

Safeguarding audit report for Tarrawarra Abbey published today

Monday 13 January 2020

Catholic Professional Standards Limited (CPSL) has today published the safeguarding audit report for the Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance at Tarrawarra Abbey. The Abbey has achieved 100 per cent compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) and has implemented or is substantially progressed in the implementation of all 80 NCSS Indicators which are relevant to their operations.

Tarrawarra Abbey is a community of Cistercian monks in the Yarra Valley, 60 kilometres north-east of the city of Melbourne. There are currently 11 monks and one postulant living in the community at Tarrawarra. The current Abbot, Dom Steele Hartmann, was installed in 2012.

Tarrawarra Abbey celebrates daily Masses which are open to the local community and families. While the Abbey hosts school groups who wish to learn more about monastic life and/or use the Abbey facilities for school sacramental programs, personnel of the Abbey do not minister directly to children. As such, the Order has been assessed as a “Category Two” Church entity for application of the NCSS (Contact with Children).

Two recommendations have been provided to Tarrawarra Abbey to strengthen their safeguarding practices. These recommendations relate to the implementation of an internet monitoring program for personnel, and improving the supervision of third-party contractors on-site at the Abbey. There are no Priority 1 (high rated) audit recommendations for Tarrawarra Abbey.

CPSL CEO Sheree Limbrick said that the results of the audit show that Tarrawarra Abbey takes the safeguarding of children seriously in its operations.

“As a Category Two entity which has limited contact with children, the child safeguarding policies and processes in place need to be comprehensive, yet fit for purpose. The Order’s Child Safeguarding Policy is a good example of this: it contains a number of appendices which address critical components of safeguarding, such as behavioural expectations and Code of Conduct, complaints handling, risk management, record keeping and recruitment procedures for employees and volunteers. Tarrawarra Abbey’s Child Safeguarding Policy is an example of good practice for other Category Two entities, and the Abbey should be commended in this regard”.

“Another area where Tarrawarra Abbey has demonstrated good practice is in relation to complaints handling and management, with formal risk management practices in place to address potential incidents or concerns. The Abbey’s Complaint Handling Policy contains good guidance on taking and responding to disclosures from a child, including recognising potential barriers to disclosure. The policy is supplemented by simple, yet effective child-friendly materials designed to help children raise complaints,” Ms Limbrick said.

The Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance at Tarrawarra Abbey is the first monastic order to undergo a safeguarding audit to assess compliance with the 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.

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



MEDIA RELEASE

The full audit report is available on CPSL's website [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.

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