

Safeguarding audit of Christian Brothers published today

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The Christian Brothers Oceania Province (CBOP) has key child safeguarding policies and procedures in place but there is still more that can be done to strengthen safeguarding practices within the organisation, according to an audit focusing on the safeguarding of children released by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd (CPSL) today.

The audit found that CBOP had either implemented or was substantially progressed in the implementation of 91 (89 per cent) out of the 102 indicators relevant to them under the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

CPSL CEO Sheree Limbrick said that on the back of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, CPSL is auditing Catholic Church organisations across Australia to make sure they have sound and robust processes in place to keep children safe.

“There’s no magic wand, but we do know there are key things every organisation needs to do to protect children. In the case of CBOP we found that key policies and procedures relating to safeguarding requirements are in place and operating, however some will need updating based on the results of this audit.

“For example, our audit has found that CBOP has detailed human resource and risk management frameworks covering its ministries and communities, which ensures that personnel who are working with children are appropriately vetted prior to commencing employment and have comprehensive child safety training and support.

“However, we identified a gap, in that annual performance reviews for employees and key volunteers are not currently documented and do not include reference to safeguarding requirements. In addition, we noted that safeguarding training is still in the process of being rolled out – all staff working with children have had appropriate training, but those in non-child-facing roles and all Brothers in the province have yet to undertake this training, which includes dissemination of an updated Code of Conduct.

“Creating consistency in safeguarding training and human resource practices will help to shape an environment where systems and procedures effectively support child safety.”

“From here, the Christian Brothers have committed to implementing the 15 recommendations we made to continue to improve their safeguarding practices.

We’ll be undertaking a further 270+ audits across the whole country over the next 18 months,” Ms Limbrick said.

Key things that CPSL looks for in an audit include:

- people in an organisation are appropriately screened and trained before working with children;
- children and families are involved and listened to;
- leaders are driving change and championing children’s rights; and
- a proper response is in place if an issue arises – people can trust that children will always be at the centre of the response.

CEO Sheree Limbrick is available for interview. The full audit report can be read on our website [here](#).

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