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children and appropriate child safeguarding recruitment procedures are implemented.	Not applicable			
5.1.4	Position descriptions, selection criteria, referee checks and interview questions articulate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that children are valued and respected. the commitment of the entity to child safeguarding; and where appropriate to the role, an understanding of children's developmental needs and culturally safe practices. 	Not applicable			
Observations: The entity does not have any personnel aside from. Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.2 - Relevant personnel (including all seminarians, clergy and religious) have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
5.2.1	The entity has a policy which is implemented that ensures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> personnel have a current working with children check as required by legislation, prior to working with children; and where a working with children check is not required by legislation, other background checks for personnel are conducted prior to working with children. 	✓			
5.2.2	The entity keeps records and monitors the status of working with children checks and/or background checks for all personnel.	✓			
Observations:					

There is only Sister who has incidental contact with children and the requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.3 - Personnel receive an appropriate induction and are aware of child safeguarding responsibilities, including reporting obligations.					
		Managed & Measurable	Defined & developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
5.3.1	All personnel participate in a safeguarding induction program, which occurs as soon as possible after commencement.	✓			
5.3.2	All Church Authorities who are a signatory to a Service Agreement with ACSL are required to participate in the NCCS Introductory Session for Leaders within four months of commencement.		✓		
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are mostly in place. A new Prioress was elected in 2023 and she would benefit from attending the NCCS Introductory Session. Refer recommendation #3 .					
Criterion 5.4 - Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safeguarding					
		Managed & Measurable	Defined & developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
5.4.1	Support, mentoring, oversight and professional supervision processes for personnel include child safeguarding.	✓			
5.4.2	Annual performance reviews for personnel include child safeguarding responsibilities relevant to their role.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 5.5 - Robust processes exist for screening candidates before and during seminary and religious formation, as well as for ongoing formation, support and supervision of clergy and religious.					
		Managed & Measurable	Defined & developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
5.5.1	The Church Authority draws upon broad-ranging professional advice in its decision-making relating to candidates for seminary/formation programs and ordination/profession of vows. This includes a positive duty to disclose to other Church Authorities where an applicant or candidate for seminary/formation programs does not continue through to ordination/profession of vows.	✓			
5.5.2	Seminary and initial formation programs have robust screening processes for candidates for religious ministry, including external psychological and psychosexual assessments.,	✓			
5.5.3	The entity promotes as normative the participation of all bishops, leaders of religious institutes, clergy and religious in active ministry, in no less than six hours professional/pastoral supervision per year.	✓			
5.5.4	The entity promotes as normative, all clergy and religious in active ministry, for the sake of proper accountability, are offered and access both ongoing professional development and annual performance appraisals.	✓			
5.5.5	All newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least five years post ordination or final profession.		✓		

Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place; if current Postulants profess vows in the next two years they will be provided with a suitable mentor. Refer recommendation #4 .					
Criterion 5.6 - Seminary and formation programs for clergy and religious have appropriate curriculum to build the knowledge and skills of candidates to understand and lead child safeguarding initiatives.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
5.6.1	Seminary and initial formation programs have appropriate curriculum throughout the formation program which builds candidates' knowledge and skills in a range of areas to support child safeguarding		✓		
5.6.2	Seminary and initial formation programs ensure promotion of pastoral responses to victims/survivors of sexual abuse.		✓		
5.6.3	Seminary and initial formation programs are delivered in such a way as to protect against the development and/or reinforcement of clericalist attitudes and behaviours.		✓		
Observations: Requirements of the Indicator are mostly in place. The Sisters and Postulants live in an enclosed monastery and the latter undertake a specific formation program. It would be beneficial for all Sisters and Postulants to participate (online) in the annual refresher training on safeguarding offered by the Diocese. Refer recommendation #5 .					
Criterion 5.7 - Credentialing and movement of seminarians, clergy and religious is appropriately managed.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
5.7.1	The entity implements a system to assess the credentials and manage movement of all seminarians, clergy and religious moving between different seminaries and Church jurisdictions.	Not applicable			
Observations: N/A.					
Criterion 5.8 - Entities which receive overseas clergy and religious for work in ministry have targeted programs for the screening, induction, professional supervision, and development of these individuals.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
5.8.1	Selection and screening procedures for overseas clergy and religious are targeted, thorough and follow, as far as practicable, the same processes as for Australian personnel. This includes the Australian Church Authority obtaining screening information from the International Church Authority.	Not applicable			
5.8.2	All overseas clergy and religious participate in a Safeguarding Induction program, documented by the entity, before work with children begins.	Not applicable			
5.8.3	Overseas clergy and religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least the first two years of their time in Australia.	Not applicable			
5.8.4	The entity promotes as normative the participation of all overseas clergy and religious in active ministry in no less than six hours of professional/pastoral supervision per year.	Not applicable			
Observations:					

N/A.

Standard 6		Effective complaints management			
<i>Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, families, carers, communities and personnel</i>					
Criterion 6.1 - The entity has an effective Complaints Handling Policy and procedures which clearly outline the roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
6.1.1	The entity's policies, procedures and practices ensure that all mandatory reporting obligations are met.	✓			
6.1.2	There are documented procedures that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take for different types of complaints, including breaches of Codes of Conduct, disclosures, allegations or concerns of abuse of a child, be they historic or current.	✓			
6.1.3	There are clear procedures for identifying and mitigating actual and perceived conflicts of interest in complaint management.	✓			
6.1.4	The entity works in cooperation with relevant organisations and seeks specialist advice from statutory child protection services when necessary	✓			
6.1.5	Key roles and responsibilities in relation to handling complaints are articulated within the Complaint Handling Policy and procedures.	✓			
6.1.6	The Complaint Handling Policy and procedures differentiate, where appropriate, between a child victim and an adult bringing forward a complaint of abuse suffered as a child.	✓			
6.1.7	A process is in place to record all child abuse complaints, incidents, allegations, disclosures, concerns and referrals. The system must be secure so that confidential information is stored, protected and retained for 50 years.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.2 - The entity has a child-focused complaints handling system that is understood by children, families, carers and personnel.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
6.2.1	The complaints handling system prioritises the safety and well-being of children.	✓			
6.2.2	The Complaints Handling Policy and procedures are publicly available in a variety of formats, including age and developmentally appropriate for children, enabling complaints processes to be easily understood.		✓		
Observations: The Audit team are advised the Complaint Handling Policy is publicly displayed however it is not available on their website. ACSL recommends that a 'safeguarding' tab is added to their website and this repository can provide comprehensive details on their safeguarding policies, procedures and practices. Refer recommendation #1 .					

Criterion 6.3 - Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
6.3.1	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that, upon receiving a complaint of child abuse, an initial risk assessment is conducted to identify and minimise any risk to children. Ongoing risk assessments are required throughout all investigation processes.	✓			
6.3.2	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that at the completion of the initial risk assessment, where a complaint of child sexual abuse is plausible, and there is a risk that the person may come into contact with children, the person be stood down from their role and/or ministry while the complaint is investigated.	✓			
6.3.3	The Complaints Handling Policy is aligned, and operates in conjunction, with the entity's documented disciplinary and grievance policies and processes, in such a way that at the completion of the initial risk assessment, a breach or breaches of the Code of Conduct in relation to inappropriate behaviour towards a child are effectively investigated and managed, and include provisions for personnel to be redeployed, stood down and/or dismissed.	✓			
6.3.4	Complainants are responded to promptly and kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaint.	✓			
6.3.5	Support and care are provided to a child who has experienced or is alleging abuse, and other affected parties.	✓			
6.3.6	Appropriate confidentiality is maintained with due regard for the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant legislation in relation to information sharing in the context of child safeguarding.	✓			
6.3.7	Documented policies and processes empower and support personnel to raise, in good faith, concerns and allegations about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other personnel.	✓			
6.3.8	Where a complaint related to child sexual abuse against a seminarian, clergy or religious is substantiated on the balance of probabilities, with due respect to the rights of individuals, the Church Authority should remove that individual from ministry.	✓			
6.3.9	Where a seminarian, clergy or religious is convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse, that individual should be permanently removed from ministry. The Church Authority must take practicable steps to prohibit that individual from holding themselves out as being a person with religious authority and should present a case to the relevant dicastery for dismissal from the clerical state and/or dispensation from vows.	✓			
Observations:					
Requirements of the indicators are mostly in place. The Diocese of Lismore will review their Complaints Policy in July 2023.					
Criterion 6.4 - The entity has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant		Managed & Measurable	Defined & developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed

authorities, whether the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.					
6.4.1	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> concerns and complaints of child abuse occurring within the entity be reported to the appropriate statutory authority/ies, regardless of whether the reporting is mandated; and personnel cooperate with law enforcement procedures and directives. 	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations are noted.					
Criterion 6.5 - Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
6.5.1	The Complaints Handling Policy requires that all relevant reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.6 - The Church Authority ensures mechanisms are in place to care for adult complainants.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
6.6.1	The entity offers appropriate pastoral care to adult complainants, which recognises their unique needs. This should include an offer from the Church Authority to meet the complainant in person.	✓			
6.6.2	The Church Authority facilitates adult complainants' access to appropriately trained personnel whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the complainant. This is done in consultation with the complainant.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					
Criterion 6.7 - The Church Authority ensures mechanisms are in place to monitor and support respondents facing allegations.		Managed & Measurable	Defined & Developed	Initial/ Ad-hoc	Not Addressed
6.7.1	The Church Authority has access to appropriately trained personnel - lay, religious or clergy - whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent. This is done in consultation with the respondent.	✓			
6.7.2	The Church Authority has suitable arrangements in place for the monitoring and support of a respondent, where there is a plausible complaint, until (and if) the Church Authority no longer has responsibility for monitoring the respondent.	✓			
Observations: Requirements of the indicators are in place. No recommendations for improvement noted.					

Recommendations

Standard 1: Committed leadership and Culture

Recommendation #1		Priority 2
Criterion 1.1.2 – The Safeguarding Commitment Statement is published, is widely displayed and made publicly available.		
Details of finding	The following points were noted: The Order of Disalced Nuns use several policies and procedures from the Diocese of Lismore since their ministry is sporadically engaged with children and adults at risk. The audit revealed the congregation is committed to zero tolerance of abuse though their website does not contain any safeguarding policies or procedures.	
Recommendation	The Order of Disalced Nuns create a ‘safeguarding’ tab on their website and include safeguarding policies and procedures amongst which is the Diocese of Lismore Safeguarding Commitment Statement. The Order use their ‘flowerofcarmel’ domain name to communicate with any official inquiries.	
Agreed Action	The Order of Disalced Nuns will create a ‘safeguarding’ tab on their website and include safeguarding policies and procedures, amongst which will be the Diocese of Lismore Safeguarding Commitment Statement. As part of their website upgrade, the Sisters will use a ‘flowerofcarmel’ domain name for all email activity associated with their ministry.	
Responsibility	Prioress	
Due date	31 December 2023	

Recommendation #2		Priority 2
Criterion 1.4.2 -The Code of Conduct outlines the importance of considering how power imbalances can occur in ministries and services.		
Criterion 1.4.3 - Code of Conduct takes into account the needs of all children and adults, paying particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; • Individuals who are elderly, are living with a disability, are suffering from an illness or who are vulnerable; • individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds; • children in out of home care or who are homeless; and • children and adults of diverse sexuality. 		
Details of finding	ACSL notes the incidental contact the Nuns have with the wider community in Lismore. Nonetheless, their Code of Conduct does not account for the disadvantage or needs of specific groups within the community nor the potential power imbalances that may exist for some persons when engaging with members of the Congregation.	
Recommendation	ACSL recommends that the Order adopt the Diocese of Lismore Code of Conduct policy to take into account the particular needs of these groups and note the potential power imbalances that may be present.	

Agreed Action	The Order will adopt the Diocese of Lismore Code of Conduct policy to take into account the particular needs of these groups and note the potential power imbalances that may be present. The Diocese are updating their policy in Quarter 2 of 2023.
Responsibility	Prioress
Due date	31 December 2023

Standard 5: Robust Human Resource Management

Recommendation #3		Priority 3
Criterion 5.3.2 – All Church Authorities who are a signatory to a Service Agreement with ACSL are required to participate in the NCSS Introductory Session for Leaders within four months of commencement.		
Details of finding	A new Prioress was named earlier this year and she has yet to attend the NCSS Introductory Session for Leaders.	
Recommendation	The Prioress register and attend the next NCSS Introductory Session for Leaders.	
Agreed Action	ACSL will advise the Prioress when the next NCSS Introductory Session for Leaders is being held and she will attend.	
Responsibility	Prioress	
Due date	30 June 2024	

Recommendation #4		Priority 3
Criterion 5.5.5 – All newly ordained clergy and newly professed religious are supported with a suitable mentor for at least five years post ordination or final profession.		
Details of finding	There are currently two Novices in the monastery who may profess vows in the next two years. If these vocations proceed, they will need to be provided with a suitable mentor. ACSL recommend the Prioress reflect on who might be best placed to provide mentorship to Postulants post profession.	
Recommendation	The Novices are provided with a mentor if they proceed to profess their vows.	
Agreed Action	The Novices will be provided with a mentor if they proceed to profess their vows.	
Responsibility	Prioress	
Due date	30 June 2025	

Recommendation #5		Priority 3
Criterion 5.6.1 – Seminary and initial formation programs have appropriate curriculum throughout the formation program which builds candidates’ knowledge and skills in a range of areas to support child safeguarding		
Criterion 5.6.2 - Seminary and initial formation programs ensure promotion of pastoral responses to victims/survivors of sexual abuse.		
Criterion 5.6.3 - Seminary and initial formation programs are delivered in such a way as to protect against the development and/or reinforcement of clericalist attitudes and behaviours.		
Details of finding	The Sisters, Novices and Postulants live in an enclosed monastery and the latter undertake a specific formation program. It would be beneficial for all Sisters, Novices and Postulants to participate (online) in the annual refresher training on safeguarding offered by the Diocese of Lismore.	
Recommendation	The Sisters, Novices and Postulants participate in annual safeguarding formation/training arranged by the Diocese of Lismore.	
Agreed Action	The Sisters, Novices and Postulants will participate in annual safeguarding formation/training arranged by the Diocese of Lismore.	
Responsibility	Prioress	
Due date	30 June 2024	