



**CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF
BROKEN BAY**

Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay

Safeguarding Annual Report 2024

Bishop's Commitment

Safeguarding Message from Bishop Anthony Randazzo

At the heart of our Christian calling is the conviction that all people—children, young people, adults, and especially the vulnerable—are created in the image of God and are to be treated with dignity, respect, and care. Safeguarding is not just a matter of civil compliance; it is a foundational expression of our faith and discipleship.

As Bishop, I carry the responsibility of ensuring that clear systems and processes are in place to promote a culture of safety and care across the breadth of our Diocese, to prevent harm, and to respond when concerns arise. Yet this responsibility does not lay with me alone. It is my vision that safeguarding becomes the shared work of every member of our diocesan community. Together, we are called into a partnership of protection, where the safety and well-being of all is upheld as central to our mission.

In February 2023, we introduced the Diocesan Safeguarding Awareness Framework—an initiative designed to support our ongoing formation, increase awareness, and strengthen our collective commitment. In 2024 the theme, The Voice of the Vulnerable, focused on Domestic and Family Violence. This is a hidden but devastating reality in many households. As people of faith, we cannot remain silent. The Church must be a place of refuge and advocacy, where all voices—especially those of the hurting—are heard and respected.

We are blessed to have dedicated safeguarding staff and teams across our parishes, Catholic Schools Broken Bay, CatholicCare, and the Chancery, working to ensure our policies and practices are consistent, accountable, and Christ-centred. Our diocesan resource, A Catholic Response to Domestic Violence, along with a full calendar of events and initiatives, supports the year's theme and reflects our commitment to change through education, formation, and compassion.

+ Anthony Randazzo



Executive Summary

In 2024, the Diocese of Broken Bay reaffirmed its commitment to safeguarding through a comprehensive program of cultural assessment, continuous improvement, risk management, and robust governance. In Catholic Schools Broken Bay, a Culture Survey conducted across all schools revealed high confidence among staff in the prioritisation of child safety, with 90% rating safeguarding systems highly. This aligns with a significant 258% increase in safeguarding-related contacts over four years, reflecting a positive shift in awareness and reporting culture.

A survey by CatholicCare Broken Bay demonstrated strong staff confidence and clarity around safeguarding responsibilities.

The Diocese continued to embed safeguarding best practices by maintaining rigorous policy reviews, investing in education and training for over 2,200 participants across its entities, and commissioning independent oversight to ensure transparency. An external audit, scoped by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) and completed by Demetrius Consulting, found 100% of relevant National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) indicators developed and 96% embedded, acknowledging the Diocese's proactive, leadership-led approach. In light of its recommendations, strategic plans are already underway to enhance systems further. Through innovation in risk management, including a new Parish Activity Risk Assessment Toolkit and enhanced training initiatives, the Diocese remains steadfast in its mission to build safe, accountable, and nurturing environments for all members of the community, with a focus on those most vulnerable, children, young people and adults at risk.



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

Safeguarding Commitment

Culture survey results and insights.



Survey Participation

In Term 2 of 2024, 1,261 staff members participated in a culture survey across Catholic Schools Broken Bay.

High Rating

90% of respondents rated the safeguarding priority statement 7 or 8 out of 8, indicating strong support.



Contact Increase

There has been a 258% increase in safeguarding contacts from schools to the Safeguarding Office since 2020.

Confidence Boost

76% of CatholicCare staff who responded to the survey felt confident in responding to safeguarding concerns, indicating strong preparedness.



Positive Outcomes

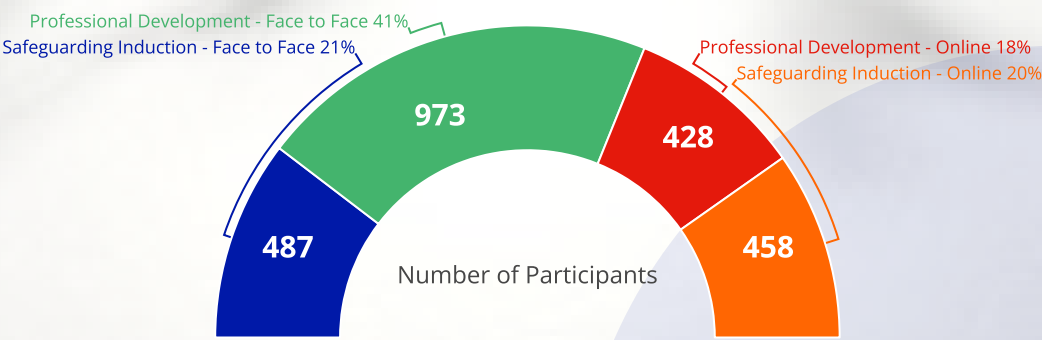
These findings, both in Catholic Schools Broken Bay and CatholicCare Broken Bay, reflect our collective commitment to embedding safeguarding at the heart of our mission

Achieving Practice Excellence and Continuous Improvement

As part of our commitment to safeguarding, the Diocese continues to undertake regular and thorough reviews of safeguarding policies and procedures. This ongoing process ensures that our practices remain current, compliant with legislation, and aligned with best practice standards. By actively seeking feedback, monitoring outcomes, and responding to emerging issues, we strive to create a culture of continual learning and improvement.

In support of our commitment to accountability and transparency, the Diocese engages qualified external investigators to manage certain matters when appropriate. This independent oversight helps to ensure integrity in our processes, builds community trust, and reinforces our resolve to handle safeguarding concerns with objectivity and professionalism. These measures are essential in fostering a safe environment where the dignity of every person is protected and upheld. This is further supported by the Diocese Safeguarding Strategic Advisory Panel members comprising of external experts.

The Diocese remains deeply committed to safeguarding through ongoing education and awareness initiatives delivered throughout the year. Across our parishes, schools, and agencies, we provide regular training, workshops, and resources to equip staff, volunteers, and clergy with the knowledge and confidence to recognise, respond to, and prevent harm. These efforts not only support compliance but help to embed a culture of safety, vigilance, and shared responsibility at every level of our community.



Risk Management, Legislative and Regulatory Compliance

We are committed to accountability in all programs and services we deliver, ensuring that we meet relevant standards and fulfil our legislative obligations. Clear safeguarding structures, processes, policies, guides, and frameworks are in place across the Diocese to support our community in working safely and effectively. We maintain compliance with the Office of the Children's Guardian Reportable Conduct Scheme and have robust systems within each agency to monitor and uphold Working with Children Check (WWCC) requirements, ensuring the highest standards of child safety and protection are consistently met.

Additionally, across our chancery, parishes, schools, and agencies, safeguarding risk is formally recorded in centralised risk registers to ensure it is subject to ongoing monitoring and regular review, supporting the continued effectiveness of risk mitigation strategies.

In 2024, the Diocese of Broken Bay participated, for the first time, in an external audit required by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL) against the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). Given their own regulatory requirements, Catholic Care Broken Bay and Catholic Schools Broken Bay submitted a declaration of assurance.

The final audit report was submitted and approved by ACSL on 24 October 2024. ACSL congratulated the Diocese on the safeguarding practices developed and embedded across the Diocese and the excellent progress in implementing the NCSS. The report identified that 100% of the relevant NCSS indicators were developed and 96% of those already embedded in the Diocese.

The report highlighted the Diocese's *"strong leadership, robust governance and mature systems"* describing its safeguarding efforts as exceeding compliance and proactively embedding the NCSS standards in everyday practice. Overall, the Diocese was recognised for having well-established risk management protocols, with further opportunities for improvement through streamlining and enhancing local implementation.

Conclusion

Embedding Safeguarding best practice throughout the Diocese continues to be our commitment as we recognise the importance always to continuously review and improve. Our work aligns with the Bishop's vision of safeguarding and in 2025, we will build on the findings of the recent external audit, which identified 15 recommendations. These findings reflect a strong safeguarding foundation, with room to enhance consistency and transparency across the Diocese.



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