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Second safeguarding audit of Benedictine Community of New Norcia shows continued safeguarding awareness and strengthened culture of safety

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A safeguarding audit report published this week by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) has found an embedded culture of safeguarding evident throughout the Benedictine Community of New Norcia (the Community).

The Community of New Norcia is the only monastic town in Australia and is located 130 km north-east of Perth.

There are 10 monks associated with the monastery, of whom six reside at New Norcia. The Community also has lay personnel who work and volunteer in various capacities throughout the town. The Community runs guided tours for the public and there are several types of accommodation which can be hired for retreats or other occasions.

This is the second National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) audit undertaken by the Community of New Norcia. The first audit in 2019 focused on NCSS Edition 1 and the child safety standards, while the second audit in 2023 assessed safeguarding practices for both children and adults at risk, in line with NCSS Edition 2.

ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens said that through a review of the Community's safeguarding documentation on the NCSS Self-Assessment Portal and subsequent audit fieldwork, it was plain to see that a culture of safeguarding is embedded in the life and activities of the New Norcia Community.

'Our audit and visit to the Community this year was an affirming process, where we could see that work to respond to emerging and ongoing safeguarding risks has been made a priority by the Community.'

'We were also impressed to see the emphasis on restorative justice and a trauma-informed approach evident throughout Community programs. For instance, there are numerous acknowledgements (for example, plaquettes) that individuals, families, and the community have been harmed and need restoration. These acknowledgements have been developed in close consultation with those affected, in keeping with the obligations held by the Benedictine Community to make things right as much as possible. All New Norcia staff have received training to manage unintended responses or reactions to their programs and displays (such as re-traumatisation) that may be triggered when visitors tour the Community.'

'The 100 per cent compliance result of the 2023 NCSS audit is reflective of the safeguarding culture which is now firmly rooted in the Community. As a result of our audit, our team was pleased to offer some additional safeguarding recommendations to further enhance safeguarding capacity into the future, in line the Community's commitment to continuous improvement,' Dr Stephens said.

View the Benedictine Community of New Norcia's audit report 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.