

2022

CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS
OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN OF THE
ORDER OF ST BENEDICT

SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT



Dedication

We dedicate our ministry of safeguarding to all victims and survivors of all forms of abuse.

We recognise their strength and courage.

We recognise their pain and suffering.

We recognise the people who help them carry the burden of their experience.

We recognise the tragedy of those who have lost their lives.

Our ministry is our commitment to ongoing and meaningful development and improvement to protect children and adults at risk now and into the future, and to help those affected by abuse.

We want to make our community and ministry safe for all children and adults.

Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples

We respectfully acknowledge the first peoples of all the lands and waters upon which we live, work and travel throughout Australia, Japan, Kiribati and the Philippines.

As you take your next step, remember the first peoples who walked these lands.

Acknowledgement of Survivors and Victims

We acknowledge the lifelong trauma of abuse victims, survivors and their families. Any failures of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan to protect, believe and respond justly, betrayed children's trust and that of the community.

We commit to creating an environment of respect and safety for all, especially children and adults at risk.

SISTERS OF THE **GOOD SAMARITAN**

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GOOD SAMARITAN SAFEGUARDING

*But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. Go and do likewise.
Luke 10:32-34, 37.*

A. LOCAL SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURE

One of the many approaches the Sisters of the Good Samaritan (Congregation) implement to foster a culture of safeguarding is the appointment of a local safeguarding coordinator. In December 2022, Sr Taabeia Ibouri was appointed to the role of safeguarding coordinator for Kiribati. Sr Donna Ferrer began her safeguarding coordinator appointment at the beginning of 2022 where she has collaborated with the Good Sam Sisters to implement safeguarding policies and education for the Good Samaritan communities of the Philippines. Within Australia, Anita Biddle began the safeguarding coordinator role in June 2022, where she has provided ongoing support to the Sisters in Australia.

The local structure provides the opportunity to implement safeguards applicable to the local context. It is an opportunity for the voice of the local people engaging in Good Samaritan ministries, to be heard. The positive outcomes include practices and policies that address the needs of those who gather. This structure also provides an opportunity for the three safeguarding coordinators to collaborate on projects and support each other.



Photo left

Donna Ferrer sgs, delivering an information session about child safety to kinder parents, Philippines

B. CHILD WISE PROJECT - AUSTRALIA, KIRIBATI & THE PHILIPPINES

Having completed their project in both Australia (2019) and the Philippines (2021), Childwise was engaged in 2022 to work with the Sisters in Kiribati.

The work in Kiribati included collaborating with the Sisters to develop an understanding of the local safeguarding context. Child Wises' initial task was to learn more about the health and education

systems and political and socio-economic context of Kiribati. They sought to understand the child protection services and the main issues children and young people face in the local community.

The process took a strength-based approach which provided Sisters the opportunity to engage in open dialogue and build further capacity. The collaborative and educative model established during the process provided a strong foundation and modelled a way of working for the implementation of the future safeguarding action plan.

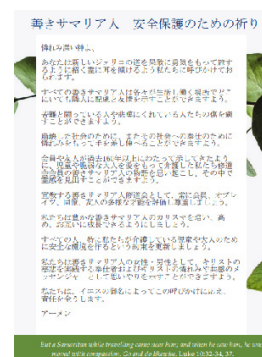
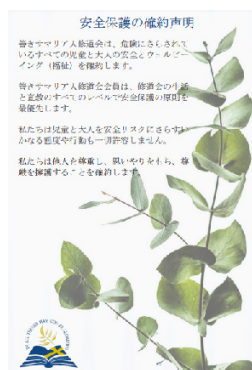
The Sisters in Kiribati will implement their safeguarding action plan in 2023.

C. GOOD SAMARITAN SISTERS IN JAPAN

Good Samaritan Sisters in Japan participate in voluntary ministry within their local community. Their ministry however does not involve direct contact with children.

In 2022, the Sisters received the Good Samaritan Safeguarding Statement of Commitment and Prayer in Japanese.

Right: Safeguarding Commitment Statement and Safeguarding Prayer translated to Japanese.



D. OBLATES

In early 2022, Oblates participated in a safeguarding session led by their local coordinator. The session provided an opportunity for Oblates to reflect on and discuss the Code of Practice. All oblates were invited to commitment to the practices presented to them.

In consultation with the Oblate Coordinator, Sonia Wagner sgs and the Safeguarding Coordinator, Australia the current safeguarding processes and practices applicable to the Oblate community were reviewed. Upon review a new framework outlining the safeguarding responsibilities of both the Congregation and Oblate community was finalised and approved in November 2022.

The Congregation of Sisters of the Good Samaritan is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and adults at risk.

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan prioritise principles of safeguarding at all levels of our Congregation's life and mission.

SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES

A. MINISTRY REGISTER

The Ministry Register is a tool that assists the Congregation in capturing the emerging needs of Sisters undertaking ministries with regards to safeguarding.

In 2022, the ministry register was moved online. Sisters registered to access the portal and updated their ministry details and completed a simple form requesting a response to questions relevant to the practices and culture of safeguarding.

On 2 November 2022, 77 Sisters in Australia received a request to complete their Ministry Register. The Sisters responded to questions according to their allocated safeguarding category of Church/Other (4), Congregational (3) or Semi-Retired (2A) or (2B).

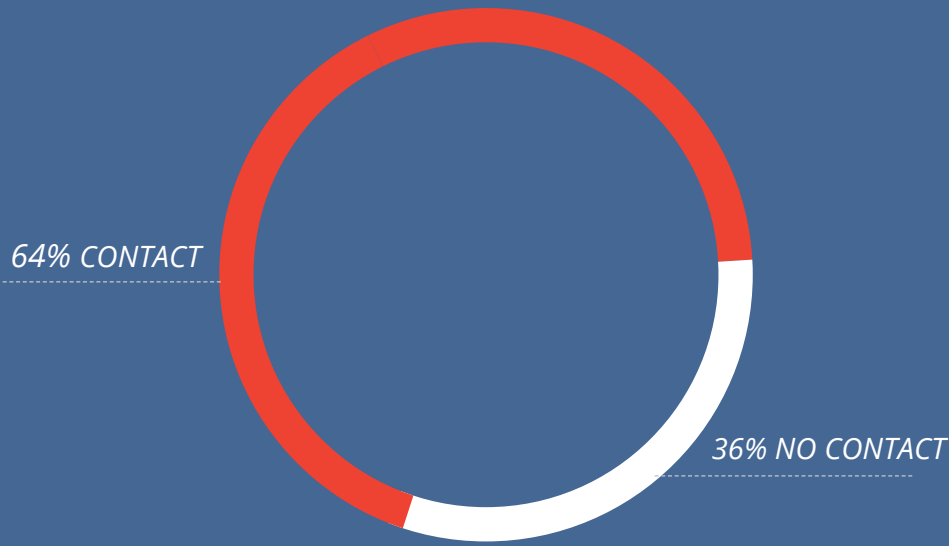
Sisters were invited to contact the Communities On Mission Team (COMT) Coordinator if they wished to discuss the safeguarding category they were allocated. When contact was made an evaluation of the current ministry occurred involving both the COMT Coordinator and the Safeguarding Coordinator.

Summary of data :

- 65% of Sisters have contact with children and/or adults at risk
- 100% of Sisters hold a valid WWCC
- 98% of Sisters in ministry have access to the SGS Safeguarding Policies
- 100% of Sisters have signed the Code of Practice
- 80% of Sisters in categories 3 & 4 (only) hold a contract or letter of appointment that formalises their ministry
- 50% of Sisters in categories 3 & 4 (only) hold a role description defining their ministry responsibilities
- 64% of Sisters in categories 3 & 4 (only) completed an annual performance review/ appraisal
- 72% of Sisters in categories 3 & 4 (only) attended 6-10 hours of professional/ pastoral supervision per annum
- 70% of Sisters in categories 3 & 4 (only) completed annual Safeguarding Education & Formation
- 91% of Sisters in category 2B (only) completed 6 hours of annual reflective practice (which entails ministry circle or supervision and/or Annual Safeguarding Education & Formation)

Good Samaritan Sisters of Kiribati & the Philippines will complete the Ministry Register in 2023.

SISTERS WHOSE MINISTRY INVOLVES CONTACT WITH CHILDREN AND/OR ADULTS AT RISK (AUSTRALIA)



LEARNINGS - SISTERS IN SAFEGUARDING CATEGORY CHURCH/OTHER (4) & CONGREGATIONAL (3) (AUSTRALIA)

Key Learning: Responses received from the Sisters indicate the application of consistent human resource practices, in relation to safeguarding is required. These include the following:

- 1. Role Descriptions** - establish clear expectations and responsibilities in relation to safety
- 2. Performance review/appraisal** - a proactive approach to reflect on skills and knowledge, especially in relation to the Code of Practice and safeguarding policies and procedures
- 3. Professional and Pastoral Supervision** - an interactive dialogue that seeks to review, reflect, critique and replenish
- 4. Safeguarding Education & Formation** - opportunities to build ability and capacity to protect children and adults from harm

Safeguarding Education (Philippines)

Three Sisters (including the Safeguarding Coordinator Donna Ferrer sgs) and staff from the Outreach Center and Kinder School attended a two week online safeguarding formation program. The program included full day sessions and evening work.

Topics included identifying abuse, types of abuse and its impacts, red flags, abuse in formation programs, clericalism, safe self, safe community, boundary issues, canon law and policies. Participants heard stories of abuse and cover up from victims/survivors.

The program was developed for Religious Congregations.

The Sisters that attended the program noted their appreciation for the delivery of such a program by Filipinos for Filipinos.

We have zero-tolerance to any attitude or action that makes children and adults less than safe.

We commit to being respectful, compassionate, and upholding the dignity of others.

SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES CONTINUED

B. AUDIT PREPARATION

A decision was made by the Superior and Council that the Congregation would be audited against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS).

The audit will be conducted by the Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) Audit Team and directed toward an assessment of compliance as well as the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes in place related to safeguarding.

Since August 2022, significant work by congregational personnel has been completed in preparation for the audit submission. The work has involved gathering evidence and detailing in narrative form how each indicator is demonstrated. The information is entered into an online portal provided by ACSL.

When finalised the Congregation will submit their audit report. ACSL will complete a desk top review in the first instance then schedule a visit to the Congregation to complete fieldwork. It is expected the Congregation will finalise this process mid to late 2024.

Our initial review indicates the practices, policies, and culture of safeguarding across the Congregation are developed and embedded.

C. POLICY REVIEW

The review schedule of policies for 2022 included many safeguarding policies.

The process required an initial review by the Safeguarding Coordinator who presented the policy to the Safeguarding Advisory Group for their feedback and input. A further review was conducted by the Director of Operations who submitted the final document to the Superior and Council for approval.

Safeguarding Policies approved in 2022 include:

- Reporting Abuse
- Responding to Historical Allegations of Abuse
- Complaints Handling
- Recruitment and Selection
- Supervision and Performance Review
- Conducting Internal Investigations (Child-related)
- Conducting Internal Investigations (General)

In the Philippines, led by Donna Ferrer sgs, all Kinder staff worked together every Friday to develop and finalise their Safeguarding Policy.

The Outreach Center also worked on a Safeguarding Policy. Much of the writing was undertaken by Sisters Grace Marcelo and Anne Dixon with input from staff.



We are committed to the
**NATIONAL CATHOLIC
SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS**

The Congregation of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan
pledge to implement the National Catholic Safeguarding
Standards and are committed to safe discipleship.

D. EMPLOYEES

Employees of the Congregation take part in an annual performance assessment. During this meeting, an opportunity is provided to reflect on the Good Samaritan Code of Practice.

The following questions are provided to assist with the reflection.

- How have you adhered to the Code of Practice over the past 12 months?
- Is there any aspect of the Code of Practice that you would like to discuss further?
- Is there anything in the work environment that raises a concern for you?

This practice contributes to a culture of safety, transparency and accountability.

Employees working directly with children = zero (0)

Employees working directly with adults at risk = twenty-two (22)

SAFEGUARDING PUBLICATIONS

A. ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER



Edition 1 of the Annual Safeguarding Newsletter was emailed to Sisters, employees and congregational partners in December. Articles address good news stories from the communities of Australia, Kiribati and the Philippines.

B. SAFEGUARDING RESOURCE PORTAL



An online portal of safeguarding resources is readily available to Congregational employees. The portal contains factsheets, information sheets, posters, forms, flyers, practice guides, video links, newsletters, and staff education & formation modules.

C. COMMUNITY RESOURCE

This hard copy document was sent via post to all Australian communities and residences of Sisters (92 in total). The purpose of the Safeguarding Community Resource is to provide a 'one stop' service to support Sisters. The resource is intended to be readily accessible to the Sister particularly when a query may arise in relation to safeguarding.

Information in the resource covers:

- Acknowledgement & Dedication
- SGS Commitment to Safeguarding
- SGS Code of Practice
- Breaches of the SGS Code of practice
- Receiving a Disclosure of Harm
- Support Services - Australia
- Ministry Register Safeguarding
- Categories
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- Community Safeguarding Contact - Australia
- Good Samaritan Safeguarding Prayer
- Glossary

SAFEGUARDING
PRAYER



Photo right

Kiribati community celebrating cultural day, mother and child.

God of compassion,

You call us to listen to your spirit inviting us to travel a new Jericho road boldly and courageously.

May all Good Samaritans show neighbourly concern and friendship wherever they live and work.

May we tend the wounds of those who struggle or grieve.

May we reach out with compassion for, and in service of, our fractured society.

May we remember and find inspiration in our own Good Samaritan story, of the loving care for children and vulnerable people as shown by Sisters and friends for over 160 years.

As Good Samaritans on mission let us always hold deep respect for the diverse gifts of Sisters, Oblates, colleagues and friends.

May we foster and strengthen our rich Good Samaritan charism

and allow each other to flourish.

Let us renew our commitment to creating safe environments for all, especially children in our care.

May we, as Good Samaritan women and men, use all gentleness as ministers of Christ's mercy and messengers of Christ's compassion.

We live out this call and responsibility in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

SAFEGUARDING SUPPORT

A. Safeguarding Advisory Group (SAG)

SAG continues to provide advice and support to the Superior and Council in the leadership and coordination of the Congregation's Safeguarding policies and protocols.

Membership of SAG are Sisters and lay professionals across Australia working in the fields of policy and research, social or educational change processes, child protection, compliance and risk management and professional standards. SAG members meet quarterly each year.

The current members of SAG are Veronica Hoey sgs (Chair), Mary Tobin, Kath Tierney rsm, Nick Halfpenny, and Liz Wiemers sgs.

A summary of topics discussed in 2022 include, but not limited to;

- Revision of seven (7) safeguarding policies
- Cultural Safety Statement (draft)
- Ministry Register and Safeguarding Categories
- Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd Audit
- Child Wise Project in Kiribati
- Safeguarding Action Plan Philippines
- Safeguarding Action Plan Australia
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2)
- Adults at Risk

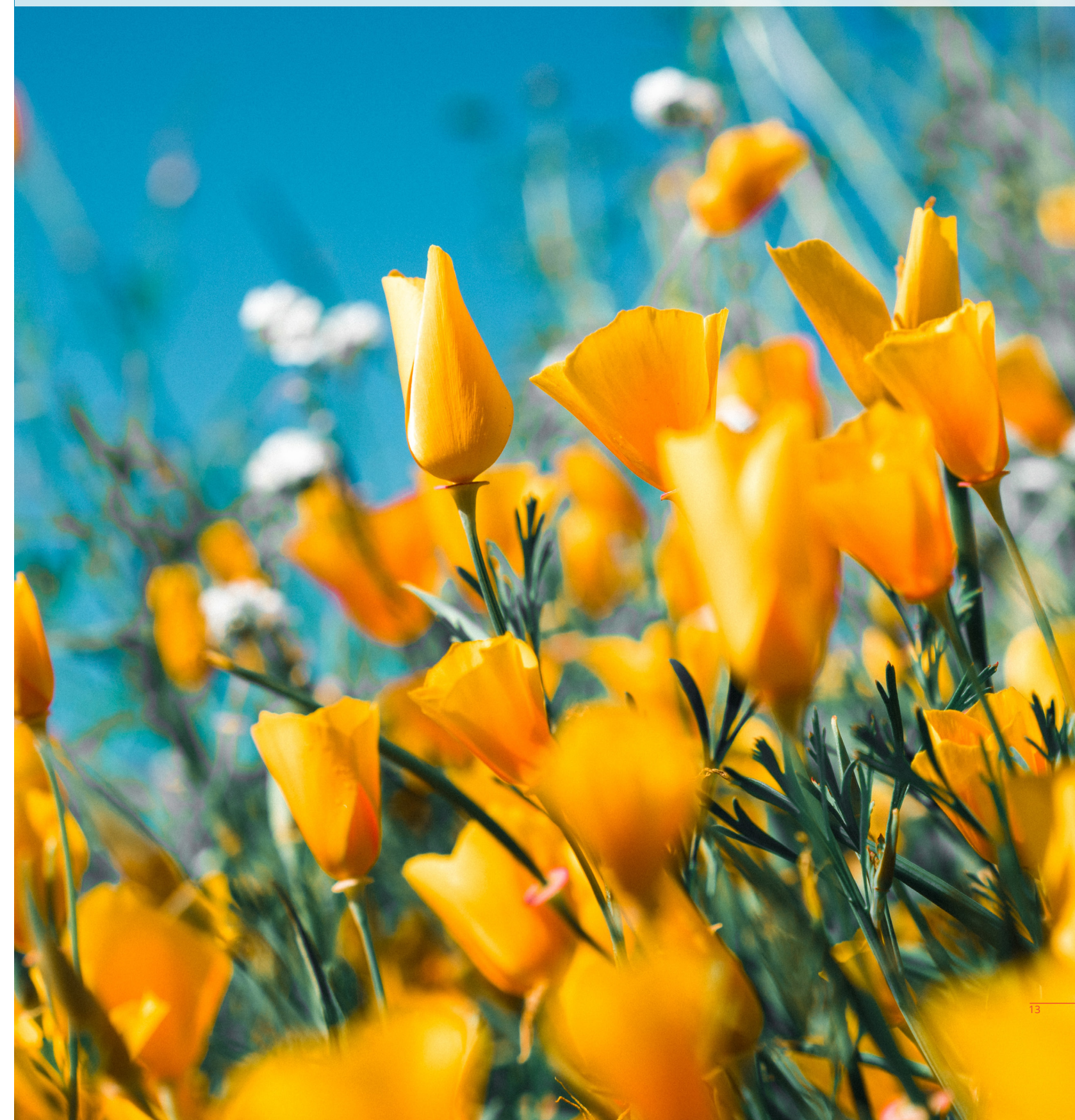


B. Catholic Religious Australia Communities of Practice (CRA CoP)

This platform provides an opportunity for representatives from religious groups and apostolic societies to come together to share best practices in safeguarding. CoP meet bimonthly and most often via zoom. It is chaired by the CRA National Executive Director.

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan Safeguarding Coordinator Australia is a member of a CRA CoP working party that is involved in drafting and developing resources for an online Code of Conduct Module. The resource will be available to all Religious Orders and Societies throughout Australia.

SEEK GOD AND BE NEIGHBOUR



You must honour everyone (RB 4, 8)

Never do to another what you do not want done to yourself (RB 4,9)

Go to help the troubled (RB 4, 18)

Console the sorrowing (RB 4, 19)

Speak the truth with heart and tongue (RB 4, 28)

SAFEGUARDING COMPLAINT HANDLING

PURPOSE

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan (the Congregation) believes that all children and adults have the right to make a complaint when they are dissatisfied by actions or inactions of Sisters, Oblates, employees, volunteers or contractors, or the services provided by the Congregation. The Congregation is committed to providing accessible and supportive pathways for Sisters, Oblates, employees, volunteers, contractors, families, children and community members who wish to make a complaint and will ensure complaints are handled with respect, fairness, efficiency and transparency.

PRINCIPLES & VALUES

- Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- Complaints will be dealt with honestly and

fairly.

- Complainants will be listened to and heard; this will be met with the support of appropriately trained personnel.
- Complainants and where appropriate their support personnel are kept informed as to the progress of dealing with their complaints.
- The Congregation's complaints handling approach prioritises the safety and well-being of children, adults at risk and secondary victims.
- Sisters, Oblates, employees, volunteers and contractors should be confident in reporting immediately any inappropriate behaviour around children and adults at risk.
- The Congregation will act impartially and promptly to assess, investigate and resolve complaints.
- The concept of procedural fairness will apply to all aspects of the complaint handling process.
- This policy is underpinned by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan (SGS) Code of Practice and is informed by the Good Samaritan commitment to safeguarding.

SAFEGUARDING SNAPSHOT

CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Kiribati & the Philippines - supporting children and adults at risk

3 Schools **2** Community Centers

Achievements

- 7** Policies reviewed
- 5** Publications finalised
- 1** National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Audit Preparation
- 3** Local safeguarding coordinators

Redress

- 14** National Redress Scheme Request for Information
- 6** Civil Claims (historical)
- 4** Non litigated complaints (historical)

Types of ministry include (but not limited to) ...

- Refugee & Asylum Seeker support
- English language tutor
- Prison ministry
- Health care support
- Pastoral care/outreach
- Disability support
- Hospice
- Parish ministry
- Teaching
- Spiritual Direction
- Counselling
- Formation, Supervision
- Networks, Committees
- Prayer ministry
- Accompaniment





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