

- MEDIA RELEASE -

Collaboration key to safeguarding approach across Capuchin ministries

October 5, 2026

A safeguarding audit report of the Order of Friars Minor (Capuchin) published today by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) has found strong commitment to safeguarding across the religious institute's operations.

The audit assessed the Capuchins' progress in implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS), a framework for the safety and protection of children and adults at risk in Catholic organisations.

The Capuchins' work in Australia serves communities across a variety of operations, including administering three parishes in partnership with local dioceses, working in chaplaincy, and outreach to the poor.

ACSL's audit processes involved a thorough review of the Capuchin's safeguarding processes and policies, interviews with key safeguarding personnel, including friars, personnel in paid and volunteer roles, and a visit to 2 communities – one in Melbourne and one in Sydney. The NCSS audit did not include an assessment of their parishes since the relevant diocese has responsibility to ensure that safeguarding practices are in place.

ACSL CEO Dr Ursula Stephens said that the Capuchin Friars were able to demonstrate that 92 per cent of the NCSS criteria and indicators relevant to the Order were either fully implemented, or substantially progressed at the time of audit.

'The auditors noted the great opportunities the Capuchin Friars have for sharing safeguarding knowledge in their ministries. The parishes benefit from the support offered by Professional Standards Units within the dioceses, with the dioceses, in turn, benefiting from the resources the Friars have developed in their outreach ministries. Their willingness to work together is a critical component of creating a safe Church for everyone,' Dr Stephens said.

'As with any audit, there are learnings and opportunities for improvement. We have provided four recommendations to the Capuchin's that will further strengthen their ability to provide a safe environment for all people'. Dr Stephens said.

Br Robert Steart OFM, Provincial welcomed the publication of the audit report and expressed his gratitude to, to ACSL and to the auditor, Dr David Treanor, for a thorough, fair and independent process.

"Safeguarding is integral to our Franciscan mission. Inspired by the Gospel and the example of St Francis of Assisi we strive to be instruments of peace, healing and justice."

The audit report of the Order of Friars Minor (Capuchin) is published in the ACSL 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.