



**AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
INCLUDING HILLSONG CHURCH,
INSTITUTIONAL REPORTING TO THE
NATIONAL OFFICE FOR CHILD SAFETY**

DECEMBER 2018

SECTION 1:

IDENTIFYING THE INSTITUTION

AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

PO Box 8093
Norwest NSW 2153

www.acc.org.au

Structure and Governance:

Australian Christian Churches (ACC) is a national association of Pentecostal churches in voluntary cooperation (Cooperative Fellowship), on terms of equality, uniting for evangelism, fellowship, order, discipline and other purposes. Each individual church is self-governing, but commits itself to work together with other churches in the movement for the purpose of mutual support and the spread of the gospel in Australia and the world.

The overarching governing document of the ACC Movement is the United Constitution¹.

Australian Christian Churches is a recognised denomination under the Marriage Act 1961.

SECTION 2:

GENERAL REPORTING AGAINST RECOMMENDATIONS RELEVANT TO ALL INSTITUTIONS

Theme 1: Making institutions child safe

Measure 1.1: New or revised Code of Conduct, policies and procedures for child safe institutions.

(Volumes 6, 7) (Recommendations 6.4-6.6, 7.8)

- All staff and volunteers comply with a Code of Conduct that sets behavioural standards towards children, explains reporting requirements and handling complaints of child sexual abuse;
- requires all people working within the institution to undergo initial and periodic training of the Code of Conduct, and
- ongoing documentation of policies and procedures related to child safe standards.

¹ ACC United Constitution

Description of measures implemented prior to December 2018:

ACC developed the ACC Child Protection Policy² in conjunction with the Australian Childhood Foundation (<https://www.childhood.org.au/>) and it was unanimously accepted at the ACC National Conference 2015, ACC's supreme governing body, with an implementation date of 1st December 2015. The overall strategy towards ongoing child protection was termed ACC Safer Churches. Further implementation Guidelines³ were developed in the lead up to the implementation date.

The Policy requires all ACC Credential and Certificate holders to complete Safer Churches training every three years. ACC requires that all ACC people who have a direct role with children, as defined by the policy, receive adequate training at a minimum every three years (ACC Safer Churches Guideline 1⁴). Safer Churches Induction training includes behavioural standards, reporting requirements and complaints handling.

Safer Churches Induction training is a six hour face-to-face workshop, or equivalent online training option (see [link](#)). This workshop has been developed by Safe Ministry Resources (SMR) for ACC. SMR is a company independent of ACC which specialises in providing child protection resources. A separate ACC Safer Churches Refresher course has also been developed in conjunction with SMR, for those who have previously completed the Induction course (see [link](#)).

Some current stats re training are:

- 10,276 ACC People and Credential holders have completed Safer Churches Induction training face-to-face 2015-2018*
- 944 ACC People and Credential holders have completed Safer Churches Induction training online since its launch in October 2017*
- 56 ACC People and Credential holders have completed the Safer Churches Refresher course online since its launch in October 2018*

In November 2017, ACC launched an ACC Safer Churches Volunteer Workshop for church volunteers:

- Victoria has trained 188 local church presenters*
- NSW has trained 12 local church presenters*
- 1494 ACC volunteers have completed this workshop*

ACC has two Codes of Conduct:

- ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct⁵*
- ACC Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct⁶*

² ACC Child Protection Policy, April 2015

³ ACC Safer Churches Guidelines, 2015

⁴ ACC Safer Churches Guideline, 2017

⁵ ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct, April 2015

⁶ ACC Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct

At the 2015 National Conference, changes were voted in to the ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct to include wording specifically related to the handling of notifications of sexual abuse, as per:

'Apart from strict adherence to all policies and procedures adopted by the ACC, a Minister who has been notified of an instance of sexual abuse must not engage in poor administrative practices, which include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Failure to take any action that should reasonably have been taken;*
- 2) Failure to notify the relevant State President, their appointee or other relevant officer;*
- 3) Failure to follow an appropriate consultative process;*
- 4) Excessive or unreasonable delay in process;*
- 5) Inadequate record-keeping;'*

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2018 to implement

In conjunction with Safe Ministry Resources, ACC will continue to review and update the Safer Churches Induction, ACC Safer Churches Volunteer Workshop and Refresher training to reflect ongoing legislative changes and good practice. These training options will continue to be available to ACC Credential and Certificate holders, as well as ACC people. As reflected in the ACC Child Protection Policy and Guidelines, training is required to be updated every three years.

Additionally, ACC is committed to communicating changes to legislation and Safer Churches Implementation procedures through the ACC State Executives to all our Pastors, to ensure that they are aware of their legal responsibilities and implementation of best practice.

Measure 1.2: Improvements to institutional responding and reporting

(Volume 7) (Recommendation 7.7 and 7.8)

- There is an effective complaint handling policy and procedure in place that sets out how the institutions should respond to complaints of child sexual abuse, and is understood by children, staff, volunteers and families.
- If a complaint is made, there is a risk assessment framework followed immediately and appropriate discipline of any internal perpetrators or decision-making of staff on allegations undergoing investigation.

ACC has clear procedural process for responding to complaints including the ACC Safer Churches Guidelines 8 and 11 and the ACC Safer Churches Helpline Process Flow Chart⁷.

The ACC Safer Churches Workshop Induction and ACC Safer Churches Volunteer Workshop provide training in complaints handling and response.

⁷ ACC Safer Churches Helpline Process Flow Chart

In 2016, ACC established a national Safer Churches Helpline 1800 number where ACC Churches and people can report concerns. This helpline is managed by an independent organisation SMR, provides local churches and individuals a place to report that is not internal, it also provides pastoral and risk management advice in relation to child protection issues.

ACC also has a Safer Churches information poster⁸, so children and families know who their local Safer Churches person is, as well as how to contact the ACC Safer Churches Helpline should they wish to do so.

Measure 1.3: Improvements to recordkeeping and information sharing

(Volume 8) (Recommendations 8.1 and 8.4)

- Institutions should implement the Royal Commission's principles for records and record keeping that responds to child sexual abuse occurring within institutions.

Included in the ACC Safer Churches Implementation resources is a "Record Keeping Procedure"⁹.

The ACC Safer Churches Manual (3rd Edition)¹⁰ points to this resource. This procedure is used in conjunction with ACC Guideline 8.

The ACC Safer Churches Implementation Resources, includes reporting forms¹¹ that are available to all ACC churches to use for their records.

In addition, all allegations are tabled at the State and National Executive (akin to Board) meetings and form part of the meeting records. SMR keeps records of all calls received through the Safer Churches Helpline.

THEME 2: Children's Voices

Measure 2.1: Children participate in decisions that affect them

(All relevant volumes and recommendations)

- *Information about how children are able to express their views and how their voices have been incorporated into child safe practices, including the design of policy and decision-making.*

*ACC Safer Churches Guideline 5- Promoting Empowerment and Participation states, "ACC People and constituent churches **shall** actively promote the empowerment and participation of all people at church in the protection of Children and Young People." Included in the ACC*

⁸ ACC Safer Churches PosterA3, 2017

⁹ ACC Safer Churches Implementation Resources SC024

¹⁰ ACC Safer Churches Manual 3rd Edition, page 36

¹¹ ACC Safer Churches Implementation Resources SC025

Safer Churches Implementation Resources, which were developed to assist with Implementation of this Guideline in 2018, are the following:

- *Participation and Inclusion of Children*
- *Feedback form for Children*
- *Feedback form for Parents and Carers*¹²

These resources are available to all ACC Churches via the ACC website.

The section relating to the Empowerment and Participation of children in ACC Safer Churches Manual Ed3¹³ has been redrafted to better reflect the 10 National Child Safe Principles.

The Royal Commission Recommendations were handed down at the end of 2017. ACC will hold its first National Conference since this time, in May 2019.

It is proposed that at our National Conference, children and young people will be involved in a forum to give voice to their views around child safe practice and complaints handling, as well as engage them in their ideas for resources that would assist them to know how to get help and who to talk to, should they need to. ACC proposes to engage with the expertise of the Australian National University's Institute for Child Protection Studies in development of this forum.

On an ongoing basis, practical strategies and resources to assist local churches find ways to allow children to participate in decisions that affect them, will be developed and communicated through the State Executives, via the Safer Churches Implementation Resources and through ACC Kids and Youth Alive.

¹² ACC Safer Churches Implementation Resources SC016, SC017, SC018

¹³ ACC Safer Churches Manual 3rd Edition, pages 14-17

SECTION 3:

REPORTING AGAINST INSTITUTION SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

All religious institutions (*Volume 16, recommendations 16.31 – 16.58*)

Recommendation 16.31 All institutions that provide activities or services of any kind, under the auspices of a particular religious denomination or faith, through which adults have contact with children, should implement the 10 Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission.

ACC is committed to implementing the 10 Child Safe Principles agreed to by all States and Territories in response to the Recommendations of the Royal Commission. These principles are included in ACC Safer Churches Induction, 3rd Edition¹⁴, training manual for 2019.

Recommendation 16.32 Religious organisations should adopt the Royal Commission's 10 Child Safe Standards as nationally mandated standards for each of their affiliated institutions.

As a Movement of separately incorporated and governed autonomously churches, ACC's powers to 'mandate' directives are limited. The ACC has unanimously adopted a Child Protection Policy, which in turn either needs to be adopted by the appropriate governance model in each local church, or used as a minimum standard for their own policy. The ACC Safer Churches Induction training is available to all ACC Credential and Certificate holders and people. The acceptance of each individual church's CPP is confirmed via an annual declaration.

There have been only a small number of examples of churches who are unable and/or unwilling to implement a CPP. In these cases, after much assistance offered, we have removed the Certificate of Fellowship from these churches, meaning they are no longer an ACC church. For the safety of children in the church, we would much rather work with them to see a CPP adopted and implemented, but as expressed earlier we have no legal basis to enforce this.

Recommendation 16.33 Religious organisations should drive a consistent approach to the implementation of the Royal Commission's 10 Child Safe Standards in each of their affiliated institutions.

ACC Safer Churches Child Protection Policy and Guidelines, along with the ACC Safer Churches Implementation Resources address this recommendation. All Safer Churches, resources (including policies, procedures, guidelines, links to training etc) are available to our pastors and churches through a single online portal.

¹⁴ ACC Safer Churches Manual 3rd Edition, page 4

Recommendation 16.34 Religious organisations should work closely with relevant state and territory oversight bodies to support the implementation of and compliance with the Royal Commission's 10 Child Safe Standards in each of their affiliated institutions.

ACC is committed to working closely with relevant State and Territory oversight bodies to support the implementation of, and compliance with the 10 Child Safe Principles ratified by the States and Territories in response to the Royal Commission recommendations.

ACC is represented on the NSW Survivor and Faith Groups Child Safety Standing Committee.

Recommendation 16.35 Religious institutions in highly regulated sectors, such as schools and out-of-home care service providers, should report their compliance with the Royal Commission's 10 Child Safe Standards, as monitored by the relevant sector regulator, to the religious organisation to which they are affiliated.

Not applicable

Recommendation 16.36 Consistent with Child Safe Standard 1, each religious institution in Australia should ensure that its religious leaders are provided with leadership training both pre- and post-appointment, including in relation to the promotion of child safety.

Refer Measure 1.1.

Recommendation 16.37 Consistent with Child Safe Standard 1, leaders of religious institutions should ensure that there are mechanisms through which they receive advice from individuals with relevant professional expertise on all matters relating to child sexual abuse and child safety. This should include in relation to prevention, policies and procedures and complaint handling. These mechanisms should facilitate advice from people with a variety of professional backgrounds and include lay men and women.

ACC is committed to working with all State and Territory Governments and other organisations that may provide expert advice as outlined in the recommendation above. ACC is committed to participation in the NSW Survivor and Faith Groups Child Safety Standing Committee and, as part of this committee, will be engaging with Survivor Groups such as the Blue Knott Foundation and Brave Hearts during 2019. ACC has an ongoing relationship with SMR, who provides expertise in the area of child protection.

Recommendation 16.38 Consistent with Child Safe Standard 1, each religious institution should ensure that religious leaders are accountable to an appropriate authority or body, such as a board of management or council, for the decisions they make with respect to child safety.

The ACC United Constitution and the ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct sets out requirements of accountability for ACC Credential and Certificate holders.¹⁵

Recommendation 16.39 Consistent with Child Safe Standard 1, each religious institution should have a policy relating to the management of actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise in relation to allegations of child sexual abuse. The policy should cover all individuals who have a role in responding to complaints of child sexual abuse.

*ACC approved a "Conflict of Interest" Guideline¹⁶ in April 2015. The independently run Saffer Churches Helpline 1800 number also helps to ensure that any potential conflicts are appropriately managed. ACC Safer Churches Guideline 8 provides a national standard reporting procedure. ACC Safer Churches Guideline 11 states, "When responding to allegations of misconduct and/or abuse by those who are not ACC Credential or Certificate holders, ACC People **shall** work through an appropriate process which affords natural justice to all parties" A process of natural justice by definition requires that conflicts of interest be addressed and that the process is conducted without bias.*

At the 2015 National Conference, the ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct was adjusted to include the following wording which specifically addresses the above recommendation, ie; 'Ministers must consider their other duties, such as their duty of confidentiality, and the duty to avoid conflicts of interest in discharging their duties to adequately respond to reported instances of sexual abuse.'

Recommendation 16.40 Consistent with Child Safe Standard 2, wherever a religious institution has children in its care, those children should be provided with age-appropriate prevention education that aims to increase their knowledge of child sexual abuse and build practical skills to assist in strengthening self-protective skills and strategies. Prevention education in religious institutions should specifically address the power and status of people in religious ministry and educate children that no one has a right to invade their privacy and make them feel unsafe.

ACC is committed to this recommendation and this will be a priority development in conjunction with Safe Ministry Resources in 2019. This will include contact with Andrea Musulin and the Australian Catholic University's Institute of Child Protection Studies.

Recommendation 16.41 Consistent with Child Safe Standard 3, each religious institution should make provision for family and community involvement by publishing all policies relevant to child safety on its website, providing opportunities for comment on its approach to child safety, and seeking periodic feedback about the effectiveness of its approach to child safety.

¹⁵ ACC United Constitution, May 2017, Article 11

¹⁶ ACC Conflict of Interest Guideline, April 2015

ACC churches can publish child protection policy and procedure on their church websites and can provide their people with the information regarding who is their local Safer Churches person/ team, as well as the contact number for the ACC Safer Churches helpline.

It is proposed that ACC continue to develop resources that can be used by local churches that communicate the ongoing commitment to child safety and provide information about feedback opportunities.

Included in the ACC Safer Churches Implementation resources are feedback forms for both children and parents.¹⁷

Recommendation 16.42 Consistent with Child Safe Standard 5, each religious institution should require that candidates for religious ministry undergo external psychological testing, including psychosexual assessment, for the purposes of determining their suitability to be a person in religious ministry and to undertake work involving children.

We have investigated a number of options for this, but have not yet arrived at a final solution. Investigations to continue.

Recommendation 16.43 Each religious institution should ensure that candidates for religious ministry undertake minimum training on child safety and related matters, including training that: a. equips candidates with an understanding of the Royal Commission's 10 Child Safe Standards b. educates candidates on: i. professional responsibility and boundaries, ethics in ministry and child safety ii. policies regarding appropriate responses to allegations or complaints of child sexual abuse, and how to implement these policies iii. how to work with children, including childhood development iv. identifying and understanding the nature, indicators and impacts of child sexual abuse.

Covered in Measure 1.1.

Recommendation 16.44 Consistent with Child Safe Standard 5, each religious institution should ensure that all people in religious or pastoral ministry, including religious leaders, are subject to effective management and oversight and undertake annual performance appraisals.

ACC Safer Churches Guidelines 9 and 10 outline the need for adequate induction, supervision, and ministry review. Every ACC credential holder is subject to Movement oversight via the ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct and Grievance Procedure¹⁸, as well as annual/biennial declarations.

Recommendation 16.45 Consistent with Child Safe Standard 5, each religious institution should ensure that all people in religious or pastoral ministry, including religious leaders,

¹⁷ ACC Safer Churches Implementation resources SC017, SC018

¹⁸ ACC Grievance Procedure for Certificate Holders 2017

have professional supervision with a trained professional or pastoral supervisor who has a degree of independence from the institution within which the person is in ministry.

ACC is in the early stages of addressing this recommendation. Chaplaincy Australia (a ministry of ACC) have developed a Professional Supervision course that is available to all ACC Credential and Certificate holders as well as ACC people in ministry.

It is anticipated that this course ([link here](#)) will be one of the tools used to address supervision of credential holders. ACC Safer Churches Guideline 10 addresses supervision of church workers.

Currently, 'junior' pastors minister under the supervision of a Senior Pastor or the relevant State Executive.

Recommendation 16.46 Religious institutions which receive people from overseas to work in religious or pastoral ministry, or otherwise within their institution, should have targeted programs for the screening, initial training and professional supervision and development of those people. These programs should include material covering professional responsibility and boundaries, ethics in ministry and child safety.

The ACC Child Protection Policy and Procedures are binding for ACC Constituent Churches and clearly state the requirement for ACC Churches to comply with relevant State and Territory Laws around screening and reporting, as well as following ACC Guideline 1 in regard to adequate training. There are screening processes in place to ensure the proper visas are in place for people wishing to apply for an ACC credential. Additionally, any credential applicant that comes from another denomination overseas, must provide a letter of recommendation/reference from that denomination.

Recommendation 16.47 Consistent with Child Safe Standard 7, each religious institution should require that all people in religious or pastoral ministry, including religious leaders, undertake regular training on the institution's child safe policies and procedures. They should also be provided with opportunities for external training on best practice approaches to child safety.

ACC Safer Churches Induction and ACC Safer Churches Volunteer workshop training address this recommendation as outlined in ACC Safer Churches Guideline 1. ACC training is developed in conjunction with SMR, a company external to ACC.

Recommendation 16.48 Religious institutions which have a rite of religious confession for children should implement a policy that requires the rite only be conducted in an open space within the clear line of sight of another adult. The policy should specify that, if another adult is not available, the rite of religious confession for the child should not be performed.

This is not applicable to ACC Churches, however, both ACC Safer Churches Guidelines 4 and 15 refer to appropriate boundaries in this regard.

Recommendation 16.49 Codes of conduct in religious institutions should explicitly and equally apply to people in religious ministry and to lay people.

ACC has both a Ministerial Code of Conduct and Volunteer Church Worker Code of Conduct.

These are referenced in ACC Safer Churches Guidelines 3 and 10 and included in the Safer Churches Induction and Volunteer training.

Recommendation 16.50 Consistent with Child Safe Standard 7, each religious institution should require all people in religious ministry, leaders, members of boards, councils and other governing bodies, employees, relevant contractors and volunteers to undergo initial and periodic training on its code of conduct. This training should include: a. what kinds of allegations or complaints relating to child sexual abuse should be reported and to whom b. identifying inappropriate behaviour which may be a precursor to abuse, including grooming c. recognising physical and behavioural indicators of child sexual abuse d. that all complaints relating to child sexual abuse must be taken seriously, regardless of the perceived severity of the behaviour.

ACC Safer Churches Guidelines 1, 6, 7 and 8 as well as the ACC Safer Churches Induction and ACC Safer Churches Volunteer workshop address this recommendation.

Recommendation 16.51 All religious institutions' complaint handling policies should require that, upon receiving a complaint of child sexual abuse, an initial risk assessment is conducted to identify and **minimise any risks to children**.

ACC Safer Churches Guideline 8 provides procedure to address this recommendation.

Recommendation 16.52 All religious institutions' complaint handling policies should require that, if a complaint of child sexual abuse against a person in religious ministry is plausible, and there is a risk that person may come into contact with children in the course of their ministry, the person be stood down from ministry while the complaint is investigated.

ACC Safer Churches Guideline 8 provides procedure to address this recommendation.

Recommendation 16.53 The standard of proof that a religious institution should apply when deciding whether a complaint of child sexual abuse has been substantiated is the balance of probabilities, having regard to the principles in *Briginshaw v Briginshaw*.

*The ACC National Grievance Procedure applies the principles in *Briginshaw v Briginshaw* in determining the standard of proof. In NSW, Victoria and the ACT, where Reportable Conduct legislation has been introduced or announced, local churches must apply the standard of burden of proof, set out in *Briginshaw v Briginshaw*.*

Recommendation 16.54 Religious institutions should apply the same standards for investigating complaints of child sexual abuse whether or not the subject of the complaint is a person in religious ministry.

ACC requires that ACC Child Protection Policy be implemented by constituent churches, including Guidelines for reporting- Guidelines 8, 11, 15¹⁹.

ACC has established a national helpline to assist churches to follow required procedures.

Allegations made against an ACC Credential or Certificate Holder must be handled by the appropriate State Executive using the ACC Grievance Procedure, alongside relevant State Laws for reporting.

In those States and Territories where Reportable Conduct Schemes apply, ACC Churches need to comply with this legislation.

Recommendation 16.55 Any person in religious ministry who is the subject of a complaint of child sexual abuse which is substantiated on the balance of probabilities, having regard to the principles in *Briginshaw v Briginshaw*, or who is convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse, should be permanently removed from ministry. Religious institutions should also take all necessary steps to effectively prohibit the person from in any way holding himself or herself out as being a person with religious authority.

The ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct and Grievance Procedure outlines the discipline procedure for ACC Credential and Certificate holders. An adverse finding in regards to child sexual abuse would result in the withdrawal of an ACC Credential or Certificate.

A number of articles²⁰ have been written to our Movement from our National President with regard to the proper use of the term Pastor, being only for those who hold an ACC Credential/Certificate (and who subsequently have completed the requisite checks and training). This message has been reinforced verbally at our State and National Conferences.

Recommendation 16.56 Any person in religious ministry who is convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse should: a. in the case of Catholic priests and religious, be dismissed from the priesthood and/or dispensed from his or her vows as a religious b. in the case of Anglican clergy, be deposed from holy orders c. in the case of Uniting Church ministers, have his or her recognition as a minister withdrawn d. in the case of an ordained person in any other religious denomination that has a concept of ordination, holy orders and/or vows, be dismissed, deposed or otherwise effectively have their religious status removed.

The ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct and Grievance Procedure outlines the discipline procedure for ACC Credential and Certificate holders. If an ACC Credential or Certificate Holder is convicted of child sexual abuse, they would immediately lose their Credential/Certificate.

¹⁹ ACC Safer Churches Guidelines, Aug 2017

²⁰ ACC Articles regarding use of term 'Pastor'

Recommendation 16.57 Where a religious institution becomes aware that any person attending any of its religious services or activities is the subject of a substantiated complaint of child sexual abuse, or has been convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse, the religious institution should: a. assess the level of risk posed to children by that perpetrator's ongoing involvement in the religious community b. take appropriate steps to manage that risk.

ACC has a "Known Offender Guideline"²¹ which addresses this recommendation.

ACC church boards can seek external advice in regards to these matters and this is clearly recommended in the Known Offender Guideline.

Recommendation 16.58 Each religious organisation should consider establishing a national register which records limited but sufficient information to assist affiliated institutions identify and respond to any risks to children that may be posed by people in religious or pastoral ministry.

The autonomous nature of ACC constituent churches places the management of known offenders on local church boards. The ACC Known Offender Guideline recommends that local churches report to their local church Insurers. ACC has suggested to local churches who have a known offender who moves to another ACC church that appropriate disclosure be made to the leadership of that local church under qualified privilege for public safety reasons (NSW Supreme Court. Haddon v Forsyth. 2011).

Additional supporting information relating specifically to Hillsong Church's response to the Royal Commission's Recommendations, can be located in Section 4.

²¹ ACC Known Offender Guideline, Aug 2017

SECTION 4: ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

All documents referenced throughout Sections 1-3 are included in Section 4.

Document	Section 4 Page
United Constitution	1
ACC Child Protection Policy	35
ACC Safer Churches Guidelines, 2015	48
ACC Safer Churches Guidelines, 2017	57
ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct	68
ACC Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct and Declaration	77
ACC Safer Churches Helpline Process Flow Chart	79
ACC Safer Churches Poster	80
ACC Safer Churches Manual 3rd Edition	81
Grievance Procedure for Certificate Holders	161
Conflict of Interest Guideline	168
ACC Known Offender Guideline	176
ACC Articles regarding use of term 'Pastor'	177
ACC Safer Churches Implementation Resources SC016	179
ACC Safer Churches Implementation Resources SC017	182
ACC Safer Churches Implementation Resources SC018	183
ACC Safer Churches Implementation Resources SC024	184
ACC Safer Churches Implementation Resources SC025	185
Hillsong Letter	187
Hillsong Safe Church Framework	190
Hillsong Annual Report	197



OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

Title:	United Constitution
Document Type:	Movement Constitution
Version:	2017:1
Date:	May 2017
Approval:	Amendments approved National Conference 2017

UNITED CONSTITUTION
(Incorporating State By-laws)

ARTICLE 1 THE NAME

- 1.1** The name of the Movement shall be the AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.
- 1.2** The name of the movement was previously Assemblies of God in Australia.
- 1.3** Only churches, ministries and ministers properly affiliated with the Movement, shall be authorised to use the logo and name of the "Australian Christian Churches".

ARTICLE 2 DEFINITION

2.1 The Movement

The Movement is the unincorporated association known as "AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES" It is a national association of Pentecostal churches in voluntary cooperation (Cooperative Fellowship), on terms of equality, uniting for evangelism, fellowship, order, discipline and other purposes. Its supreme governing body shall be the National Conference.

In circumstances where it is necessary for any aspects, initiatives or functions of the Movement to be incorporated, the manner and form of such incorporations must conform to the requirements set out in this constitution.

2.2 Cooperative Fellowship

"Cooperative Fellowship" describes the principles of relationship that provide cohesion and structure for the Movement. It is relevant to the relationship of individuals to a local church and the relationship of local churches to the Movement.

2.2.1 Cooperative Fellowship and the Local Church

The local church is a body of individual believers that come together, in Christian love, to partner in serving God and the community. The individual believers voluntarily work together for the purpose of spreading the Gospel, meeting needs in the community and building up the church. There is a respect and responsiveness to leadership in the church but each individual has an individual responsibility for his/her relationship with God.

2.2.2 Cooperative Fellowship and the Movement

The Movement is a conference of local churches that come together, in Christian love, to work cooperatively to attain common objectives (ARTICLE 3). It is acknowledged that the local church is God's chosen means for communicating the Gospel and as such, it is an express purpose of the movement to empower and encourage local churches to fulfil their mandates.

The Movement recognises the autonomy of the local church within the movement but cooperative fellowship places a responsibility on a local church to function consistently with the United Constitution, the State By-Laws and all policies approved by the National Conference of the movement.

2.3 National Conference

The National Conference is the supreme governing body of the Movement and operates according to ARTICLE 5 of this United Constitution.

2.4 State Conference

State Conferences are established under the authority of the national Movement and operate according to the United Constitution and the State By-Laws of the Movement.

2.4.1 The Movement within the State of Queensland shall be called "Australian Christian Churches Qld".

2.4.2 The Movement within the State of New South Wales shall be called "Australian Christian Churches NSW".

2.4.3 The Movement within the State of Victoria shall be called "Australian Christian Churches Vic".

2.4.4 The Movement within the State of Tasmania shall be called "Australian Christian Churches Tas".

2.4.5 The Movement within the State of South Australia shall be called "Australian Christian Churches SA".

2.4.6 The Movement within the State of Western Australia shall be called "Australian Christian Churches WA".

2.4.7 The Movement within a Territory of Australia may be called either by using an abbreviation of the name of the Territory after "Australian Christian Churches" or not named separately and included within the administration of the State in the discretion of the National Executive from time to time.

2.5 Incorporation

In circumstances where it is considered necessary for any aspects, initiatives or functions of the Movement to be incorporated, the manner and form of such incorporations shall conform to the requirements of ARTICLE 22 of this Constitution.

ARTICLE 3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 To present the Gospel in a way that is consistent with the doctrines of the Movement as outlined in ARTICLE 4.

3.2 To encourage integrity and righteous living in its leaders, credentialed ministers and

congregation members.

- 3.3** To plant and sustain churches that provide a safe and nurturing environment in which Christians can grow and others can find faith in Christ.
- 3.4** To engage in Christian action in the relief of human suffering and need by all available means and in development programs appropriate to developing countries and disadvantaged groups.
- 3.5** To train, ordain and send out ministers of the Gospel, missionaries and other ministries, for the work of God in Australia and overseas.
- 3.6** To allow and encourage individuals and churches to fulfil their God given purpose without undue interference or restriction on their activities and ministries.
- 3.7** To establish a code of conduct, policies and standards of behaviour, endorsed by the National Conference, that will be required standards for credential holders and churches.
- 3.8** To establish and maintain such departments and institutions as may be necessary for the fulfilment of the Movement's mission both in Australia and overseas.
- 3.9** To establish corporate entities on the basis set out in ARTICLE 22, under the ultimate control of its elected executives (National and State), to carry out the business of the Movement in an efficient and lawful manner.
- 3.10** To use whatever means are available, whether traditional or electronic, to communicate information to its ministers, constituents and the community at large.
- 3.11** To, either directly in its own right where possible or by its corporate entities, own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, lease or otherwise dispose of such property, real or otherwise or engage in any lawful activity whatever, as may be considered necessary to fulfil the objectives of the Movement.

ARTICLE 4 DOCTRINAL BASIS

Preamble

The Holy Scriptures, known as the Bible, is the inspired Word of God and our all sufficient rule for faith and practice.

These articles of faith of the Australian Christian Churches, grounded in these scriptures, are given as a basis for belief, fellowship and ministry "that we all preach the same thing" (1 Corinthians 1:10). Let it be remembered, however, that this is not given as a summary of the complete revelation of biblical truth, only that it covers our present needs as to these fundamental doctrines.

4.1 The Eternal Godhead

We believe in the unity of the true and living God who is the eternal, self-existent one, who has revealed himself as one being in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and who is the Creator and preserver of things visible and invisible (Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 86:9-10; Isaiah 43:10-11; Matthew 28:19, Mark 12:29; John 1:1-3).

4.2 The Lord Jesus Christ

We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the triune Godhead, who was and is the eternal Son of God; that he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary.

We believe in his sinless life, miraculous ministry, substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, glorious ascension, and abiding intercession (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 24:39; Acts 1:9; 2:22; 10:38; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 4:8-10; Hebrews 7:25-26; 9:12; 1 Peter 2:22).

4.3 The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune Godhead, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is ever present and active in the work of convicting and regenerating the sinner, and sanctifying and guiding the believer into all truth (John 14:26; 16:8-11; Romans 8:14; 1 Peter 1:2).

4.4 The Holy Scriptures

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, namely the Old and New Testaments in their original writings. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is infallible, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us all in all things necessary to our salvation, and is absolutely supreme and sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible does not simply contain the Word of God, but is, in reality, the complete revelation and very Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith (Matthew 5:17-18; 24:35; John 4:39; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

4.5 The Devil

We believe in the personality of the devil, who, by his influence, brought about the downfall of man, and now seeks to destroy the faith of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:1-15; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; John 13:2; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8).

4.6 The Fall of Man

We believe that man was created by God by specific immediate act and in his image and likeness, morally upright and perfect, but fell by voluntary transgression.

Consequently, all men are separated from original righteousness, being depraved and without spiritual life (Genesis 1:26-31; 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-21).

4.7 The Atonement

We believe that God's answer to man's sinful state is in the death of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, on the cross, whose sufferings and shed blood have made full atonement for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and that there is no other ground for salvation (2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:25-26; 1 Peter 1:19-20).

4.8 Salvation of Man

We believe that salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This experience is also known as the new birth and is an instantaneous and complete operation of the Holy Spirit whereby the believing sinner is regenerated, justified, and adopted into the family of God and becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus and heir of eternal life (Titus 2:11; 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 5:1).

4.9 The Church

We believe that the church is the body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfilment of its great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the general assembly and church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven (Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:22; Hebrews 12:23).

4.10 Water Baptism

We believe that baptism, by single immersion, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is enjoined on all who have repented and have believed in Christ as Saviour and Lord, and that it is symbolic of our identification with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47-48; 2:38-39; Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 2:12).

4.11 The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4); a memorial of his sufferings and death (1 Corinthians 11:26); and a prophecy of his second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26), and is enjoined on all believers "until He comes" (Matthew 26:26-28; Luke 22:15-20; Acts 20:7).

4.12 Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God. We believe it is the glorious provision for every believer in Christ to be made pure in heart and wholly sanctified, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, by the blood of Jesus and the Word of God (John 17:15-19; Acts 15:8-9; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23-24; Hebrews 2:11; 10:16-19).

4.13 The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

We believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the bestowing of the believer with power to be an effective witness for Christ. This experience is distinct from, and subsequent to, the new birth; is received by faith, and is accompanied by the manifestation of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, as the initial evidence (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-4; 8:15-19; 11:14-17; 19:1-7).

4.14 Gifts

We believe in the present day operation of the nine supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. We also believe in the ministry gifts of Christ, as recorded in Ephesians 4:11-13.

4.15 Divine Healing

In accordance with the teachings of the scriptures, we trust our heavenly Father to protect and heal our bodies from sickness and disease. We believe that divine healing for the body, as with all redemptive blessings of God, has been provided for us by the atoning death and victorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is the privilege of all believers and it is appropriated by faith in our heavenly Father's unfailing promises (Exodus 15:26; Psalms 103:3; Isaiah 53:4; Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 16:17-18; 1 Peter 2:24; James 5:14-15).

4.16 The Second Coming of Christ

We believe in the premillennial, imminent and personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ to gather his people to himself. Having this glorious hope and earnest expectation, we purify ourselves, even as he is pure, so that we may be ready to meet him when he comes. (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; Titus 2:13; James 5:7-8; 1 John 2:28; 3:2-3).

4.17 The Millennium

We believe in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to set up his millennial reign on this earth (Psalm 11; 96:10-13; Daniel 7.22; Zechariah 14:5; Revelation 5:9-10; 20:1-10).

4.18 The Punishment of the Wicked

We believe in the everlasting punishment of the wicked (in the sense of eternal torment) who wilfully reject and despise the love of God manifested in the great sacrifice of his only Son on the cross for their salvation (Matthew 25:46; 13:49-50; Luke 12:47-48; Romans 6:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Revelation 20:11-15).

We believe that the devil and his angels and whoever is not found written in the book of life shall be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Revelation 19:20; 20:10-15).

4.19 The New Heavens and the New Earth

"We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation chapters 21-22).

4.20 Creation

We believe that the heavens and earth and all original life forms, including humanity, were made by the specific immediate creative acts of God as described in the account of origins presented in Genesis, and that all biological changes which have occurred since creation are limited to variation within each species.

ARTICLE 5 THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

5.1 Purpose

It shall be the function of the National Conference as the supreme governing body:

- 5.1.1** To promote possibilities for fellowship between local churches.
- 5.1.2** To make whatever decisions may be necessary in the interests of the Movement.
- 5.1.3** To carry out elections to office in accordance with this United Constitution and to appoint committees for special work as occasion may arise.
- 5.1.4** To receive and consider reports from the states, departments, officers and committees and, where appropriate, make any decisions or recommendations arising there from.
- 5.1.5** To consider and decide on any constitutional matter that may arise.

5.2 Constituents

The voting constituents of the National Conference of the Movement shall be:

- 5.2.1** Those churches which at the date of adopting this constitution hold a current Certificate of Fellowship.
- 5.2.2** Such registered churches as shall thereafter be received into the Movement by the granting of a Certificate of Fellowship.
- 5.2.3** Those individuals who hold a current Ordained Minister's Credential at the time of commencement of a National Conference.
- 5.2.4** Churches will cease to be voting constituents of the National Conference of the Movement at such a time as they no longer hold a current Certificate of Fellowship, and individuals will cease to be a voting constituent when, and from the time, an Ordained Minister's Credential is withdrawn.
- 5.2.5** Pastors and churches must be up to date with their National dues to be a voting constituent at the National Conference.

5.3 Sessions

The National Conference shall be held biennially, at a time and place determined by the National Executive or by a sitting of the National Conference.

5.4 Notice

The National Secretary shall send to all voting constituents, a notice in writing of the Conference, not later than four months before the commencement of conference. All remits from voting constituents, which must be in the form of a resolution, shall be in the hands of the National Secretary three months prior to the commencement of conference.

If a voting constituent wishes to submit a remit to National Conference it must first be submitted for discussion at Regional level and receive endorsement by the regional leadership body. If the Regional leadership endorses the remit, it may then be forwarded to the appropriate State Executive. In states where there are no regions, the remit may be sent directly to the State Executive.

If the State Executive endorses the remit, it must then be forwarded to the National Secretary for inclusion on the agenda for the National Conference. If the State Executive fails to endorse a remit, the Region has the right to appeal to the next State Conference. If the State Conference endorses the remit it must then be forwarded to the National Secretary for inclusion on the agenda for the National Conference.

If a remit fails to pass at a Regional or State level, there is no further right of appeal. Remits may be submitted direct to the National Secretary by State Conferences, State Executives and the National Executive. All remits shall be notified to registered churches and ministers holding a current Ordained Minister's Credential six weeks prior to the commencement of conference as part of a provisional agenda.

5.5 Voting at National Conference

5.5.1 All registered churches that hold a current Certificate of Fellowship and are in financial standing, may be represented by one delegate for every two hundred and fifty (250) adults in regular attendance (18 years and over) or part thereof and each such delegate shall be entitled to one vote.

5.5.2 Every ordained minister is entitled to one vote.

5.5.3 In the event that the name of a church delegate is not received by the National Secretary, twenty-one days prior to the commencement of the National Conference, the National Executive may, in its absolute discretion, veto such delegate's voting power in which case the delegate shall have no voting rights but may attend as an observer.

5.6 Special Conference

Special conferences may be called by the National Executive at its discretion, or at the request of two or more of the State Executives. A written notification of the Conference setting forth the reasons for the special conference shall be distributed to the State Secretaries, churches and those holding Ordained Minister's Credentials, not less than three weeks prior to the commencement of the special conference, which shall consider the matters listed on the notice but no other business, except as provided for in ARTICLE 19 of this Constitution.

5.7 Chairman

The National President, or their nominee, and in their absence, the National Vice President, shall preside over all meetings of the National Conference. In the event of the National President and the National Vice President being absent, the National Conference shall be presided over by a member of the National Executive appointed by the National Conference at that meeting.

5.8 Business

- 5.8.1** The National Conference may discuss any business not on the agenda but brought forward by the National Executive. General remits received less than three months prior to conference may be placed on the agenda at the absolute discretion of the National Executive.
- 5.8.2** No remits involving constitutional changes shall be brought before the National Conference unless included on the provisional agenda.
- 5.8.3** The National Executive shall prepare the agenda.
- 5.8.4** The only persons eligible to vote are delegates of Registered Churches and holders of an Ordained Minister's Credential attending in person. No proxy votes are allowed.
- 5.8.5** In the normal course of business all resolutions shall be decided by a show of hands. However, the chairman may require that a secret ballot be taken.
- 5.8.6** All resolutions shall require a 55% majority of the voting constituents present at the meeting to be carried except where different percentages are specified in this constitution.
- 5.8.7** Quorum: Provided that notice has been given, consistent with ARTICLE 5.4, the voting constituents present at a conference business session shall constitute a quorum. To be clear, there is no minimum number of voting constituents whose presence is necessary to validate the transactions of the National Conference.

ARTICLE 6 NATIONAL OFFICERS

- 6.1** The officers shall consist of the National President, National Vice President(s), National Secretary, National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer, together with such other officers as shall be appointed from time to time.
- 6.2** The National President and National Vice President(s) shall only be chosen from the ordained ministers, and shall be persons of mature experience and ability, who shall have been ordained for at least five years.
- 6.3** The National Secretary and the National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer may be chosen from the ordained ministers or from individuals in fellowship and good standing with any church forming part of the Movement and shall be of mature experience and ability. If the National Secretary and/or National Treasurer are not holders of an Ordained Minister's Credential, they shall be ex officio members of the National Executive without voting rights.
- 6.4** The National Secretary, National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer shall be ex officio delegates to National Conferences with full voting rights provided they have no vote by virtue of ARTICLE 5.5.2 of this United Constitution.
- 6.5** The roles and job descriptions of the National Officers shall be set and modified by the National Executive.

ARTICLE 7 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

7.1 Membership

Each biennial National Conference shall elect a National Executive. The National Executive shall consist of nine members and shall include the National President, National Vice President(s), National Secretary, National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer. Persons nominated for the National Executive shall have been ordained for at least four years except a National Secretary and a National Treasurer or a National Secretary/Treasurer, who is not the holder of an Ordained Minister's Credential. In special circumstances, the National Executive may waive the four year requirement.

Note: As per ARTICLE 6.2, the National President and National Vice President(s) shall have been ordained for at least five years.

7.2 Term of Office

With the exception of the National President and full time office bearers, whose initial term shall be a period of four years, the term of office shall be from the conclusion of the National Conference at which elected, until the conclusion of the National Conference next following.

7.3 Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy or vacancies occurring on the National Executive, the same shall be filled by the National Executive from those who have been ordained for at least four years. In the event of any member being incapacitated through illness or any other cause, the National Executive may likewise appoint any other eligible person to act in place of that member so incapacitated.

7.4 Meetings

The National Executive shall meet at such times and places as it may, from time to time, decide. Meetings shall be convened by the National Secretary, at the request of the National President or at the request of a simple majority of the National Executive. All members of the National Executive shall be entitled to receive notice of meeting. The National Executive may resolve from time to time the manner and form of such notice and a minute of its meeting to the effect will be conclusive evidence as to the form of notice required.

7.5 Quorum

The quorum necessary for the transaction of the business of the National Executive shall be a majority or such greater numbers as it shall fix from time to time.

7.6 Technology Meetings

For meetings other than those held in person after written notice, a majority of the National Executive shall be deemed to hold or be present at a meeting when they communicate through a telephone conference call, video or other electronic conference method in circumstances where each of them can simultaneously hear what is said by and can speak to the other members. Such a meeting shall be deemed to be held at the place where the chairperson was present during the meeting. A resolution passed at a meeting under this sub-clause must be ratified at the next National Executive meeting where notice has been given to all members.

If a majority of the National Executive shall have advised the National Secretary in writing by fax or email that they are in favour of a resolution in particular terms such resolution shall be deemed to be passed at a meeting of the National Executive provided it shall be ratified at the next National Executive meeting where notice has been given to all members.

7.7 Powers and Duties

Between biennial National Conferences, the National Executive is authorised to provide leadership and act in all matters that affect the Movement, at their discretion. All decisions of the National Executive must be in harmony with the provisions of this United Constitution and any decisions of the National Biennial Conference.

7.8 Nominations

7.8.1 Nominations for the National Executive, may be made by National and State Executives, State Conferences or voting constituents.

7.8.2 Nominations must be received, in writing, by the National Secretary, not less than two months prior to the commencement of the National Conference, which nominations shall be assented to, in writing, by the nominee. In the event that the number of nominations is less than the number of positions or offices to be filled, the National Executive shall make nominations up to the number required. Not less than six weeks prior to the commencement of the National Conference, the National Secretary shall advise all voting constituents of the nominations.

7.8.3 The National Executive shall recommend to the National Conference, one or more of the persons nominated for the offices of National Secretary, and National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer, but all nominations shall be presented to the National Conference.

7.8.4 Nominees do not have to be present at the National Conference to be eligible for election.

7.9 Election Procedure

7.9.1 All elections shall be made by secret ballot. A separate ballot shall be held for each of the following:

- National President;
- National Vice President;
- National Secretary or National Secretary/Treasurer;

- National Treasurer (if required);
- Members of the National Executive other than National Officers.

- 7.9.2** The first office to be filled shall be that of the National President. The offices of the National Vice President(s), National Secretary or National Secretary/Treasurer shall then be successively filled, and then the ordinary members of the National Executive.
- 7.9.3** When the nominee for National Treasurer is a holder of an Ordained Minister's Certificate and is being considered for executive office, his election shall take place immediately following that of National Secretary.
- 7.9.4** All candidates must achieve at least a simple majority of votes cast to be declared as elected.
- 7.9.5** In ballots for National Officers, the candidate with the highest number of votes over a simple majority shall be declared as elected.
- 7.9.6** If no candidate, in the election for a National Officer, obtains a simple majority in the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held. Only the two candidates who achieved the highest and second highest number of votes in the first ballot shall be included in the second ballot.
- 7.9.7** In ballots for election of members of the National Executive other than office holders, all candidates achieving a simple majority, at least, up to the number of positions to be filled, shall be declared as elected in the order corresponding to the number of votes achieved by each candidate from the highest to the lowest.
- 7.9.8** If all vacancies for members of the National Executive other than office holders have not been filled following the results of the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held. The number of candidates in the second ballot shall be the number of remaining vacancies plus one. The candidates in the second ballot shall be chosen in the order corresponding to the number of votes achieved by each candidate in the first ballot from the highest to the lowest.
- 7.9.9** In the event of a tied vote between candidates for any vacancy, a further ballot shall be held, between the candidates with the tied vote, to fill the vacancy.

ARTICLE 8 AUDIT

The National Executive shall ensure that a proper audit of all books and accounts administered by the National Secretary/Treasurer or National Treasurer is carried out, for presentation to the membership of the appropriate corporate entities. It shall also ensure that a summary report be prepared, together with covering letter from the Auditor, for presentation to the National Conference.

ARTICLE 9 STATE CONFERENCES AND BY-LAWS

- 9.1** Whilst the Movement is a national movement, it recognises the necessity of administration of some matters at a state level.

- 9.2** Each state shall have its own Conference, State Executive and executive officers, consistent with the provisions of this constitution and the State By-Laws. The roles and job descriptions of the State Officers shall be set by the State Executive.
- 9.3** A conference shall be held in each state biennially, at a time and place to be fixed by the State Executive or by the sitting conference, to consider matters affecting the state. A conference may also be held at any time and place deemed necessary by the State Executive.
- 9.4** The administration of state matters not affecting the national Movement shall be vested in the State Executive between State Conferences.
- 9.5** All State Conference and Executive decisions are required to conform with the decisions of the National Conference and the National Executive.
- 9.6** In the event of a State being unable to appoint suitably qualified officers or executive members, the National Executive may appoint persons to fill the vacancies, at its sole discretion, until the next State Conference.
- 9.7** A State Executive may, by resolution, invite the National Executive to intervene in the management and affairs of that state for such period as it determines or until the next State Conference whichever is earlier. For the term of such intervention the National Executive shall replace the role of the State Executive or make additions to the State Executive, to represent the National Executive, with full voting powers.

In circumstances where the National Executive considers the interests of the Movement within a state are in serious jeopardy it may intervene so as to replace the role of the State Executive in all respects for such period as it determines or until the next State Conference whichever is earlier. In these circumstances the role of the State Executive is terminated upon written notification by the National Secretary that the National Executive has intervened under the provisions of this clause.

- 9.8** In the event of the National Executive replacing the role of the State Executive, a Special Conference, for the state, must be held within two months of the intervention. The special conference shall be informed of the reason for the replacement of the State Executive and determine the timing of the election of a new State Executive.

ARTICLE 10 MINISTRY

- 10.1** The Movement acknowledges that the church, both local and universal, has been endowed with Ministry Gifts as outlined in Ephesians 4:11-12.
- 10.2** Accepting that the Call of God, Ministry Gifts and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit have been bestowed on men and women without respect of gender, the Movement acknowledges the right and privilege of men and women to have their ministries recognised.

- 10.3** The Movement recognises ministries, by the granting of the appropriate certificates as set out in ARTICLE 11 of this Constitution. The movement may grant an OMC or a PMC to individuals who reside outside Australia subject to the provisions of this constitution.

ARTICLE 11 CREDENTIALS

11.1 Certificates

The Movement recognises four certificates with respect to ministry, namely:

- Ordained Minister's Credential (OMC)
- Provisional Minister's Credential (PMC)
- Specialised Ministry Certificate (SMC)
- Overseas Associate Minister's Certificate (OAMC)

11.2 Qualifications and Requirements of all Credential and Certificate Holders

11.2.1 To be a person of God in good standing with those within the church and of good report by those outside the church.

11.2.2 To have demonstrated the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9 for a leader in the church and have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, as described in ARTICLE 4 of the United Constitution.

11.2.3 To have undertaken a recognised Bible study course and/or given evidence to the interviewing committee that he/she is equipped by private reading and study to fulfill the relevant ministry.

11.2.4 To be acquainted with, accept and adopt the United Constitution, structure, policies and administration of the Movement.

11.2.5 To be living consistent with the Code of Conduct and other policies of the Movement.

11.2.6 To be regularly attending a church that holds a Certificate of Fellowship or a Provisional Certificate of Fellowship. This will not apply to credential holders resident overseas but the National Executive may require overseas resident credential holders to demonstrate that they are involved in appropriate church fellowship to the extent considered reasonable by the National Executive.

11.2.7 To complete professional development as required by the National and State Executive.

11.2.8 To be prepared to sign, as required, a declaration in relation to moral standing, compliance with legal requirements and doctrinal consistency with the Movement.

11.3 Ordained Minister

11.3.1 Definition

An "Ordained Minister" is one who is a proven minister as described in Ephesians 4:10-12. An Ordained Minister's Credential will only be granted to a minister who has held a Provisional Minister's Credential for at least two

years. Ministers who have been ordained in another recognised movement may, at the discretion of the State Executive (with appropriate references and endorsement), be recommended for the issuance of an Ordained Minister's Credential.

11.3.2 Rights and Responsibilities

Those holding Ordained Minister's Credentials shall have the right/responsibility to:

- 11.3.2.1** Do all those things which befit one as a minister of the Gospel.
- 11.3.2.2** Attend Regional, State and National Conferences (of which he/she is a member) with full voting rights.
- 11.3.2.3** Be registered to solemnise marriages, except in the case of a credential holder residing outside Australia.
- 11.3.2.4** Pay all National, State and Regional dues, levies and other charges payable.
- 11.3.2.5** Live consistently with the qualifications and requirements as outlined in ARTICLE 11.2 of the United Constitution.

11.4 Provisional Minister

11.4.1 Definition

A "Provisional Minister" is one showing clear signs of a divine call and God-given ability, and an evident purpose to devote his/her life to the preaching of the Gospel.

Recommendations for an Ordained Minister's Credential may be made by a supervising pastor on behalf of those who have satisfactorily completed at least two years as a provisional minister.

11.4.2 Rights and Responsibilities

Those holding a Provisional Minister's Credential shall have the right/responsibility:

- 11.4.2.1** To minister, under supervision, in any area that the Senior Pastor of a local church, or the State Executive deems to be appropriate.
- 11.4.2.2** To attend State and Regional Conferences of the state/region in which he/she resides, with full voting power.
- 11.4.2.3** To attend National Conferences with the courtesy of the floor but without voting rights unless as an official delegate of a registered church.
- 11.4.2.4** To be registered to solemnise marriages only if local circumstances require it (e.g. isolation) and the State Executive authorises it.

11.4.2.5 Pay all National, State and Regional dues, levies and other charges payable.

11.4.2.6 Live consistently with the qualifications and requirements as outlined in ARTICLE 11.2 of the United Constitution.

11.5 Specialised Ministry

11.5.1 Definition

A "Specialised Ministry" is one authorised to engage in various types of ministries on a specified basis, in a specific location or field of activity.

There is no articulation from a Specialised Ministry Certificate to Ordination but, if the holder wishes to proceed to a wider sphere of ministry, application may be made for a Provisional Minister's Credential after the satisfactory completion of at least one year as a specialised ministry.

11.5.2 Rights and Responsibilities

Those holding a Specialised Ministry Certificate shall have the right/responsibility:

11.5.2.1 To be involved in a ministry that requires recognition within a specific church or engage in ministry in a recognised field of ministry.

11.5.2.2 To attend Regional Conferences of the region in which he/she resides with full voting power and to attend the State Conference in which he/she resides with courtesy of the floor unless as an official delegate of a registered church.

11.5.2.3 To attend National Conferences with the courtesy of the floor but without voting rights unless as an official delegate of a registered church.

11.5.2.4 Pay all National, State and Regional dues, levies and other charges payable.

11.5.2.5 To report to the appropriate State Executive any change of location or ministry. Note: Since the Specialised Ministry Certificate is location and ministry specific, there is no obligation on a State Executive to continue a SMC if location or ministry changes.

11.5.2.6 Live consistently with the qualifications and requirements as outlined in ARTICLE 11.2 of the United Constitution.

11.6 Overseas Associate Minister's Certificate

11.6.1 Definition

"Overseas Associate Minister" is one who is living and ministering outside of Australia, holds a credential with an accrediting body within their nation of

residence but has, in the opinion of the National Executive, a significant ministry and clear connectedness with the Movement that makes the maintenance of the relationship advantageous. The minister's primary accountability rests with the accrediting body in their nation of residence and an overseas Associate Minister's Certificate will not be issued without the approval of the accrediting body within their nation.

If a minister does not hold a credential in his/her nation of residence and has a close connection with the Movement but does not qualify to hold an OMC according to the guidelines set out in the Overseas Credential Policy (specifically relating to the historical connection), the National Executive may grant him/her and OAMC if it believes there is a compelling reason to do so provided always that the candidate fulfils the qualifications in Article 11.2.

11.6.2 Rights and Responsibilities

Those holding Overseas Associate Minister's Certificates shall have the right/responsibility to:

11.6.2.1 Be acknowledged as an associate minister of the Movement.

11.6.2.2 Transfer directly to an appropriate credential/certificate upon relocation in Australia provided that the credential in the overseas nation is relinquished.

11.6.2.3 Attend Regional, State and National Conferences with the courtesy of the floor but no voting rights.

11.6.2.4 Pay all National, State and Regional dues, levies and other charges payable.

11.6.2.5 Live consistently with the qualifications and requirements as outlined in ARTICLE 11.2 of the United Constitution.

11.7 Issuance and Suspension of Credentials and Certificates

11.7.1 All credentials and certificates are issued by the National Executive.

11.7.2 The National Executive may establish such procedures as it considers just and necessary to investigate any complaint against a credential or certificate holder prior to consideration of such complaint by the National Officers.

11.7.3 Credentials and certificates may be suspended or withdrawn on the grounds of improper conduct or false teaching by decision of a majority of the National Officers either on their own motion or upon recommendation of a State Executive. The National Executive may appoint other persons in particular cases to comprise a panel to assist the National Officers in the task of deciding whether or not to suspend or withdraw a credential or certificate in such cases.

- 11.7.4** All applications for credentials and certificates shall be made on the application forms and according to the processes prescribed by the National Executive.
- 11.7.5** The administration of the application and processing of credentials and certificates may, at the discretion of the National Executive, be delegated to the states but the responsibility for setting standards and required qualifications shall remain the responsibility of the National Executive. States may not change application procedures and requirements for the holders of these credentials and certificates except on a uniform national basis with the approval of the National Executive.
- 11.7.6** If, in the opinion of the National President, circumstances exist which, in the public interest, justify the suspension of a minister's credential, the National President or delegate appointed for that purpose, may do so, by notice in writing to the Minister, for a period not exceeding sixty days while the matter is being investigated by the State Executive. Where the National Executive is of the opinion that further time is required to fairly and justly investigate the matter, it may extend the period of suspension for further periods not exceeding 60 days each. Before each new suspension period the National Executive must freshly consider all elements of the investigation and the reasons for extension.
- 11.7.7** The National President should be immediately informed of a formal complaint against a credentialed minister that may, in the opinion of the State President, lead to the suspension of the minister's credential or ministry certificate.

11.8 Right of Appeal

All credential/certificate holders who have their credentials or certificates withdrawn shall have right of appeal to the National Executive.

- 11.8.1** The right of appeal to the National Executive shall be granted, provided that written notice of appeal is lodged with the National Secretary, not later than thirty days after notification of the withdrawal of his/her credential or certificate.
- 11.8.2** The right of hearing shall, in such cases, be before the National Executive or any persons they may appoint.
- 11.8.3** The decision of the National Executive shall be final in relation to substantial outcome of, and procedure to be adopted upon, the appeal.

11.9 Right of Appeal for National Executive Personnel

If the credential/certificate holder whose credential/certificate is suspended or withdrawn is a member of the National Executive:

- 11.9.1** The right of appeal shall be to an appeals board, consisting of the State President of each state (or his appointee if the State President is a member of the National Executive)

11.9.2 The right of appeal to the appeals board shall be granted, provided that written notice of appeal is lodged with the National Secretary, not later than thirty days after notification of the suspension or withdrawal of his/her credential/certificate.

11.9.3 The decision of the appeals board, in relation to the appeal, shall be final.

11.10 Procedure for Issuance of Credentials and Certificates

11.10.1 Ordained Ministers Credentials shall be renewed biennially.

11.10.2 All other certificates and credentials shall be renewed annually.

11.10.3 Credentials/certificates, signed by the National President and National Secretary, must be held by all ministers in the Movement.

11.10.4 Without a credential/certificate, a person cannot be regarded as an active minister.

11.10.5 State Executives shall review all credentials and certificates as they become due, through the appropriate renewal form and submit the recommended ministerial list to the National Secretary by 31 October or other date specified in writing by the National Secretary.

11.10.6 Credentials and certificates will not be issued until the appropriate dues have been paid.

11.11 Active Ministry

"Active ministry" is defined as:

11.11.1 Ministers having the oversight of an ACC church or holding a state or national ministry/administrative position.

11.11.2 Those ministering as recognised assistant pastors or assistants to the pastor in an ACC church.

11.11.3 Recognised itinerant preachers and evangelists or those engaged in a recognised form of ministry activity.

11.11.4 Recognised pioneer ministers.

11.12 Inactive Ministry

11.12.1 An ordained minister, on ceasing to engage in active ministry, shall continue to be recognised as a minister in the Movement, until the expiration of their Ordained Minister's Credential. This is subject to the minister continuing to attend a church with a Certificate of Fellowship or a Provisional Certificate of Fellowship.

11.12.2 Those who have held an Ordained Minister's Credential which has lapsed and who desire to accept a call to the ministry, shall complete an appropriate application and any other required documentation. They should apply immediately for a reissuance of their credential.

11.12.3 The reissuance of a credential will only occur following the advice of the appropriate State Executive.

- 11.12.4** Emeritus ministers shall continue to receive their annual Ordained Minister's Credentials whilst they otherwise remain qualified according to this United Constitution.

ARTICLE 12 CHURCHES AND SERVICES

12.1 Registered Church

12.1.1 Definition

A "Registered Church" shall be defined as a church that holds a current Certificate of Fellowship issued by the Movement.

12.1.2 Certificate of Fellowship

Certificates of Fellowship shall be issued and may be withdrawn at any time at the discretion of the National Executive. Certificates will only be issued and retained by churches that meet the following requirements:

- 12.1.2.1** For the initial issuance of a Certificate of Fellowship, a church should have at least 50 adults in regular attendance.
- 12.1.2.2** For the renewal of a Certificate of Fellowship, a church should have at least 30 adults in regular attendance.
Note: The appropriate State Executive may recommend an exception to this requirement in the case of churches in small or isolated rural communities.
- 12.1.2.3** A church must appoint, as its senior pastor, a person holding a current Ministry Credential/Certificate of the Movement. If it wishes to appoint a person not holding a current credential/certificate, it may only do so with the express permission of the appropriate State Executive and only on condition that that person immediately begins the process of applying for an appropriate credential/certificate.
- 12.1.2.4** A church must have an appropriate written constitution consistent with this United Constitution and the State By-Laws. It should also have a functioning board of at least three members, independent of each other, including a Secretary and Treasurer or a Secretary/Treasurer. This administration should have been functioning for at least 12 months prior to the granting of a Certificate of Fellowship.
- 12.1.2.5** Acceptance of the United Constitution, State By-Laws, Code of Conduct and Policies of the Movement and Agreement to function according to them must be included in the church constitution.
- 12.1.2.6** Attendance of appropriate people at required compliance training sessions and a demonstrated cooperation with National, State and Regional Executives.

12.1.2.7 Payment of all National, State and Regional dues, levies and other charges payable.

12.1.2.8 Compliance with all applicable Federal, State and Local Government legislation as pertaining to churches and charities.

12.1.2.9 The church must maintain an appropriate insurance policy including coverage for “public liability” and “officers and directors”.

12.1.3 State Executive Intervention

12.1.3.1 The appropriate State Executive of the Movement may accept a written and signed invitation to hold a meeting of members, or to assist or advise in the business or affairs of the church, by either the senior minister, or the board, or by a majority of the current membership of the church.

12.1.3.2 Such meeting shall be chaired by a member of the State or National Executives (or their appointee), appointed by the State Executive who shall set the agenda.

12.1.3.3 All business conducted shall be in accordance with the constitution of the church, and the State or National Executive official of the Movement may not institute any rule, take any action, or make any decision affecting the church unless such motions are carried by a majority of the members.

12.2 Provisional Church

12.2.1 Definition

A “Provisional Church” shall be defined as a church that is recognised by the appropriate State Executive as working towards becoming a registered church but having not yet fulfilled the requirements of obtaining a Certificate of Fellowship. Such a church shall be under the authority and oversight of the relevant State Executive.

12.2.2 Provisional Certificate of Fellowship

A Provisional Church shall be granted a Provisional Certificate of Fellowship, upon being recognised by its State Executive. The certificate shall be subject to the maintenance of governance and legal requirements deemed appropriate by the State Executive and may be withdrawn at any time on the advice of the State Executive. The certificate shall be subject to review and renewal every two years.

12.2.3 State Executive Intervention

The State Executive shall have the right to give advice and direction as it sees fit and the State Executive should be consulted prior to any major decisions being made by the provisional church.

12.3 Satellite or Extension Service

12.3.1 Definition

A "Satellite or Extension Service" shall be defined as an outreach from a registered church that has a regular and distinct ministry to a community or people group but comes under the authority and control of the registered church. A service catering for a distinct group or ministering in a different location would qualify as a satellite or extension service but multiple services in one location would not qualify.

12.3.2 State Executive intervention

The State may only intervene in Satellite or Extension Services through the registered church as allowed in 12.1.3. The registered church is responsible for compliance with all requirements (including payment of dues) for the Satellite or Extension Service

12.3.3 Transition to church status

In the event that the responsible registered church and its satellite or extension service agree for the satellite or extension service to be separately listed as a church, the State Executive may accept it as a registered or provisional church depending on its meeting the required criteria. If the responsible registered church and the satellite or extension service are in dispute about becoming a separately listed church, the State Executive may intervene and make a determination.

ARTICLE 13 NATIONAL DEPARTMENTS AND MINISTRIES

The National Executive may establish departments and ministries that function at a national level, to facilitate the objectives of the Movement. Such ministries shall have the right to operate under their own constitutions and by-laws, approved by the National Executive. The ministries are subject to the direction of the National Executive and must present a report to the biennial National Conference. The leaders of all national departments and ministries shall be appointed by the National Executive. In the event that a national department is incorporated, the provisions of ARTICLE 22 shall apply.

ARTICLE 14 WORLD MISSIONS

The Movement shall give priority to World Missions. The National Executive shall ensure that structures and initiatives are put in place to facilitate an effective ministry outside of Australia. Where it is deemed advisable to establish corporate entities, to fulfill the purpose of World Missions, the provisions of ARTICLE 22 shall apply.

ARTICLE 15 EDUCATION

The Movement shall give priority to the education of its constituents, particularly in relation to the practical training of prospective ministers for Australia and overseas. To this end, the establishment of institutions at all levels of education shall be encouraged.

Specifically, a National College shall be established, for the training of prospective ministers. The National College shall be authorised to establish such corporate entities that facilitate its educational purposes subject to ARTICLE 22.

ARTICLE 16 CODE OF CONDUCT AND OTHER POLICIES

- 16.1** The National Conference shall adopt, as policy, a "Code of Conduct" and such other policies that reflect the moral and ethical standards of the Movement.
- 16.2** All persons who have been issued with a credential or certificate by the Movement are required to adhere to such policies and a failure to do so may be regarded as improper conduct under ARTICLE 11.7.3 of this Constitution and lead to discipline according to ARTICLE 11.7.
- 16.3** All policies shall be circulated to registered churches and Ordained Ministers for consultation prior to introduction or amendment. They will then be ratified by the National Conference with a vote of at least 65%.

ARTICLE 17 PROPERTY

17.1 National Property

The National Executive will make appropriate provision for the holding of the Movement's properties under their absolute control, on behalf of the Movement. Appropriate provision may include the establishment of trust(s) or the formation of company(ies) as set out in ARTICLE 22.

17.2 State & Regional Property

Each State Executive will make appropriate provision in their absolute discretion for the holding of State and District properties, on behalf of the state Movement.

17.3 Local Church Property

Local church property may be held:

- 17.3.1** In its own name where incorporated; or
- 17.3.2** By the State Executive making provision for the holding of local church properties on behalf of the local church where unincorporated; or
- 17.3.3** By a corporate body controlled by the local church, where unincorporated, upon trusts determined in accordance with the constitution of the local church; or
- 17.3.4** By individuals appointed by the local church in accordance with and upon trusts determined in accordance with its constitution.
- 17.3.5** Local church property means any property held for or controlled by a church that holds a Certificate of Fellowship or Provisional Certificate of Fellowship and any property of an outreach commenced by such a church.

ARTICLE 18 INDEMNITY

18.1 Indemnity

Subject to the terms of this Article 18, the Movement indemnifies:

- (a) any person who holds or who has held any elected or appointed office within the Movement whether or not validly appointed to occupy such a position;
- (b) any executive officers; and
- (c) any employees.

from any loss suffered in respect of any wrongful act asserted against such person while acting in their individual or collective capacities as office bearers within the Movement.

18.2 Exclusions

The Movement will not indemnify any person for any claim arising from or attributable to:

- 18.2.1** A wilful breach of duty, the dishonest, fraudulent or malicious act or omission committed with criminal intent;
- 18.2.2** Sexual abuse claims, which means any actual, alleged or attempted assault or abuse of a sexual nature or any other lewd conduct.

18.3 Limits to Indemnity

18.3.1 The Movement's liability in respect of this indemnity is limited to the greater of:

- 18.3.1.1** The value of assets held on trust on behalf of the Movement; and
- 18.3.1.2** To the extent the claim made against a person is covered by a policy of insurance, whether or not that policy is held by or for the benefit of the Movement or not, the sum insured under that policy.

18.3.2 This indemnity is limited to office bearers, officers or employees, of the National Conference.

18.4 Advancement of Defence Costs

The Movement will pay all reasonable defence costs incurred in defending any civil or criminal proceedings commenced in respect of any wrongful act asserted against such a person while acting in their individual or collective capabilities on an on-going basis as they are incurred prior to the final payment or settlement of any claim provided that:

- 18.4.1** Such defence costs are incurred with the written consent of the Movement. Such consent not to be unreasonably withheld; and

- 18.4.2** Such advance payments by the Movement shall be repaid to the Movement in the event that the person is not entitled to payment of any loss under this indemnity."

ARTICLE 19 SUSPENSION OF CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

To allow members to bring forward business, which is of a special and urgent nature, which is not on the agenda, the requirements of this Constitution, in relation to business, may be suspended without notice by a motion carried by a 65% majority of the delegates present and eligible to vote. On the carrying of such motion, the National Secretary will place the said business on the agenda.

ARTICLE 20 INTERPRETATION

The official interpretation of this Constitution and the State By-Laws, including the substantive meaning of any aspect of the Doctrinal Basis, shall be vested in the National Executive between conferences.

ARTICLE 21 AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to this Constitution must be submitted in writing, as a remit under ARTICLES 5.4 and 5.8 to the National Secretary at least three months prior to the date of the ensuing National Conference of the Movement. Such shall be considered carried when carried by a 75% majority of the delegates present and eligible to vote.

The National Executive is empowered to make any spelling and grammatical corrections that make no significant change to the meaning of this constitution. The National Executive is also empowered to make changes to by-laws and policies that are made necessary by constitutional amendments approved by the conferences. Such changes shall be notified to the Movement.

ARTICLE 22 MOVEMENT INCORPORATION PROVISIONS

- 22.1** In circumstances where the National Executive is of the view that it is necessary to legally incorporate any aspects (including State aspects), initiatives or functions of the Movement, it may approve such incorporation provided the following principles are adopted.
- 22.2** Except in circumstances where the National Executive deems it to be otherwise necessary, the constituent documentation of such incorporated bodies must provide:
- 22.2.1** Acceptance of the Doctrinal Basis set out in Article 4 of this constitution;
 - 22.2.2** The voting constituency must consist of either the National Company or the individual members of the National Executive and State Executives where it is not possible for the National Fellowship Company to do so because of legal requirements of the jurisdiction where the incorporated body is to be formed and;
 - 22.2.3** The controlling directorship or committee must only be eligible for election or re-election with the prior written approval of the National President or National Secretary except for State Companies where the board must be

comprised by the State Executive elected in accordance with State Bylaws adopted by the National Conference and;

22.2.4 Annual financial reports be provided to the National Treasurer without demand.

22.3 The term "National Company" means any corporate body so designated by the National Executive from time to time.

22.4 The term "State Company" means a body incorporated within a state or territory of Australia where it is necessary to do so.

ARTICLE 23 NON-PROFIT

The income and property of the Movement however derived shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Movement as set out in this United Constitution. No portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit, to individual persons who, at any time are or have been associated with the Movement, or to any person claiming through any of them provided that nothing herein shall prevent the payment in good faith or remuneration to any officers or servants of the Fellowship or other person in return for services actually rendered to the Movement or for goods supplied in the ordinary way of business (but not for services rendered as an office bearer) nor prevent the payment of interest on borrowed money, the maximum rate of interest to be not more than the current rate charged by Banks in Australia similar circumstances or the payment of rent for premises or goods let or hired to the Movement.

ARTICLE 24 DISSOLUTION

If the Movement should be dissolved and there be any property or assets after satisfaction of its liabilities, the same shall not be paid to or distributed among individuals associated with the Movement, but shall be paid forthwith, without demand to such other organisation with similar objects as the voting constituents present at the meeting of the National Conference to dissolve the Movement shall determine or in default thereof as determined by the Supreme Court of a State provided always that such payment or distribution shall only be made to such other organisation that is not carried on for the purposes of profit and gain to its individual members and where that entity is able, at the time of such payment or distribution, to satisfy the Movement that it holds endorsement from the Australian Taxation Office as a tax concession charity or other such qualification required under Australian law that results in the entity being exempt from income tax.

STATE BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 1 DEFINITION

AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES is a National Movement, governed according to its United Constitution. State Conferences are established according to Article 2.4 and Article 9 of the National Constitution and are under the authority of the National Conference of Australian Christian Churches.

ARTICLE 2 CORPORATE ENTITY

State Conferences shall have the right to establish corporate entities for the purpose of holding property, conducting business and undertaking financial transactions on behalf of the State Conference. The corporate entity shall be established consistent with ARTICLE 12 of these By-Laws.

ARTICLE 3 BY-LAWS

These By-Laws are set forth for the guidance of constituents, ministers and officers for the orderly conduct of the business of the movement within each state and territory of Australia. The United Constitution of the Movement takes precedence over these By-Laws should any conflict of provisions appear at any time.

ARTICLE 4 STATE CONFERENCE

4.1 Purpose

It shall be the function of the State Conference, within the state:

- 4.1.1** To promote possibilities for fellowship between local churches.
- 4.1.2** To make whatever decisions may be necessary in the interests of the Movement.
- 4.1.3** To carry out elections to office in accordance with the State By-Laws ARTICLE 6 and to appoint committees for special work as occasion may arise.
- 4.1.4** To receive and consider reports from the states, departments, officers and committees and, where appropriate, make any decisions or recommendations arising therefrom.

4.2 Constituents

The voting Constituents of the State Conference of the Movement shall be:

- 4.2.1** Those churches which at the date of adopting the United Constitution hold a current Certificate of Fellowship and located in the appropriate State.
- 4.2.2** Such registered churches, located in the State, as shall thereafter be received into the movement by the granting of a Certificate of Fellowship.
- 4.2.3** Those individuals, resident in the State, who hold a current Ordained Minister's Credential (OMC) or Provisional Minister's Credential (PMC) at the time of commencement of a State Conference.

4.2.4 Deemed ineligible to vote in the following circumstances:

4.2.4.1 A constituent church will be ineligible to vote at a conference (or entitled to appoint voting delegates) when dues are unpaid at the eligible date.

4.2.4.2 An individual constituent will be ineligible to vote at a conference when, at the eligible date:

- dues are unpaid, or
- their credential is withdrawn, or
- they are no longer resident in the state.

In this sub-clause (4.2.4) 'eligible date' means the day that is fourteen days before the date of the commencement of the State Conference.

4.3 Sessions

The State Conference shall be held biennially, at a time and place determined by the State Executive.

4.4 Notice

The State Secretary shall send to all churches of the State Conference, and those credential holders entitled to vote, a notice in writing of the Conference, not later than four months before the commencement of Conference. All remits, which must be in the form of a resolution, shall be in the hands of the State Secretary three months prior to the commencement of conference.

Remits may be submitted by the State Executive, churches holding a Certificate of Fellowship, and by ordained ministers. All nominations and remits shall be submitted to churches and ordained ministers six weeks prior to the commencement of conference.

4.5 Membership

4.5.1 The State Conference shall comprise of all churches, located in the state that hold a current Certificate of Fellowship (not a Provisional Certificate of Fellowship) and who are in financial standing, represented by one delegate for every two hundred and fifty (250) adults in regular attendance (18 years and over) or part thereof.

4.5.2 Every Ordained or Provisional Minister resident in the state shall be eligible to attend as a voting member.

4.5.3 Missionaries holding an Ordained Minister's Credential, whose Australian residential address is in that state, are entitled to attend and to vote.

4.5.4 In the event that the name of a church delegate is not received by the State Secretary fourteen days prior to the commencement of the State Conference, the State Executive may, in its absolute discretion, veto the voting power of such delegate, who shall have no voting rights but may attend as an observer.

4.6 Special Conference

Special State Conferences may be called by the State Executive at its discretion, or at

the request of not less than one third of the registered churches in the state. A written notification of the conference shall be distributed to churches with current Certificates of Fellowship (not a Provisional Certificate of Fellowship) and those holding Ordained Minister's Credential, not less than three weeks prior to the commencement of the Special State Conference, which shall consider the matters raised but no other business, except as provided for in Article 10 of these By-Laws.

4.7 Chairman

The State President, and in his/her absence the State Vice President, shall preside over all meetings of the State Conference. In the event of the State President and the State Vice President being absent or in cases where it is deemed beneficial or in the interests of the Conference, the Conference shall be presided over by a member of the State or National Executive appointed by the Conference at that meeting.

4.8 Business

4.8.1 The State Conference may discuss any business not on the agenda but brought forward by the State Executive. General remits received less than three months prior to conference may be placed on the agenda at the absolute discretion of the State Executive.

4.8.2 The State Executive shall prepare the agenda.

4.8.3 The only persons eligible to vote are members of the State Conference attending in person.

4.8.4 In the normal course of business, all resolutions shall be decided by a show of hands. However, the chairman may require that a secret ballot be taken.

4.8.5 All resolutions shall require a 55% majority of the voting strength to be carried except where different percentages are specified in the United Constitution or the State By-Laws.

4.8.6 Quorum: Provided that notice has been given, consistent with ARTICLE 4.4, the voting constituents present at a conference business session shall constitute a quorum. To be clear, there is no minimum number of voting constituents whose presence is necessary to validate the transactions of the State Conference.

ARTICLE 5 STATE OFFICERS

5.1 The officers shall consist of the State President, State Vice President(s), State Secretary, State Treasurer or State Secretary/Treasurer, together with such other officers as shall be appointed from time to time.

5.2 The State President and State Vice President(s) shall only be chosen from the ordained ministers, and shall be persons of mature experience and ability, who shall have been ordained for at least three years.

5.3 The State Secretary and the State Treasurer or State Secretary/Treasurer may be chosen from the ordained ministers or from individuals in fellowship and good standing with any church forming part of the movement and shall be of mature experience and ability. If the State Secretary and/or State Treasurer are not holders of an Ordained Minister's Credential, they shall be ex officio members of the State

Executive without voting rights.

5.4 The State Secretary, State Treasurer or State Secretary/Treasurer shall be ex officio delegates to State Conferences with full voting powers.

5.5 The roles and job descriptions of the State Officers shall be set and modified by the State Executive.

ARTICLE 6 STATE EXECUTIVE

6.1 Membership

The State Executive shall consist of not less than five, or more than seven members of the conference and shall include the State President, State Vice President, State Secretary and State Treasurer or State Secretary/Treasurer. Persons nominated for the State Executive shall have been both ordained and resident in the state for at least two years. Persons nominated for the position of State President or State Vice President shall have been ordained for at least three years, and two years for other officers, except a State Treasurer, or a State Secretary/Treasurer who is not the holder of an OMC.

6.2 Term of Office

The term of office shall be from the conclusion of the State Conference at which elected, until the conclusion of the State Conference next following.

6.3 Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy or vacancies occurring on the State Executive, the same shall be filled by the State Executive, from those who have been members of the conference for at least two years. In the event of any member being incapacitated through illness or any other cause, the State Executive may likewise appoint any other eligible person to act in place of that member so incapacitated.

6.4 Meetings

The State Executive shall meet at such times and places as it may from time to time decide. Meetings shall be convened by the State Secretary at the request of the State President or a simple majority of the State Executive.

6.5 Quorum

The quorum necessary for the transaction of the business of the State Executive shall be a majority or such greater numbers as it shall fix from time to time.

6.6 Technology Meetings

For meetings other than those held in person after written notice, a majority of the State Executive shall be deemed to hold or be present at a meeting when they communicate through a telephone conference call, video or other electronic conference method in circumstances where each of them can simultaneously hear what is said by and can speak to the others of them. Such a meeting shall be deemed to be held at the place where the chairperson was present during the meeting. A resolution passed at a meeting under this sub-clause must be ratified at the next State Executive meeting where notice has been given to all members.

If a majority of the State Executive shall have advised the State Secretary in writing by fax or email that they are in favour of a resolution in particular terms such

resolution shall be deemed to be passed at a meeting of the State Executive provided it shall be ratified at the next State Executive meeting where notice has been given to all members.

6.7 Powers and Duties

The powers and duties of the State Executive shall be to do all those acts and things, which in its opinion, are necessary and beneficial to further the aims of Australian Christian Churches within the state. Such acts shall be consistent with the United Constitution of Australian Christian Churches and the State By-Laws.

6.8 Nominations

Nominations may be made by the State Executive, the State Conference, or voting constituents.

6.9 Election

Elections to office shall be conducted in harmony with the United Constitution.

ARTICLE 7 CREDENTIALS

The State Executive shall work, under the direction of the National Executive to facilitate the granting, reviewing and withdrawal of credentials as required in the United Constitution.

ARTICLE 8 STATE DEPARTMENTS AND MINISTRIES

The State Executive may establish departments and ministries that function at a State level, to facilitate the objectives of Australian Christian Churches. Such ministries shall have the right to operate under their own constitutions and by-laws, approved by the State Executive. The ministries are subject to the direction of the State Executive and must present a report to the biennial State Conference. The leaders of all state departments and ministries shall be appointed by the State Executive. In the event that a state department is incorporated, the provisions of Article 12 of these By-Laws shall apply.

ARTICLE 9 INDEMNITY

9.1 Indemnity

Subject to the terms of this Article 9, the State movement indemnifies:

- (a) any person who holds or who has held any elected or appointed office within the movement whether or not validly appointed to occupy such a position;
- (b) any executive officers; and
- (c) any employees

from any loss suffered in respect of any wrongful act asserted against such person while acting in their individual or collective capacities as office bearers within the movement.

9.2 Exclusions

The Movement will not indemnify any person for any claim arising from or attributable to:

9.2.1 A wilful breach of duty, the dishonest, fraudulent or malicious act or omission committed with criminal intent;

9.2.2 Sexual abuse claims, which means any actual, alleged or attempted assault or abuse of a sexual nature or any other lewd conduct.

9.3 Limits To Indemnity

9.3.1 The Movement's liability in respect of this indemnity is limited to the greater of:

9.3.1.1 The value of assets held in trust on behalf of the Movement; and

9.3.1.2 To the extent the claim made against a person is covered by a policy of insurance, whether or not that policy is held by or for the benefit of the Movement or not, the sum insured under that policy.

9.3.2 This indemnity is limited to office bearers, officers or employees, of the State Conference.

9.4 Advancement of Defence Costs

The Movement will pay all reasonable defence costs incurred in defending any civil or criminal proceedings commenced in respect of any wrongful act asserted against such a person while acting in their individual or collective capabilities on an on-going basis as they are incurred prior to the final payment or settlement of any claim provided that:

9.4.1 Such defence costs are incurred with the written consent of the movement, such consent not to be unreasonably withheld; and

9.4.2 Such advance payments by the movement shall be repaid to the movement in the event that the person is not entitled to payment of any loss under this indemnity."

ARTICLE 10 SUSPENSION OF BY-LAWS

To allow members to bring forward business, which is of a special and urgent nature, which is not on the agenda, the requirements of these By-Laws, in relation to business, may be suspended without notice by a motion carried by a 65% majority of the delegates present and eligible to vote. On the carrying of such motion, the State Secretary will place the said business on the agenda.

ARTICLE 11 AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these By-laws may be made at any meeting of the National Conference, and shall be considered carried when carried by a 65% majority of the delegates present and eligible to vote.

ARTICLE 12 INCORPORATION PROVISIONS

12.1 In circumstances where the State Executive is of the view that it is necessary to legally incorporate any aspects, initiatives or functions of the Movement it may approve such incorporation provided the following principles are adopted –

12.2 Except in circumstances where the State Executive deems it to be otherwise necessary the constituent documentation of such incorporated bodies must provide:

12.2.1 Acceptance of the Doctrinal Basis set out in the United Constitution; and

12.2.2 The voting constituency must consist of either the State Company or the individual members of the State Executive where it is not possible for the State Company to do so because of legal requirements of the jurisdiction where the incorporated body is to be formed; and

12.2.3 The controlling directorship or committee must only be eligible for election or re-election with the prior written approval of the State President or State Secretary; and

12.2.4 Annual financial reports be provided to the State Treasurer without demand.



OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

Title:	ACC Child Protection Policy
Document Type:	Movement Policy
Version:	2015:1
Date:	April 2015 (Implementation date 1 Dec 2015)
Approval:	National Conference 2015

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This Child Protection Policy is a Policy of the ACC Movement that reflects the moral and ethical standards of the Movement pursuant to Article 16.1 of the United Constitution.

1 PURPOSE OF OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Australian Christian Churches (ACC) is a movement of Pentecostal Churches in voluntary cooperation. Each individual church is self-governing, but commits itself to work together with other churches in the movement for the purpose of mutual support and the spread of the gospel in Australia and the world. ACC strives for an inclusive approach that is committed to providing opportunities for all people to have caring relationships. Caring about the welfare of Children or Young People is a serious consideration and ACC is committed to protecting Children or Young People.

It is the responsibility of all at ACC, from the National and State Executives, constituent ministers to staff, pastoral care and volunteers, to understand the important responsibility they have:

- To provide for and promote the care, protection and wellbeing of Children or Young People in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment and the right to be protected from Harm, and to maximise opportunities for Children or Young People to realise their full potential;
- To provide for and promote the provision of services that foster the health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity of Children or Young People including by ensuring that persons responsible for Children or Young People within the movement are appropriately performing their responsibilities;
- To promote caring attitudes and responses towards Children or Young People, so that the need for appropriate nurture, care and protection is understood, risks to a Child's wellbeing are quickly identified, and any necessary support, protection or care is promptly provided;
- To recognise the family as the primary means of providing for the nurture, care and protection of Children or Young People and to accord high priority to supporting and assisting the family to carry out its responsibilities to Children or Young People;
- To promote and recognise the need to strengthen, preserve and promote positive relationships between the Child and the Child's parent, family members, leaders, mentors, spiritual advisors and significant others; and
- To provide for and promote a Child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access an ACC program, service or managed facility.

2 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

The ACC Child Protection Policy has been adopted nationally by the ACC through its supreme governing body, the National Conference, and is binding on Credential Holders and Constituent Churches. It consists of a set of principles and procedural benchmarks that underpin the other policies and procedures in relation to the protection of Children or Young People that the ACC and its Constituent Churches have in place for their Ministers, staff, volunteers and other members of a congregation.

3 HOW DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO THE ACC CONSTITUENT CHURCHES?

It is a requirement of the ACC National and State Executives and Constituent Churches to adopt the ACC Child Protection Policy or use it as a minimum standard.

4 WHO IS COVERED BY THE ACC CHILD PROTECTION POLICY?

The ACC Child Protection Policy covers all ACC People.

5 DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS POLICY

Term	Definition
ACC People	ACC People includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • officers or employees of ACC or its State or National ministries, • ACC Credential holders, • officers of a Constituent Church, • employees, volunteers and other members of a congregation of a Constituent Church who may or will have a Direct Role, • contractors (external agents) engaged by the ACC or a Constituent Church who may or will have a Direct Role.
Child/Children or Young Person/People	The ACC considers a Child or Young Person to be a person under the age of eighteen years.
Child Protection Policy	The Child Protection Policy is this document that defines the principles that are implemented to ensure that Children or Young People who access a program, service or facility are protected from harm by Ministers, staff, volunteers and other members of a congregation. The ACC Child Protection Policy has been adopted by the National Conference April 2015.
Child Protection Practice Guidelines	The ACC National Executive may develop and promulgate practice and behaviour guidelines to identify, and so prevent, behaviour that may be harmful to the Children or Young People in our church communities. Such guidelines may further identify how to appropriately deal with unacceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with Children or Young People.
Constituent Church	A Constituent Church includes a Registered Church, a Provisional Church and a Satellite or Extension Service as defined in the United Constitution of ACC.
Direct Role	A role that includes, or is likely to include, providing services that are directed towards a Child or Young Person (whether in whole or in part), or conducting activities that may involve a Child or Young Person (whether in whole or in part), and includes the supervision of persons in Direct Roles (for example, a board member of a church is in a Direct Role, irrespective of whether they actually work with Children or Young People, because of their overarching supervisory duties).
Emotional or psychological abuse	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a Child or Young Person does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a Child or Young Person. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviors continue to an extent that results

	in significant damage to the Child or Young Person's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing or development.
Grooming	Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a Child or Young Person, or the family unit of the Child or Young Person, with a view to abusing the Child or Young Person at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of Children or Young People. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The Child or Young Person may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a Child or Young Person in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom Children or Young People but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by SMS.
Harm	Harm, to a Child or Young Person, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the Child or Young Person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or • sexual abuse or exploitation; • a single act, omission or circumstance; or • a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Member of a congregation	Member of a congregation is an individual who participates in an ACC or Constituent Church activity, program, service or facility.
Physical abuse	Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a Child or Young Person to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally, or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a Child or Young Person. Physically abusive behavior includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning and kicking. It also includes giving Children or Young People harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a Child or Young Person at risk of being hurt
Risk	A Child or Young Person is at risk of harm if harm has not yet occurred but is likely to occur in the future, given risk factors identified in the present. A Child or Young Person may be assessed as in need of protection if the level of future risk is identified as likely (probable), not just possible (may occur); the probable harm will have a significant detrimental effect on the Child or Young Person if it does occur; and there is not a parent able and willing to protect the Child or Young Person from future significant harm.

Sexual abuse	Sexual abuse occurs when a person with a position of power involves a Child or Young Person in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the Child or Young Person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a Child or Young Person, engaging Children or Young People to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a Child or Young Person's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a Child or Young Person. Encouraging a Child or Young Person to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging Children or Young People to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.
Sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation occurs when Children or Young People are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos whether published on the internet or not. Exploitation can also involve Children or Young People who are forced into prostitution.

6 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE ACC CHILD PROTECTION POLICY?

The ACC National Conference is responsible for the development and endorsement of the ACC Child Protection Policy. It delegates the implementation of the ACC Child Protection Policy to the ACC National and State Executives and Constituent Churches. The role of each entity in relation to the implementation and enforcement of the ACC Child Protection Policy is detailed in the table below.

Entity	Role/Responsibility
ACC National Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the ACC commitment to the ACC Child Protection Policy; Support review on an annual cycle as a minimum, of the ACC Child Protection Policy or at a time governed by legislation, regulations or organisational learnings that requires a change to the ACC Child Protection Policy; Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to Child protection; Advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children or Young People in support of this Policy.
ACC State Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the ACC Child Protection Policy is implemented and adhered to by the State Executive and Constituent Churches and ACC Credential Holders;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all ACC People understand their obligations in accordance with the ACC Child Protection Policy; • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation; • Advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children or Young People in support of this Policy; • Proactively share resources and experience in the development of Child safe initiatives as they are identified; • Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of Child protection.
Constituent Churches and Credential Holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all ACC People within the respective Constituent Church understand, and adhere to, their obligations in accordance with the ACC Child Protection Policy; • Advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children or Young People in support of this Policy; • Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of Child protection. • It is acknowledged that not all Credential Holders will have sufficient influence to achieve these objectives with a Constituent Church, but it is expected, as a minimum, that a Senior Minister and/or their appointee/s will have such influence.

7 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF CORRESPONDING CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICE GUIDELINES?

The role of developing and implementing corresponding Child Protection Practice Guidelines in accordance with the relevant State/Territory legal obligations rests with the ACC National Executive (or its delegate).

The ACC State Executive and Constituent Churches are required to adopt the approved Child Protection Practice Guidelines (or for Constituent Churches, an alternative guideline that is at least consistent with the Child Protection Practice Guidelines).

As Child or Young Person protection is a matter affecting the national Movement, the administration and enforcement of the Child Protection Policy and the approved Child Protection Practice Guidelines shall be vested in the State Executive and Constituent Churches in consultation with the National Executive.

In accordance with article 9.7 of the ACC United Constitution, in circumstances where the National Executive considers the interests of the Movement within a State are in serious jeopardy it may intervene so as to replace the role of the State Executive in all respects for such period as it determines.

In the statements which follow, references to “we” and “our” are references to the ACC National Executive, the ACC State Executives, Constituent Churches and Credential Holders.

8 WHAT IS OUR COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Australian Christian Churches and Constituent Churches recognise that Children or Young People under the age of 18 years need special care and protection.

ACC makes the following commitments to the Children or Young People and families who access its activities, programs, services and facilities.

Our commitment to Children or Young People

- We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all Children or Young People who access any of our activities, programs, services or facilities.
- We are committed to providing Children or Young People with positive and nurturing experiences.
- We will support families and communities to promote Children or Young People’s healthy development and wellbeing.
- We will take action to ensure that Children or Young People are protected from harm by identifying and addressing risk factors as soon as practicable.
- We will take action to ensure that Children or Young People are not harmed during the time that they are involved with any of our activities, programs, services or facilities.
- We will ensure that Children or Young People have access to adequate support to promote safety and intervene early.

We will listen to Children or Young People and appropriately address any concerns that they raise with us in the least intrusive way possible that is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the Child or Young Person from harm and promote the Child or Young Person’s development.

Our commitment to parents and carers

- We are committed to supporting parents and carers to protect their Children or Young People.
- We will offer assistance that builds on a family’s strengths, is sensitive to their cultural and religious beliefs and empowers them to meet the changing needs of their Children or Young People.
- We are committed to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their Children or Young People if it is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the Child or Young Person from harm and promote the Child or Young Person’s development.
- We aim to be transparent in our decision-making with parents and carers as long as doing so does not compromise the safety of Children or Young people.
- We will seek to involve parents whenever possible and practicable in the decision-making process that impacts on them and the Children or Young People.
- We will provide opportunities for formal debriefing and/or counselling families of Children or Young People who have experienced abuse and any other family in the community who may indirectly be affected by an incident.

Our commitment to ACC People

In order to fulfill our obligations to the protection of Children or Young People, the ACC National Executive, ACC State Executive and Constituent Churches make the following commitments to ACC People.

- We are committed to providing ACC People with the necessary support to enable them to fulfill their roles.
- We will put in place a management structure that supports and develops ACC People in their roles.
- We are committed to providing ACC People with regular supervision and development.
- We will work to ensure that ACC People have access to a senior person to assist in making decisions in relation to any action required to protect Children or Young People from harm.

Our commitment to ensuring a Child safe organisation

- We are committed to using best practice standards in the recruitment, screening and employment of ACC People.
- We will work to create an environment in which Children or Young People are safe and feel safe.
- We will work to ensure that ACC People do not harm Children or Young People who are involved with our programs, services or facilities.

9 WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF ACC PEOPLE IN RELATION TO PROTECTING CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE?

The following are requirements of this Policy which are to be reflected by the approved Child Protection Practice Guidelines, codes of conduct and operational procedures developed and implemented by the ACC National Executive or Constituent Churches.

We expect ACC People to understand Children or Young People's rights.

Children or Young People have a right to be safe, and this Policy is aimed at ensuring the safety of Children or Young People.

We expect ACC People to understand and acknowledge the significance of family relationships for Children or Young People.

Children or Young People's experience of their family is foundational for their development. Families can act as supportive resources for growth and resilience in Children or Young People. Family relationships can also restrain and harm Children or Young People's social, physical, cognitive and emotional development. Families are the single most significant influence in shaping the way Children or Young People develop and perceive their sense of identity. We expect ACC People to recognise, respect and work to strengthen the capacities of parents/carers and other family members to care and protect their Children or Young People.

We expect ACC People to make available information about this Policy to Children or Young People and parents/carers. The information will be made available in developmentally appropriate language and translated to accommodate the main communities that access our services.

We expect ACC People to put the rights of a Child or Young Person to the protection from harm ahead of any cultural and religious practices of families who come to our Churches.

No cultural or religious belief will take precedence over the right of Children or Young People to protection from harm.

We expect ACC People to understand and respond to the special needs of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities.

We acknowledge that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities have special needs. We expect ACC People to act in ways that communicate effectively with and are supportive of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities. We also understand that we will need to be proactive in recognising the additional vulnerability to harm that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities experience.

We expect ACC People to be respectful of Children or Young People.

As part of our commitment to Children or Young People, we will facilitate opportunities for Children or Young People to tell us their views and feedback about the services we provide to them. We will treat Children or Young People as individuals and respect their unique abilities and vulnerabilities. We expect ACC People to express attitudes and engage in behaviour that respect and support Children or Young People.

We expect ACC People to act on any concerns raised by Children or Young People and/or their parents/carers.

We will take seriously any concerns or issues raised by Children or Young People and/or their parents. We will investigate all complaints or allegations made against any of ACC People. We will ensure that we promptly report any suspected, alleged or reported crimes against Children or Young People or other family members to the police or other authorised body in accordance with the policies and operational procedures of the ACC at a local level. We expect ACC People to follow our complaints procedure without hesitation in response to concerns raised by Children or Young People and/or their parents/carers.

We expect ACC People to understand the definitions, indicators and impact of harm on Children or Young People.

Experiences of harm are significant sources of trauma for Children or Young People and intensify the risk of Children or Young People developing a range of emotional, psychological, social and behavioural problems. Child physical abuse and sexual abuse is a crime. Intervention which identifies and prevents abuse from occurring is instrumental in supporting Children or Young People and families. When abuse has occurred, it is imperative that action is taken to protect Children or Young People from further experiences of abuse. Where there is a risk of harm, it is also imperative that action is taken to protect the Child or Young Person from that risk eventuating. We expect ACC People to know how to define harm, be aware of its indicators and understand its consequences. The more informed we are, the more effective we will be in our efforts to protect Children or Young People from all forms of harm.

We expect ACC People to know and follow regulations in relation to the care of Children or Young People.

There are number of regulations governing the provision of Child care. These regulations

define our minimum responsibilities and obligations towards Children or Young People and families. We expect all ACC People to know and follow these regulations. It is the responsibility of the managers of our Child care services to ensure that the regulations are adhered to by all ACC People under their supervision.

We expect ACC People to know and follow the law in relation to reporting harm.

We expect ACC People to know and follow relevant laws in their state jurisdiction as set out in a relevant State Child protection policy by making an appropriate report to the relevant government department in respect of actual harm to a Child or Young Person or a risk of harm to a Child or Young Person. Notwithstanding our obligations under the law, we expect ACC People to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing or safety of a Child or Young Person. For the avoidance of doubt, when there is no mandatory reporting obligation at law, nevertheless we require a report to be made to the relevant government agency and/or law enforcement body.

We expect ACC People to co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations.

In every circumstance, we expect ACC People to co-operate to the best of their ability with any formal investigation undertaken by the ACC (National or State Executives), police or other authorised body in relation to the care and protection of Children or Young People.

We expect ACC People to use the policies and operational procedures defined at the local level whenever they have a concern that a Child or Young Person may be experiencing harm.

The State Child protection policies have been designed to facilitate decision making in relation to the protection of Children or Young People. At all times, we expect ACC People to have a comprehensive understanding of the contents of this Policy and the relevant policies and abide by them whenever they have concerns about the possibility that a Child or Young Person has experienced or may be at risk of experiencing harm.

We expect ACC People to always follow any Child Protection Practice Guidelines implemented by the ACC or Constituent Church that has engaged or employed them.

Where Child Protection Practice Guidelines have been promulgated ACC and Constituent Churches ACC People will be asked to personally endorse these Guidelines and ensure that they adhere to it when they are at work and away from work. These guidelines will aim to ensure that ACC People are always safe adults who act protectively of Children or Young People.

We expect ACC People not to contravene any policies, regulations or laws in relation to the safety and protection of Children or Young People.

It is a serious breach of this Policy, and possibly the law, if any ACC People contravene any regulations or laws in relation to the safety and protection of Children whether or not they are working, volunteering or participating in a Church related activity, service or program at the time. Breaches of this Policy include, but are not limited to, ACC People who:

- sexually abuse Children or Young people;

- physically abuse Children or Young People;
- abduct Children or Young People;
- verbally abuse or bully Children or Young People;
- emotionally abuse Children or Young People;
- groom Children or Young People;
- take, reproduce and/or distribute photos or videos of Children or Young People without the consent of their parents or guardians (unless the Child or Young Person is of a sufficient age and maturity to give informed consent freely and voluntarily – this should be the exception rather than the rule);
- publish any material containing images of Children or Young People who are involved in one of our activities, services or programs that can be used for the sexual gratification of others;
- access, download, store or distribute any form of Child pornography;
- condone or encourage, in any way, the harm (whatever the kind) to Children or Young People;
- fail to take appropriate action in response to a complaint, risk, or suspicion of harm.

We expect that ACC People will support Children or Young People and their families as directed by senior ACC People in the event that a Child or Young Person is harmed by any ACC People.

We recognise that the impact of any form of harm on Children or Young People and their families is traumatic. It is even more complex when the perpetrator of the harm is within ACC. In these situations, we will provide opportunities for appropriate debriefing and/or counselling to the Children or Young People and their families who have experienced the harm and any other Child or Young Person and family in the community who may indirectly be affected by the incident(s).

10 WHAT SUPPORT WILL WE PROVIDE ACC PEOPLE?

In this section the intention is that the support envisaged will be primarily delivered by the local church followed by the relevant ACC state or territory entity.

We will ensure that ACC People receive training about this Policy.

On a regular basis, we will ensure that all ACC People are provided with training to understand and recommit to this Policy and the approved Child Protection Practice Guideline (or an alternative guideline as described at 7). Such training will also form part of any induction we provide to ACC People.

We will make opportunities available to the ACC People to allow them to feel clear about what is expected of them in relation to Children or Young People's welfare and safety.

We will provide regular opportunities to clarify and confirm the procedures for staff to apply when taking action in relation to Children or Young People's welfare and safety. This will include a discussion of this Policy as a standing item for regular meetings at all levels of ACC National Executive and Constituent Churches. The National Executive will publish an annual report to all ACC People about the effectiveness of the implementation of this Policy across

the ACC.

We will ensure that ACC People are aware of the formal recruitment, screening and employment practices of the ACC in relation to individuals with specific roles in working or volunteering with Children or Young People and families.

All ACC People will be informed during their recruitment that their employment or volunteer services will be subject to clearance under the Working with Children Check system (or equivalent checks under other state legislation). It is a serious breach of this Policy if an individual, who has convictions that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance, gains employment or is allowed to volunteer with Children or Young People who access our services. It is also a serious breach of this Policy, if an individual continues in his/her employment or volunteer role with us if he/she has been charged or convicted of a crime that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance. ACC People who have been charged or convicted of a crime that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance have an ongoing obligation to inform the Constituent Church of this matter and the Constituent Church will deal appropriately with this by removing the person from employment or volunteering service.

We will provide ACC People with guidance in relation to their role with Children or Young People and families.

We recognise that caring for and working with Children or Young People and their families can be complex and challenging. As such, we will provide guidance for ACC People in relation to their specific roles with Children or Young People and families.

We will provide opportunities for ACC People to receive debriefing in the event that it is required.

We recognise that responding to Children or Young People who are at risk of or have experienced harm can be stressful. It is even more complex when the perpetrator of the harm is another staff member or volunteer of the ACC or Constituent Churches. In these situations, we will provide opportunities for formal debriefing and/or counselling to ACC People as required.

SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

These **Safer Churches Guidelines** (“Guidelines”) have been developed by the ACC National Executive as part of the implementation of the **ACC Child Protection Policy** (“Policy”).

These Guidelines include the Child Protection Practice Guidelines referred to in section 7 of the Policy.

The Guidelines contained herein are both introductory foundational thoughts which are then built upon in the SMR Safe Ministry Manual (“Manual”) and **ACC Safer Churches Awareness Workshops** (“Workshop/s”), as well as good practice procedural suggestions for churches.

These Guidelines are not written as a replacement for participation in the Workshops, rather as a prompt or reminder of some of the key topics from the Workshops.

The Guidelines, Manual and Workshops assist church leaders in abiding by Work Health & Safety (WHS) legislation, applicable in all states and territories of Australia apart from Western Australia and Victoria. This legislation requires safe emotional and physical workplaces for all workers including volunteers. As such, the content of the Guidelines, Manual and Workshops are useful to all workers, both volunteer and paid, whether *ACC People* as defined in the Policy or not.

These Guidelines are divided into two categories:

- those considered to be legal, biblical and/or moral imperatives, denoted by the word “**shall**” must be implemented, and
- those considered as good practice, denoted by the word “**recommended**”, are nevertheless strongly recommended.

As part of adopting the ACC Child Protection Policy, Constituent Churches are required to adopt the Guidelines, or an alternative guideline that is at least consistent with these Guidelines. In any legal proceedings, Constituent Churches may be asked if any such Guidelines existed and if so, whether or not they were followed.

Visit the Safer Churches section of Pastor’s Login for more information and tools.

GUIDELINES

1. ACC Safer Churches Awareness Workshops

It is **recommended** that all ACC People as defined in the Policy, attend a Workshop every three years at a minimum. ACC Credential and Certificate holders **shall** attend a Workshop (or equivalent) every three years at a minimum in order for Credentials or Certificates to be renewed.

2. Motive for ministry

Our primary motive for establishing and maintaining Safer Churches environments for Children or Young People and all vulnerable people, is God's love for us. ACC People are committed to providing Children or Young People with positive and nurturing experiences and as such **shall** minister out of the love God has for everyone. We commit to church ministry events and programs built on solid Safer Churches foundations.

3. Maintaining appropriate boundaries

ACC People **shall** abide by the relevant **ACC Code of Conduct** applicable to their role, as part of being respectful of the boundaries of everyone. See the Ministerial Code of Conduct and Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct at Pastor's Login.

4. Team ministry

We establish and maintain Safer Churches environments for each other and those to whom we minister when we work as the 'body', or minister in 'team' context. All ACC People **shall** minister in transparent and accountable teams e.g. avoid unsupervised 1:1 contact with Children or Young People.

5. Self protection

It is **recommended** that ACC People actively assist Children or Young People to

- Trust their feelings,
- Say 'no' when they feel unsafe,
- Understand when to be confidential and when to talk to others about concerns,
- Find safe people to talk to,
- Know when they feel vulnerable,
- Have a say in the activities and programs in which they participate as far as is practical.

6. Being aware of Child Abuse Indicators

All ACC People **shall** learn the indicators of Child or Young Person abuse and neglect and report to their Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team when they have concerns about a Child and/or Young Person who is involved in the church.

7. Electronic communication

The use of electronic media for communication is part of everyday life. ACC People **shall** be mindful of the position of trust they hold by:

- being transparent and accountable in the use of electronic communications with Children or Young People as far as is practical, that is as a team, not as individuals, e.g. group emails.
It is **recommended** that in the case of electronic communications with Children under 16 this will be done with the full knowledge of the parents or carers of the Child or Young Person.
- not transmitting, downloading or storing any communication that is: discriminatory or harassing, derogatory, obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic, defamatory, threatening, for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to the Code of Conduct relevant to their position. In the case where ACC People receive such communication, they will report this to their Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team.
- not sending any electronic communication that attempts to hide their identity or represent the sender as someone else.

8. Reporting concerns of Children or Young People who may be at risk of harm

It is **recommended** that Constituent Churches appoint a **Safer Churches Person/Team**, whose roles include: receiving reports, assisting in the process of reporting of Child Protection concerns and keeping accurate records permanently and securely in accordance with privacy legislation.

ACC People **shall** report concerns when:

- a Child or Young Person discloses they have been or are at risk of being abused
- someone else (regardless of age) discloses that they know of a Child or Young Person who has been/is at risk of being abused
- there are concerns that the Child or Young Person may have been or is at risk of being abused based on their physical appearance or behaviour.

ACC People are not required, as an initial response, to establish or investigate if abuse has occurred, but rather report reasonable suspicions or concerns of abuse, including the grounds for concerns, to Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team (or equivalent). If a Local Church Safer Churches Person is not available and the abuse is currently occurring, or there are reasons to believe that a Child or Young Person is at risk, a report should be made immediately to the police and appropriate authorities.

Process for Reporting:

- a) Report to Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team

Report concerns to one of the appointed Local Safer Churches People, except

when a disclosure occurs at a program or event, or a Child's/Young Person's immediate safety is at risk (sexual and physical abuse). In this case, immediately phone the police and organise appropriate support for the Child/ren. This can be done with the help of the most senior on-site Leader, who will also need to assist with managing the immediate situation.

- b) Complete applicable form/s and/or online reporting, e.g. Safer Churches anecdotal record and/or state government online reporting tool. The Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team will keep a Local Church log, upholding privacy principles.
- c) Take the appropriate action with your Local Church Safer Churches Person - including:
 - Police/government Child Protection agency reporting (police, government agency).
NOTE: In South Australia, individuals must report directly to CARL (Child Abuse Report Line).
 - Contact the **National Safer Churches Helpline** for advice and assistance.
 - Initiate the correct complaints handling processes if the allegations are about ACC Leaders/Certificate Holders.
- d) Provide ongoing support, pastoral care and risk management processes

It is the role of the Local Church Board to implement pastoral care and support for all parties involved, including the Child or Young Person and family, as much as is practical. There may also be Local Church risk management action plans that need to be implemented, e.g. stepping aside a Leader/Certificate Holder who has been accused of harming a Child or Young Person whilst the investigation occurs.

9. Appointment of Volunteer Workers (including ACC people)

The following Guideline is a **recommended** minimum standard for the appointment of all Volunteer Workers and team leaders, including ACC People. (For paid workers and leaders, additional steps may be required as part of the Local Church's written employment process.)

a) Prior to Serving

The Volunteer Church Workers Declaration should be completed. This declaration refers to the working with children checks and the Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct.

b) Induction

WHS legislation requires that all workers are provided with appropriate information/induction training to enable them to safely fulfil their role/s, i.e. share in the ministry. This induction process should include prayer for the leader and clear communication with those who need to know that this person is an endorsed leader of the church.

c) Ministry Review

It is recommended there be a process of annual review of roles for Volunteer Workers. This process should be made clear to applicants at the time of appointment, as part of the induction process. This provides an opportunity for leaders to say they will or will not be available next year/time, which is important for the health of committed teams.

10. Supervision of Volunteer Workers (including ACC people)

The following Guideline is a **recommended** minimum standard for the supervision of all Volunteer Workers and team leaders including ACC People. (For paid workers additional supervision may be required as part of the Constituent Church's written employment procedures.)

a. Provide adequate support

It is recommended that the Local Church Board make adequate provision for formal and informal support for all ACC People.

b. Develop skills

It is recommended that the Local Church Board make adequate provision for developing Volunteer Workers. This may include things like regular team meetings, praying together, eating together and planning together. It is also advisable to invest in leadership development, both through in-house in-services and external training events.

c. Apply the relevant Code of Conduct

See the Ministerial Code of Conduct and Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct at Pastor's Login. The applicable ACC code of conduct provides clear behavioural boundaries for representing the church.

11. Responding to conflicts, and/or allegations against ACC People

- ACC People **shall** make an appropriate report to the relevant government department and to the relevant ACC State or National Executive, in respect to a Child or Young Person at risk of harm.
- ACC People **shall** use the ACC Grievance Procedure when responding to allegations of misconduct and/or abuse by ACC Credential or Certificate holders.
- When responding to allegations of misconduct and/or abuse by those who are not ACC Credential or Certificate holders, ACC People **shall** work through an appropriate process which affords natural justice to all parties; your ACC State Safer Churches Officers can provide assistance working through such a process.
- In all instances, the Local Church **shall** consider the pastoral, legal and insurance implications of the conflict or allegation and respond with transparency and accountability.

12. Compliance with WHS legislation

It is **recommended** even in states where there is no legislated WHS requirement that each ACC Church:

- Elect a **Health & Safety Team** to oversee implementation of WHS compliance.
- Write and implement Health and Safety policies, including privacy policy and evacuations procedures.
- Keep Health and Safety on the agenda at the Local Church Board team meetings.
- Notify incidents such as serious events and dangerous incidents within a prescribed period to the Health & Safety Team.
- Address health and safety concerns within a timely manner of the concern being communicated to the Health & Safety Team.
- Notify incidents such as serious events and critical incidents within a prescribed period to the Health & Safety Team.
- Use incident report documentation to report serious incidents to your insurer and your ACC State Safer Churches Officer.
- Ensure all workers know and follow the church's abuse reporting and grievance procedures.
- Have the Health & Safety Team undertake a safe environment audit of the church centre at least twice a year.

Note: In States & Territories where the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Legislation applies to churches this guideline is written to assist with compliance to the WHS Act.

13. Annual program approval

It is **recommended** that all Children or Young People's programs be approved by the Local Church Board through a formal, annual written approval process.

14. Managing event and/or program risks

It is **recommended** that ministry coordinators manage individual program risk according to risk management good practice, including annual risk management as part of the annual program approval process.

15. Safe spiritual and emotional environments in ministry programs and events

The ACC Child Protection Policy contains practical expectations for safe spiritual and emotional environments for Children or Young People:

We expect ACC People to put the rights of a Child or Young Person to the protection from harm ahead of any cultural and religious practices of families who come to our Churches.

No cultural or religious belief will take precedence over the right of Children or Young People to protection from harm.

We expect ACC People to understand and respond to the special needs of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities.

We acknowledge that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities have special needs. We expect ACC People to act in ways that communicate effectively with and are supportive of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities. We also understand that we will need to be proactive in recognising the additional vulnerability to harm that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities experience.

We expect ACC People to be respectful of Children or Young People.

As part of our commitment to Children or Young People, we will facilitate opportunities for Children or Young People to tell us their views and feedback about the services we provide to them. We will treat Children or Young People as individuals and respect their unique abilities and vulnerabilities. We expect ACC People to express attitudes and engage in behaviour that respects and supports Children or Young People (ACC Child Protection Policy)

16. Safe physical environments

It is **recommended** for the safe running of Children's and Young People's programs and events that the following matters are considered:

FIRST AID including:

- At least one on-site leader should have current first aid training, e.g. St John Ambulance.
- A suitable, up-to-date and accessible first aid kit is to be available at all times.

TRANSPORTATION including:

- Responsible, road-rule abiding transportation is to be provided.
- Never be alone in a car with a Child or Young Person.
- At no time should there be more passengers in a car than the number of seat belts that are in working order and available for use.
- All cars will be registered, in good working order and driven by licensed drivers abiding by any licence restrictions (e.g. Provisional licence passenger conditions)
- If a Child/Young Person is travelling in a vehicle driven by a worker who possesses a provisional licence, prior written consent should, wherever possible, be given by a parent/guardian, except in the case of emergencies.

FOOD SAFETY including:

- Prepare a Food Preparation & Storage Practices Guide
- Display Food Preparation and Storage Practices Guide in the kitchen or food preparation area.
- Checking with local council to ensure compliance with local requirements in relation to food handling.

SUPERVISION NUMBERS including:

ACC People should ensure that adequate numbers of leaders are present to supervise the program.

Precise numbers of leaders are hard to determine and will depend greatly on the size of the group, their age and the level of physical and or emotional risk inherent to the activity.

Programs aimed at younger Children and the disabled require more supervision due to the increased level of risk involved.

No matter what size the group is, ensure enough leaders so as to cope with any accidents and/or critical incidents that may occur.

An example may be requiring a minimum of two adult leaders on site for all programs in addition to the leader to participant ratio of 1:10. This will allow for safe supervision if and when accidents or critical incidents occur. Of course, many more leaders will be needed for high-risk activities such as taking Children or Young People off-site, swimming, bushwalks, games nights or the like, or if the group is large.

It is **recommended** that ACC People running Children's or Young People's programs:

- make the distinction between those adults who are part of the team, and who are junior leaders (under 18 years). Junior leaders are not to be counted in the supervision ratios.
- use adult helpers over the age of 18 who are not leaders of the group, but rather are present on-site for supervision purposes. Such adult helpers, though still Volunteer Workers, would not actually run activities, whereas junior ministry leaders may run many. Adult helpers are important to help ensure the safety of the Children or Young People.
- do not allow leaders or helpers to be alone, one-on-one, with a Child or Young Person. One adult with a small group may be fine as long as there are other adults on site. Where possible, have both male and female leaders to provide support for both boys and girls.
- In relation to camps or overnight settings, it is not advisable that leaders sleep in the same room as Children or Young People. Leaders should be sleeping in a designated leader's space (cabin) nearby.

MANAGEMENT OF HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES including:

- For high risk and off-site activities: e.g. water sports, swimming excursions, white

water rafting/caving/bungy jumping, inflatable sumo suit wrestling, gladiator games, horse-riding, high ropes activities, roller blading/skating, skateboarding or activities involving live animals, an employee/leader with appropriate (certified) training for the event should be running the activity.

- Active supervision is also required at all times. Supervisors must not be involved in any additional activities that will distract from their role as a supervisor.
- All participants involved in high risk activities should have a signed liability release from each parent/guardian. However, it is important to note that a liability release form does not actually indemnify against an accident. Individual leaders may be protected where all due care has been taken, but a church may still be deemed liable, where duty of care failures are proven.
- Contact the church's insurance broker/company contact for advice before running high risk activities as some high risk injuries may be excluded from the Church's liability cover.

17. Responding to incidents

ACC people shall

- respond to incidents appropriately and promptly and take adequate follow up action.
- Use of report forms: Injuries or accidents requiring secondary medical attention, e.g. visit to a doctor or medical centre, are to be written up on an incident report.
- Incidents of a serious nature need to be reported to your local church insurer.
- Report all incidents to parents and/or care-givers of Children or Young People, and in instances where the impact has been felt by a wider group, report, with the permission of those involved in the incident, to the wider concerned group.



OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

Title:	Safer Churches Guidelines
Document Type:	Guideline
Version:	2017:1
Date:	August 2017
Approval:	National Executive

SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

These **Safer Churches Guidelines** ("Guidelines") have been developed by the ACC National Executive as part of the implementation of the **ACC Child Protection Policy** ("Policy").

These Guidelines include the Child Protection Practice Guidelines referred to in section 7 of the Policy.

The Guidelines contained herein are both introductory foundational thoughts which are then built upon in the SMR Safe Ministry Manual ("Manual") and **ACC Safer Churches Awareness Workshops** ("Workshop/s"), as well as good practice procedural suggestions for churches.

These Guidelines are not written as a replacement for participation in the Workshops, rather as a prompt or reminder of some of the key topics from the Workshops.

The Guidelines, Manual and Workshops assist church leaders in abiding by Work Health & Safety (WHS) legislation, applicable in all states and territories of Australia apart from Western Australia and Victoria. This legislation requires safe emotional and physical workplaces for all workers including volunteers. As such, the content of the Guidelines, Manual and Workshops are useful to all workers, both volunteer and paid, whether *ACC People* as defined in the Policy or not.

These Guidelines are divided into two categories:

- those considered to be legal, biblical and/or moral imperatives, denoted by the word "**shall**" must be implemented, and
- those considered as good practice, denoted by the word "**recommended**", are nevertheless strongly recommended.

As part of adopting the ACC Child Protection Policy, Constituent Churches are required to adopt the Guidelines, or an alternative guideline that is at least consistent with these Guidelines. In any legal proceedings, Constituent Churches may be asked if any such Guidelines existed and if so, whether or not they were followed.

Visit the Safer Churches section of Pastor's Login for more information and tools.

GUIDELINES

1. ACC Safer Churches Awareness Workshops

All people who have a Direct Role (as defined in the ACC Child Protection Policy) with children in ACC churches **shall** receive adequate training in the concepts of Child Protection at minimum every 3 years.

ACC Credential and Certificate holders **shall** complete ACC Safer Churches Workshop (or recognised equivalent) every three years at a minimum in order for Credentials or Certificates to be renewed.

2. Motive for ministry

Our primary motive for establishing and maintaining Safer Churches environments for Children or Young People and all vulnerable people, is God's love for us. ACC People are committed to providing Children or Young People with positive and nurturing experiences and as such **shall** minister out of the love God has for everyone. We commit to church ministry events and programs built on solid Safer Churches foundations.

3. Maintaining appropriate boundaries

ACC People **shall** abide by the relevant **ACC Code of Conduct** applicable to their role, as part of being respectful of the boundaries of everyone. See the Ministerial Code of Conduct and Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct at Pastor's Login.

4. Team ministry

We establish and maintain Safer Churches environments for each other and those to whom we minister when we work as the 'body', or minister in 'team' context. All ACC People **shall** minister in transparent and accountable teams e.g. avoid unsupervised 1:1 contact with Children or Young People.

5. Promoting empowerment and participation:

ACC People and constituent churches **shall** actively promote the empowerment and participation of all people at church in the protection of Children and Young People.

It is **recommended**, for example, that ACC People actively assist Children or Young People to

- Trust their feelings,
- Say 'no' when they feel unsafe,
- Understand when to be confidential and when to talk to others about concerns,
- Find safe people to talk to,
- Raise concerns about abuse,
- Find safe people to talk to,
- Know when they feel vulnerable.

It is recommended that ACC People actively assist the families of Children or Young People to

- Access information about what child abuse is,
- Feel welcome and have a say in the activities and programs in which their Children or Young People participate as far as is practical,
- Engage in two-way communication between families and the church.

6. Being aware of Child Abuse Indicators

All ACC People **shall** learn the indicators of Child or Young Person abuse and neglect and report to their Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team when they have concerns about a Child and/or Young Person who is involved in the church.

7. Safe Online and Digital practices

The use of electronic media for communication is part of everyday life. ACC People **shall** be mindful of the position of trust they hold by actively being safe in all online and digital interactions, including maintaining transparency and accountability in the use of electronic communications with Children or Young People as far as is practical, that is as a team, not as individuals, e.g. group emails/text messages/Facebook.

ACC People **shall** not transmit, download or store any communication that is: discriminatory or harassing, derogatory, obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic, defamatory, threatening, for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to the Code of Conduct relevant to their position. In the case where ACC People receive such communication, they will report this to their Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team.

ACC People **shall** not send any electronic communication that attempts to hide their identity or represent the sender as someone else.

It is **recommended** that communications with Children under 16 occur with the full knowledge of the parent/s or carer/s of the Child or Young Person.

8. Reporting concerns of Children or Young People who may be at risk of harm

It is **recommended** that Constituent Churches appoint a **Safer Churches Person/Team**, whose roles include: receiving reports, assisting in the process of reporting of Child Protection concerns and keeping accurate records permanently and securely in accordance with privacy legislation.

ACC People **shall** report concerns when:

- a Child or Young Person discloses they have been or are at risk of being abused
- someone else (regardless of age) discloses that they know of a Child or Young

Person who has been/is at risk of being abused

- there are concerns that the Child or Young Person may have been or is at risk of being abused based on their physical appearance or behaviour.

ACC People are not required, as an initial response, to establish or investigate if abuse has occurred, but rather report reasonable suspicions or concerns of abuse, including the grounds for concerns, to Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team (or equivalent). If a Local Church Safer Churches Person is not available and the abuse is currently occurring, or there are reasons to believe that a Child or Young Person is at risk, a report should be made immediately to the police and appropriate authorities.

Process for Reporting:

- a) Report to Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team

Report concerns to one of the appointed Local Safer Churches People, except when a disclosure occurs at a program or event, or a Child's/Young Person's immediate safety is at risk (sexual and physical abuse). In this case, immediately phone the police and organise appropriate support for the Child/ren. This can be done with the help of the most senior on-site Leader, who will also need to assist with managing the immediate situation.

- b) Complete applicable form/s and/or online reporting, e.g. Safer Churches anecdotal record and/or state government online reporting tool. The Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team will keep a Local Church log, upholding privacy principles.

- c) Take the appropriate action with your Local Church Safer Churches Person - including:

- Police/government Child Protection agency reporting (police, government agency).

NOTE: In South Australia, individuals must report directly to CARL (Child Abuse Report Line).

- Contact the **National Safer Churches Helpline** for advice and assistance.
- Initiate the correct complaints handling processes if the allegations are about ACC Leaders/Certificate Holders.

- d) Provide ongoing support, pastoral care and risk management processes

It is the role of the Local Church Board to implement pastoral care and support for all parties involved, including the Child or Young Person and family, as much as is practical. There may also be Local Church risk management action plans that need to be implemented, e.g. stepping aside a Leader/Certificate Holder who has been accused of harming a Child or Young Person whilst the investigation occurs.

9. Appointment of Volunteer Workers (including ACC people)

All people who have a Direct Role (as defined in the ACC Child Protection Policy) with children in ACC churches **shall** be screened, appointed and inducted using a formal accountable / transparent process (For paid workers and leaders, additional steps may be required as part of the Local Church's written employment process).

As a minimum, it is **recommended** that:

a) Prior to Serving

The Volunteer Church Workers Declaration should be completed. This declaration refers to the working with children checks and the Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct.

b) Induction

WHS legislation requires that all workers are provided with appropriate information/induction training to enable them to safely fulfil their role/s, i.e. share in the ministry. This induction process should include prayer for the leader and clear communication with those who need to know that this person is an endorsed leader of the church.

c) Ministry Review

It is recommended there be a process of annual review of roles for Volunteer Workers. This process should be made clear to applicants at the time of appointment, as part of the induction process. This provides an opportunity for leaders to say they will or will not be available next year/time, which is important for the health of committed teams.

10. Supervision of Volunteer Workers (including ACC people)

All people who have a Direct Role (as defined in the ACC Child Protection Policy) with children in ACC churches **shall** be appropriately supervised in their roles, including being provided with clear behavioural expectations for their role through a code of conduct. (For paid workers, additional supervision may be required as part of the Constituent Church's written employment procedures.)

As a minimum it is **recommended** ACC Constituent churches:

a. Provide adequate support

It is recommended that the Local Church Board make adequate provision for formal and informal support for all ACC People.

b. Develop skills

It is recommended that the Local Church Board make adequate provision for developing Volunteer Workers. This may include things like regular team meetings, praying together, eating together and planning together. It is also advisable to invest in leadership development, both through in-house in-services and external training events.

c. Apply the relevant Code of Conduct

See the Ministerial Code of Conduct and Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct at Pastor's Login. The applicable ACC code of conduct provides clear behavioural boundaries for representing the church.

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- ACC People **shall** make an appropriate report to the relevant government department and to the relevant ACC State or National Executive, in respect to a Child or Young Person at risk of harm.
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- In all instances, the Local Church **shall** consider the pastoral, legal and insurance implications of the conflict or allegation and respond with transparency and accountability.

12. Compliance with WHS legislation

It is **recommended** even in states where there is no legislated WHS requirement that each ACC Church:

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Note: In States & Territories where the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Legislation applies to churches this guideline is written to assist with compliance to the WHS Act.

13. Annual program approval

It is **recommended** that all Children or Young People's programs be approved by the Local Church Board through a formal, annual written approval process.

14. Managing event and/or program risks

It is **recommended** that ministry coordinators manage individual program risk according to risk management good practice, including annual risk management as part of the annual program approval process.

15. Safe spiritual and emotional environments in ministry programs and events

ACC constituent churches **shall** provide safe spiritual and emotional environments including a commitment to:

- servant leadership in our ministry to all people,
- upholding National Privacy Act principles,
- respect for diversity culturally, e.g. the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds,
- the safety of children with a disability.

The ACC Child Protection Policy states that ACC people **shall**:

- *put the rights of a Child or Young Person to the protection from harm ahead of any cultural and religious practices of families who come to our Churches.*

No cultural or religious belief will take precedence over the right of Children or Young People to protection from harm.

- *understand and respond to the special needs of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities.*

We acknowledge that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities have special needs. We expect ACC People to act in ways that communicate effectively with and are supportive of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities. We also understand that we will need to be proactive in recognising the additional

vulnerability to harm that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities experience.

- *to be respectful of Children or Young People.*

As part of our commitment to Children or Young People, we will facilitate opportunities for Children or Young People to tell us their views and feedback about the services we provide to them. We will treat Children or Young People as individuals and respect their unique abilities and vulnerabilities. We expect ACC People to express attitudes and engage in behaviour that respects and supports Children or Young People (ACC Child Protection Policy)

16. Safe physical environments

It is **recommended** for the safe running of Children's and Young People's programs and events that the following matters are considered:

FIRST AID including:

- At least one on-site leader should have current first aid training, e.g. St John Ambulance.
- A suitable, up-to-date and accessible first aid kit is to be available at all times.

TRANSPORTATION including:

- Responsible, road-rule abiding transportation is to be provided.
- Never be alone in a car with a Child or Young Person.
- At no time should there be more passengers in a car than the number of seat belts that are in working order and available for use.
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- Prepare a Food Preparation & Storage Practices Guide
- Display Food Preparation and Storage Practices Guide in the kitchen or food preparation area.
- Checking with local council to ensure compliance with local requirements in relation to food handling.

SUPERVISION NUMBERS including:

ACC People should ensure that adequate numbers of leaders are present to supervise the program.

Precise numbers of leaders are hard to determine and will depend greatly on the size of the group, their age and the level of physical and or emotional risk inherent to the activity.

Programs aimed at younger Children and the disabled require more supervision due to the increased level of risk involved.

No matter what size the group is, ensure enough leaders so as to cope with any accidents and/or critical incidents that may occur.

An example may be requiring a minimum of two adult leaders on site for all programs in addition to the leader to participant ratio of 1:10. This will allow for safe supervision if and when accidents or critical incidents occur. Of course, many more leaders will be needed for high-risk activities such as taking Children or Young People off-site, swimming, bushwalks, games nights or the like, or if the group is large.

It is **recommended** that ACC People running Children's or Young People's programs:

- make the distinction between those adults who are part of the team, and who are junior leaders (under 18 years). Junior leaders are not to be counted in the supervision ratios.
- use adult helpers over the age of 18 who are not leaders of the group, but rather are present on-site for supervision purposes. Such adult helpers, though still Volunteer Workers, would not actually run activities, whereas junior ministry leaders may run many. Adult helpers are important to help ensure the safety of the Children or Young People.
- do not allow leaders or helpers to be alone, one-on-one, with a Child or Young Person. One adult with a small group may be fine as long as there are other adults on site. Where possible, have both male and female leaders to provide support for both boys and girls.
- In relation to camps or overnight settings, it is not advisable that leaders sleep in the same room as Children or Young People. Leaders should be sleeping in a designated leader's space (cabin) nearby.

MANAGEMENT OF HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES including:

- For high risk and off-site activities: e.g. water sports, swimming excursions, white water rafting/caving/bungy jumping, inflatable sumo suit wrestling, gladiator games, horse-riding, high ropes activities, roller blading/skating, skateboarding or activities involving live animals, an employee/leader with appropriate (certified) training for the event should be running the activity.
- Active supervision is also required at all times. Supervisors must not be involved in any additional activities that will distract from their role as a supervisor.

- All participants involved in high risk activities should have a signed liability release from each parent/guardian. However, it is important to note that a liability release form does not actually indemnify against an accident. Individual leaders may be protected where all due care has been taken, but a church may still be deemed liable, where duty of care failures are proven.
- Contact the church's insurance broker/company contact for advice before running high risk activities as some high risk injuries may be excluded from the Church's liability cover.

17. Responding to incidents

ACC people **shall**

- respond to incidents appropriately and promptly and take adequate follow up action.
- Use of report forms: Injuries or accidents requiring secondary medical attention, e.g. visit to a doctor or medical centre, are to be written up on an incident report.
- Incidents of a serious nature need to be reported to your local church insurer.
- Report all incidents to parents and/or care-givers of Children or Young People, and in instances where the impact has been felt by a wider group, report, with the permission of those involved in the incident, to the wider concerned group.



OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

Title:	Ministerial Code of Conduct
Document Type:	Movement Policy
Version:	2015:1
Date:	April 2015
Approval:	Amendments approved National Conference 2015

MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ACC CREDENTIALLED MINISTERS

The Rationale for a Code

Ministry is a call to serve both God and people. Credentialed Ministers are firstly accountable to God (1 Corinthians 4:4-5), but also to church members and those who receive ministry (Ephesians 4:1-2). Ministers are public figures whose lives are on display and are viewed with considerable public scrutiny. A high degree of conformity is expected with the biblical call to holiness (Matthew 5:48; Titus 2:7-8). Accordingly, pastoral relationships are to be characterised by love, justice, care, and compassion (Micah 6:8). A minister is firstly a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, (1 John 2:6) and as such ministry is grounded by prayer, Bible study, regular worship and a readiness to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20).

Ministers of our Movement are to live and minister in accordance with biblical values. Additionally, it is expected that every profession have a code of conduct that sets an example of excellence for the society in which it seeks to minister. Ministers are to be examples in the creation of healthy communities.

The following guidelines are designed to identify areas, articulate relevant principles, note areas of caution, and state what is clearly prohibited in terms of biblical conduct for Ministers in our Movement.

The Purpose of the Code

This code is intended to guide the behaviour of Ministers in our Movement. It is articulated to assist leaders to serve in such a manner that it will cause our churches and ministries to be safe places for all; places where integrity is honoured, accountability is practised, misconduct is not concealed, and forgiveness is encouraged to bring about healing and restoration.

Article 11.7 of the United Constitution provides for action that may be taken where the holder of a ministerial certificate has committed improper conduct.

Improper conduct is generally regarded as behaviour that in all the circumstances of a case is an inappropriate or incorrect way of discharging a person's duties, obligations, or responsibilities.

This Code of Conduct sets out the standard that is expected of credentialed Ministers, and therefore is an important document for determining whether a person has committed improper conduct.

A breach of a **"Prohibited"** provisions will always be improper conduct and will result in disciplinary action. A breach of a **"Cautionary"** provision, depending on the circumstances may be improper conduct, and may result in disciplinary action.

The Code of Conduct

1. Pastoral Example

Ministers should be ***“above reproach”*** (1 Timothy 3:2). The values of the Gospel of Christ should be obvious to members of the church and wider society (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1). It is also important for an effective minister to have a healthy lifestyle and a balance of service, recreation, and family (Ecclesiastes 3:1-11; Titus 1:6). This lifestyle should also be supported and encouraged for all members of church staff.

Ministers should be good citizens and obey the laws of the community (Proverbs 24:21; Romans 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:11-17). The only rare exception may be when a Christian engages in non-violent civil disobedience as a matter of protest (Acts 4:18-20).

Caution

Addictive behaviours: Scripture requires that we exercise caution in the use of alcohol (Proverbs 20:1; 1 Corinthians 6:12; 1 Corinthians 8). Abstinence is a stand that is highly respected in our Movement. Extreme caution must also be exercised with all potentially addictive and harmful behaviours that bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardise our own or another's faith.

Language: The use of offensive language should also be avoided (such as swear words, sexual connotations, and racial or religious slurs).

Prohibited

A Minister must avoid drunkenness, gambling, and abstain from the use of all illegal drugs (Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:21). A Minister must not smoke.

2. Ministry Matters

Authority to minister comes from Jesus Christ; the head of the Church (Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 12:27). Christian leadership must never be manipulative or authoritarian (John 15:15). Ministers are servants of Christ, who should endeavour to become servant leaders as modelled by Jesus (John 13:3-14). Leadership in all its dimensions must always be accountable, and it is essential that ministers act responsibly in the best interests of those they serve (James 3:1; 1 Peter 5:2-4).

Caution

Qualifications: Ministers must not misrepresent their competence, qualifications, training, or experience. Ministers should recognise their level of skill and experience. If they are unsure, they must seek additional advice from other colleagues or other professionals.

Pastoral relationships: Ministers should also be aware of the danger of dependency developing in pastoral relationships, and seek supervision or advice when such concerns arise. A balance should be found between the need for mutual support and the need for accountability.

Ministry gifts: It is a Pentecostal distinctive to honour the role of the Holy Spirit who imparts spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7). There are a variety of gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4) and the true exercise of these gifts will always be consistent with the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). For example, prophecy is to be exercised for “**strengthening, encouragement and comfort**” (1 Corinthians 14:3). A leader must always be willing to held accountable, admitting to the possibility of human error when exercising the gifts of the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).

Public statements: We live in a society that has become increasingly sensitive to matters of discrimination and vilification. A Minister must show respect and godly care to all people, inside or outside the Christian community (Colossians 4:6). Care must be taken in how Ministers speak of the ministry of others in public (Mark 9:40) since reputation is something highly valued in Scripture (Proverbs 22:1).

Care must be exercised when Ministers express a personal opinion on controversial matters. They must distinguish expressing an opinion from speaking on behalf of a local church or the Movement (1 Corinthians 7:12).

Staffing and volunteers: There is a need for transparency and Godly motivation in any employment or ministry offer extended to a Minister, staff member, or volunteer serving in another church. The offer must only be made with the prior knowledge and agreement of the Senior Minister of the church where they currently serve. It is inappropriate that an approach be made to a Minister or staff member serving in a church that is geographically local. It is additionally inappropriate for a Minister or staff member serving in a pastoral team to seek a position in a neighbouring church without the endorsement of their Senior Minister.

After retirement or resignation from a ministry, the Minister must terminate existing pastoral relationships to allow their successor to assume responsibility. Friendships may continue as long as the end of the pastoral relationship is mutually recognised. Any request for a continuing pastoral relationship must only occur with the permission of the new Senior Minister or the person who has overall pastoral oversight.

It is unethical to be employed by a church, to build up that ministry, and then resign or be dismissed and then start a new work incorporating former church members without the prior knowledge and consent of the former Senior Minister. It is also unethical for a Minister to do anything to encourage a member of another church to join his or her church/ministry.

Conflicts of Interest: It is important to avoid any actual, apparent or potential conflicts between personal interests and pastoral responsibilities. If there is anything that could lead to a conflict of interest that will or could have an effect upon or undermine an individual's impartiality in a given situation, then it must be immediately disclosed in full outlining the nature and extent of the conflict

of interest to the Relevant Persons as set out in the ACC Conflicts of Interest Guidance Statement.

Prohibited

A Minister must not be abusive in any way toward others (1 Timothy 3:2-5; Titus 1:7).

The misuse of authority can be a particular temptation in leadership and must be avoided. Ministers must not attempt to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit to manipulate or coerce a person. This includes attempting to use healing for financial gain; attributing miracles for personal glory; or using a word of knowledge to control an individual; or using prophecy to change church membership or to enlist support for a ministry. Accountability in all areas of ministry is essential.

3. Sexual Behaviour

Sexuality is a gift from God and integral to human nature. Ministers must value this gift by maintaining chastity in singleness and faithfulness in marriage (Proverbs 5:18, 6:32; 1 Corinthians 7:2). Homosexual behaviour is forbidden by Scripture (Romans 1:24-25).

Caution

Children: Being especially vulnerable, children are entitled to be safe and protected. Ministry to children needs to be characterised by absolute trustworthiness. The Senior Minister and leadership of the local church are responsible to implement the appropriate **Child Protection Policy** for their State or Territory.

Physical contact: Caution must always be exercised when initiating or receiving physical contact including gestures of comfort that may be unwanted or misinterpreted.

Pastoral conversations: A Minister must be careful in pastoral conversations when a person talks about sexual problems. Consideration must always be given to whether it is appropriate to refer a person to a suitable counsellor.

Ministry to people in the sex industry requires clear boundaries, a high level of accountability and mixed gender peer support (Proverbs 5:21).

Pastoral relationships: It is only in the rarest of circumstances that a pastoral relationship can legitimately develop into a romantic relationship. If two single people meet in a pastoral setting (not a counselling relationship), and there is mutual attraction, then it is important for both parties to acknowledge that the nature of the relationship is changing. Once mutually recognised and acknowledged, it is the responsibility of the Minister to disclose this to the Senior Minister or their supervisor, and to arrange for someone else to assume pastoral responsibility for that person.

Prohibited

All inappropriate sexual behaviour is forbidden. A Minister must not have a sexual relationship with a member of the church or anyone who is receiving, or has recently received, pastoral ministry. It is never acceptable to blame the person who has received counselling or ministry.

Sexual innuendo or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate.

A Minister must not view pornographic material or go to places of commercialised sex such as strip clubs or visit a brothel (Matthew 5:28; 2 Peter 2:14a; Proverbs 5:3-6; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:12). Additionally, they must avoid chat rooms or internet sites of a sexual nature.

A Minister must adequately respond to reported instances of sexual abuse. An adequate response requires complete and timely adherence to all policies and procedures adopted by the ACC surrounding the reporting of sexual abuse.

Ministers must consider their other duties, such as their duty of confidentiality, and the duty to avoid conflicts of interest in discharging their duties to adequately respond to reported instances of sexual abuse.

Apart from strict adherence to all policies and procedures adopted by the ACC, a Minister who has been notified of an instance of sexual abuse must not engage in poor administrative practices, which include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Failure to take any action that should reasonably have been taken;
- 2) Failure to notify the relevant State President, their appointee or other relevant officer;
- 3) Failure to follow an appropriate consultative process;
- 4) Excessive or unreasonable delay in process;
- 5) Inadequate record-keeping;

4. Financial Matters

A Minister must set an example and have integrity in all their financial dealings. This would include the timely payment of debts, the effective management of finances, as well as providing for their family (Romans 13:7-8). Failure to do so will have a significant impact on the church and the perceptions of the wider community.

The Senior Minister and the leadership of the local church have responsibility for the sound management of church and ministry finances. They may or may not be involved in actual transactions, but must ensure the implementation of a proper system for financial integrity and accountability. All church and ministry accounts should be independently audited.

Caution

Conflicts of interest: It is important to avoid any potential conflict between personal finances and pastoral responsibilities. If there is anything that could lead to a conflict of interest, then it

must be immediately disclosed to the Board or Elders. It is important to disclose to the Senior Minister or Board or Eldership any personal gift or bequest (2 Corinthians 8:21; James 2:1, 2-4).

A leader must avoid borrowing money from, or lending money to, a person with whom there is a pastoral relationship.

Particular care must be exercised in the appointment of a spouse or family member to a paid position in the church or ministry. It must be done only with careful consultation with the Board or Eldership.

Taxation: A Minister must exercise caution with tax minimisation strategies and must not improperly use fringe benefit allowances.

Prohibited

A Minister must not seek additional personal advantage or financial gain because of a pastoral role. Naturally, this includes any benefit to a spouse and/or immediate member of his or her family. Various professions forbid dual relationships (2 Timothy 2:4). For example, a doctor cannot enter into a business relationship with a patient. A Minister must disclose to their Board or Eldership any situation that could be viewed as a dual relationship, including business agreements.

A Minister must never borrow or take church funds without proper authorisation. A Minister must not seek financial support from people in a previous church or ministry unless there is authorisation by the current Senior Minister, Eldership, or Board. On termination of employment with a church (ministry or agency), a Minister must not expect a payment that is excessive, illegal or by private arrangement. In cases of dispute, the matter must be referred to the State President or their appointee.

5. Confidentiality

Trust is essential in pastoral ministry. Those involved in pastoral care must note that both formal interviews and casual conversations in a ministry context are pastoral encounters where confidences are shared and confidential information received. This information must not be disclosed, and must be treated with the utmost care. Exceptions include when disclosure is required by law (subpoena or abuse notifications), there are concerns for the safety of the person or others, or when the information is in the public domain.

Caution

Pastoral records: Pastoral notes and records are important, but caution must be taken with securing them. Any record of a pastoral counselling session is considered a health record, which is governed by national legislation. Computer records must be password protected and access limited to authorised persons. Paper records must be locked up and access limited to authorised personnel.

Particular care must be exercised in the publication of personal information in church directories,

newsletters, rosters, and websites, etc. This also extends to publishing voices and images of individuals.

Confidentiality should be preserved in peer supervision or in mentoring relationships. All care should be taken to avoid disclosing those being discussed. Preachers should be careful with sermon illustrations, in teaching and especially in publications (Proverbs 11:13).

Prohibited

A Minister must not disclose confidential pastoral conversations except if required by law or if there is a concern for the safety of the person or another person (James 5:16).

6. Ministerial Development

It is important to continue to develop ministry skills through a variety of means including education, professional supervision, peer support, mentoring, and a regular ministry review (Proverbs 27:17). It is expected that Ministers will regularly attend District, State, and National Conferences and special events, and undertake ongoing professional development (Romans 13:7). This includes an expectation the Ministers demonstrate a loyalty the Movement and its vision, values, and mission.

The Implementation of the Code

If questions arise with areas of **“Caution,”** the individual Minister must talk to a supervisor, mentor, consult with peers, and if necessary pursue voluntary counselling.

With any breach of the Code of Conduct in a **“Prohibited”** area the Minister in breach must notify the State President (or the person fulfilling those duties at that time) within 7 days (24 hours if civil or criminal action is involved). The State President will implement the **Grievance Procedure for Certificate Holders** upon notification.

Failure to notify in accordance with the paragraph above will itself be a **“Prohibited”** breach of the code.

Acknowledgements.

This code has drawn on the following codes of conduct, ethical statements, and ministerial guidelines:

Faithfulness in Service: A national code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers (General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia Child Protection Committee, Draft - 2004)

Code of Professional Ethics for the practice of Pastoral Ministry: A guide for church workers and their communities (General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia Child Protection Committee, Draft - 2003)

The Code of Good Practice: (Anglican Church of Australia Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, 2005)

Code of Ethics applicable to ministers of Churches of Christ and The protocol for investigating complaints on matters pertaining to Sexuality: (Churches of Christ in Australia adopted 1997 and amended for Churches of Christ in Queensland 1998-1999)

Pentecostal Ministerial Ethics: Pastor Harry Leesment (1988)

Statement of Moral Integrity: Pastor Rick Warren.

A Statement of Restoration and Re-instatement of Disciplined Ministers.

New South Wales Registration Board Guidelines for Psychologists.

VOLUNTEER CHURCH WORKERS DECLARATION

Thank you for your desire to volunteer at _____. This declaration is part of our church's commitment to ensuring our duty of care to all people, and also to fulfil our insurance obligations, health and safety and other requirements.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname: _____ First and Middle Names: _____

Any Former Names: _____

☐ Male ☐ Female (Please select) Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Mobile Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK AND/OR WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

I hereby consent to an Australian Federal Police Check if one is considered necessary for my role.

My state based working with children check (or similar) details, where required are as follows:

State of Issue: _____ Reference Number: _____ Expiry Date: ____ / ____ / ____

CONSENT TO HOLD INFORMATION

I consent to the information contained in this application including the subsequent pages to be kept by our church. I understand that this information will be kept in a confidential file and used only for screening and disciplinary purposes.

REFEREE CHECK (if you have been at the church for less than 3 years)

Please nominate a character reference. Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Contact Number: _____

Name of my previous church and pastor (if applicable): _____

DECLARATION

1. I understand that the church operates in an environment of numerous legal and ethical restrictions, and I will fully cooperate with the church in abiding by these. I assure the church, in considering me for a volunteer role that:
 - I have no health impediment that will put me or any other person at risk in the fulfilment of my designated role
 - Other than those matters disclosed by me to the church (noted above) at the time of making this declaration, i know of no past behaviour that renders me unfit to serve as a volunteer or which detracts from the obligation of the church to operate as a place of safety to a minor or any other person. Such past behaviour may include being the subject of an allegation of sexual abuse (whether convicted or not), including any type of molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation.
2. I understand that if I am unclear as to any of the statements in this document, I will seek clarification from a team leader or church leader before signing.
3. I have provided this information, and any documents accompanying it in good faith and declare they are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
4. I understand that any material misstatement in or omission from this questionnaire may render me unfit to hold a particular role in the church.
5. I have received a copy of the *Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct* and I agree to uphold it.
6. I understand that when considering whether there is an avenue for my voluntary services, my church may refer to ACC and local church policies, guidelines and position papers.
7. I will respect the decision of my church as to where I volunteer my services within the church, and whether my services are required, from time to time.
8. I understand that a team leader will be available to me to discuss my service.

Proposed Volunteer's signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____
(if under the age of 18, please have the form co-signed by your parent/guardian)

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Signature: _____

Endorsement of church leadership for this person to volunteer:

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

VOLUNTEER CHURCH WORKERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Codes of Conduct are a part of the ACC's commitment to safe emotional and physical environments, an expectation of our Child Protection Policy and a commitment to providing appropriate duty of care, including health and safety considerations.

Volunteering in church life is a highly valued and important part of service to the church. This **Volunteer Workers Code of Conduct** outlines the standards of behaviour that are expected for all *volunteer workers* in ACC Churches.

Volunteer workers are all volunteers involved in serving the local church in teams, on rosters and in any other way.

ACC volunteer workers lives are on display and are subject to public scrutiny and as such these standards of behavior should apply not only to your church life but also your personal life.

The **ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct** (a separate document) applies to ACC Certificate and Credential holders.

1. SERVANT HEARTED

Volunteer workers are servants of Christ, who should endeavour to become servant leaders as modelled by Jesus (John 13:3-14). The misuse of authority can be a particular temptation when being given a position of trust and power – this must be avoided.

2. BEHAVIOUR

Volunteer workers:

- will act in the best interests of those we serve.
- must not be abusive in any way toward others, spiritually, emotionally, physically or sexually, including domestic and family violence.
- will avoid the use of offensive language (e.g. swear words, sexual connotations, and racial or religious slurs).
- will exercise caution with all potentially addictive behaviours and/or harmful substances. Drunkenness is never acceptable.
- will refrain from using any illicit substances.
- will use caution when initiating or receiving physical contact with those we serve, including gestures of comfort as such gestures can unwanted or misinterpreted.
- will act with sexual integrity. Sex is a gift from God and integral to human nature. All inappropriate sexual behaviour is forbidden (e.g. sex outside of marriage). Sexual innuendo and harassment of a sexual nature are always inappropriate.
- will report their concerns of abuse according to *ACC Safer Church Guidelines*.
- will treat all program participants fairly and in accordance with ACC and local church policies, guidelines and position papers.
- will communicate with integrity, including accountable and wise use of electronic communication.
- will acknowledge when they are out of their depth, do not possess the required skill set in difficult pastoral situations, such as helping a victim of abuse, or a person who needs professional counselling, and seek help from a supervisor or church leader.
- will not take property belonging to others, including intellectual property (copyright).

3. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Volunteer workers are encouraged to have integrity in their financial dealings. Volunteer workers must not seek financial gain from their church role.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

Trust is essential in serving the church. Confidential information must not be disclosed, and must be treated with the utmost care. Exceptions include when disclosure is required by law, abuse notifications whether required by law or not, there are concerns for the safety of the person or others, or when the information is in the public domain. Disclosure is a serious matter and the assistance of a supervisor or church leader should be sought.

5. COMMITMENT TO TEAM MINISTRY

Volunteer workers:

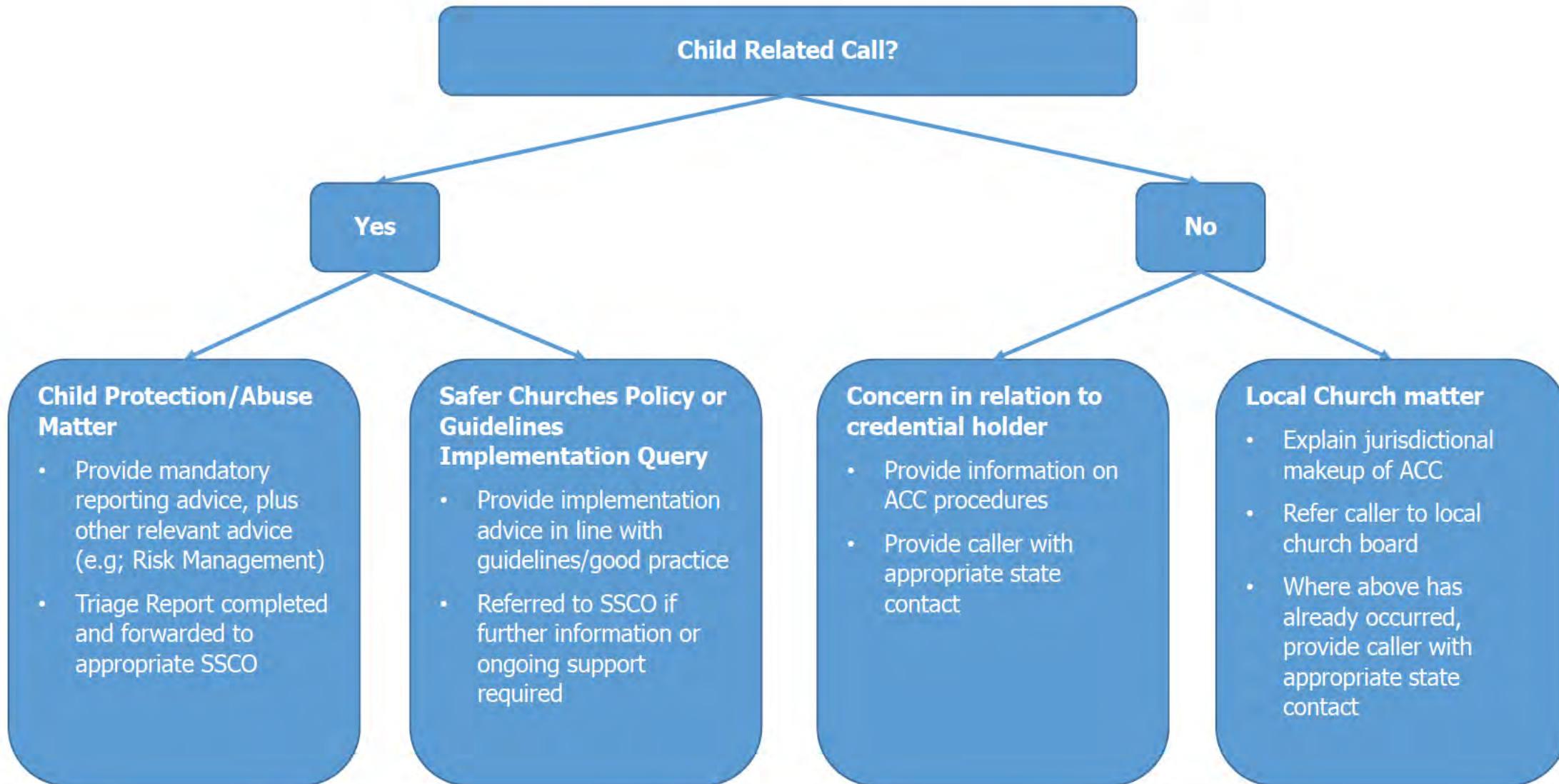
- will embrace the vision, values, and mission of the Church, and continue to develop ministry skills through a variety of means including team meetings.
- are accountable to team, watch out for each other and protect each other's integrity.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

Any breach of this code involving a criminal offence may lead to a report being made to the relevant authorities. Any breaches relating to the harm, or risk of harm, of a child or young person will be dealt with under the ACC Child Protection Policy – a copy of this policy should be provided to a volunteer who has a direct role with a child or young person. Any other breach will be considered in the light of the best interests of the volunteer and those we serve and may result in the volunteer being stood down either temporarily or otherwise.

Volunteer workers need to be open to correction and humble enough to modify behaviours so as to not discredit the gospel.

SMR Response to ACC Safer Churches Helpline Call



We want our church to be a safe place for our children and youth. If you have any concerns about any form of child abuse please contact our national helpline.



NATIONAL HELPLINE
1800 070 511

(Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm AEST)

LOCAL CHURCH CONTACTS

SAFER CHURCHES CONTACT PEOPLE: _____

HEALTH & SAFETY TEAM:
(FOR HAZARDS AND SITE SAFETY) _____

SAFER CHURCHES MANUAL



PRODUCED AND OWNED BY



FOR THE USE OF



3RD EDITION

SAFER CHURCHES MANUAL 3RD EDITION

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Chapter 1. Safer Churches - an overview.....	6
1.1. God's love for all people	7
1.2 The gift of boundaries	7
1.3. Team ministry.....	9
1.4 Duty of care.....	10
1.5 Organisational responsibilities.....	11
1.6 Transparency and accountability.....	12
Chapter 2. Protecting People.....	14
2.1. Being proactive	15
2.2 Understanding harmful behaviours	18
2.3 Responding to concerns.....	31
2.4 Care for all parties	41
Chapter 3. Safe Church Workers	42
3.1. Representing God.....	42
3.2. Selecting and appointing church workers.....	43
3.3. Supervision.....	44
3.4. Responding to grievances and/or allegations of misconduct	46
3.5 Self care.....	49
Chapter 4. Safe Environments.....	52
4.1 Safe programs	52
4.2. Identifying and managing risks	53
4.3 Health and safety	54
4.4. Safe emotional and spiritual environments.....	57
4.5. Safe physical environments	60
4.6. Responding to incidents.....	61
ACC Child Protection Policy	63
Reference guide.	77

This Safer Churches Manual 3rd Edition has been produced for the use of ACC People in ACC Constituent Churches. This Manual is an adaptation of the *Safe Ministry Manual 2019* distributed by Safe Ministry Resources Pty Ltd.

The ACC Child Protection Policy is the property of the Australian Christian Churches (ACC).

The ACC Safer Churches Guidelines, and Safer Churches implementation resources have been developed in partnership with Safe Ministry Resources Pty Ltd.

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Legal disclaimer: This publication is not legal advice. The ideas and procedures herein are based on nationally recognised good practice advice for Safe Ministry and have been written with due regard to Australian State legislation. Legal advice should be sought when responding to individual cases and incidents in ACC churches.

UPDATED 11 December 2018

INTRODUCTION

ACC SAFER CHURCHES

The Policy, good practice Guidelines, associated training, implementation resources and personnel combine as the ACC Safer Churches Strategy.

To assist ACC local churches with implementation of the Safer Churches Strategy, the movement has a range of resources available, including:

- Safer Churches National Helpline **1800 070 511** (Monday – Friday 9am-5pm AEST)
- State Safer Churches Officers
- The ACC Safer Churches Manual for Workshops
- The dedicated Safer Churches section of the Pastor's Login
- The Safer Churches Program Implementation Kit (under the Safer Churches section of the Pastor's Login)

This Manual contains:

- the **ACC Child Protection Policy** (Policy)
- the **ACC Child Protection Practice Guidelines** (known as Safer Churches Guidelines, throughout this Manual, numbered and marked in shaded boxes)
- Safer Churches Awareness information for leaders

Expectations for ACC People in relation to protecting children and/or young people can be found in section 9 of the *Child Protection Policy*.

ACC Safer Churches Strategy is primarily aimed at the protection of children. The creation and maintenance of safe emotional and physical workplaces is also essential for compliance with Work Health & Safety (WHS) legislation. As such, it is strongly recommended that the ACC Safer Churches Strategy is implemented across all ministry areas.

SAFER CHURCHES MANUAL

This **Manual** is to assist in the outworking of the **ACC Child Protection Policy**.

The ACC Child Protection Policy has been adopted nationally by the ACC through its supreme governing body, the National Conference, and is binding on Credential Holders and Constituent Churches.

It consists of a set of principles and procedural benchmarks that underpin the other policies and procedures in relation to the protection of Children or Young People that the ACC and its Constituent Churches have in place for their Ministers, staff, volunteers and other members of a congregation.

*The role of developing and implementing corresponding **Child Protection Practice Guidelines** in accordance with the relevant State/Territory legal obligations rests with the ACC National Executive (or its delegate).*

The ACC State Executive and Constituent Churches are required to adopt the approved Child Protection Practice Guidelines (or for Constituent Churches, an alternative guideline that is at least consistent with the Child Protection Practice Guidelines).

It is a requirement of the ACC National and State Executives and Constituent Churches to adopt the ACC Child Protection Policy or use it as a minimum standard. (ACC Child Protection Policy 2015).

The Policy, good practice Guidelines, associated training, implementation resources and personnel combine as the ACC Safer Churches Strategy.

The Safer Churches manual is an adaptation of SMR's Safe Ministry Manual 2017. SMR also provides manual adaptations to Hillsong, Baptist Churches WA, International Network of Churches (formerly Christian Outreach Centre Australia), Christian Venues Association, Anglican Dioceses of Northern Territory, Rockhampton, Bunbury, The Murray, Bathurst, Riverina, Newcastle and Canberra & Goulburn.

SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINES

The Safer Churches Guidelines (Guidelines) have been developed by the ACC National Executive as part of the implementation of the ACC Child Protection Policy (Policy).

These Guidelines are the Child Protection Practice Guidelines noted in section 7 of the Policy.

The Guidelines, Manual and Workshops assist church leaders in abiding by WHS legislation, applicable in all states and territories of Australia apart from Western Australia and Victoria.

This legislation requires safe emotional and physical workplaces for all workers including volunteers.

As such, the content of the Guidelines, Manual and Workshops are useful to all workers, both volunteer and paid i.e. not just ACC People as defined in the Policy.

These Guidelines are divided into two categories:

- those considered to be legal, biblical and/or moral imperatives, denoted by the word **"shall"** must be implemented, and
- those considered as good practice, denoted by the word **"recommended"**, are nevertheless strongly recommended.

The Guidelines are the recommendations of the ACC National Executive. In any legal proceedings, Constituent Churches may be asked if any such recommendations existed and if so, whether or not they were followed.

ACC SAFER CHURCHES WORKSHOPS

The ACC Child Protection Policy states: *On a regular basis, we will ensure that all ACC People are provided with training to understand and recommit to this Policy and the approved Child Protection Practice Guideline (or an alternative guideline).*

Such training will also form part of any induction we provide to ACC People.

Safer Churches Workshops are aimed at leaders (paid and volunteer) to develop a greater awareness of the Policy, Guidelines, Codes of Conduct, and to increase understanding of the rationale for the ACC Safer Churches Strategy.

SMR also offers an online eTraining version of the Safer Churches Workshops:

- Awareness (Induction) course for \$30 per person
- Refresher Course course for \$30 per person

These online courses are accessed through Openlearning.com

There are links to these courses at www.smr.org.au and www.acc.org.au at the ACC Pastor's log in.

1

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 1 SAFER CHURCHES TRAINING

All people who have a Direct Role with children, as defined in the ACC CP Policy, in ACC churches **shall** receive adequate training in the concepts of Child Protection at minimum every three years.

ACC Credential and Certificate holders **shall** complete ACC Safer Churches training (or recognised equivalent) every three years at a minimum in order for Credentials or Certificates to be renewed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors, Peter Barnett and Celia Irving, wish to acknowledge the input of Josie Barnett, Belinda Townsend, Philip Gerber, Patrick Smith, Melissa Santry, Linda Vinall, Colleen Morton, Sr Angela Ryan, Marie Fortune and the feedback from pastors and church volunteers who have attended Safe Ministry training in Australia since 2004.

For a full list of resources used in the development of this Manual see the Reference Guide.

NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO SAFETY FOR PEOPLE

Australia has a high commitment to safety for all people, expressed in legislation and government policy relating to child and vulnerable people protection. In addition to the common law concept of duty of care, Australian has specific federal and state laws to protect people such as: child protection, working with children or vulnerable people check, sexual harassment, sexual consent, work health and safety, and company regulations.

RESPONDING TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION AND BEYOND

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) concluded in 2017. Over 5 years, the Royal Commission conducted research, held public enquiries, listened in private session to the stories of over 8,000 victims of child sexual abuse in institutional settings, made 2,575 referrals to authorities (including police) and produced its final report in December 2017.

Volume 16 of the final report addressed religious institutions and included both recommendations to specific faith groups and twenty eight (28) recommendations to all faith groups.

By 30 June 2018 all Australian governments (state, territory and federal) published their responses to the Royal Commission's recommendations. These responses have seen changes in laws in many jurisdictions. There has also been the introduction of a National Redress Scheme and establishment of a National Office for Child Safety.

The 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (pictured below) have also been released at a National level. These were previously released as the Royal Commission's 10 Standards, and are good practice for organisations who provide services to children. Whilst these principles are not binding (laws) they do provide helpful benchmarks for best practice in child safety.



Principle 1: ***"leadership, governance and culture,"*** is the starting place for this commitment. There needs to be an ongoing organisational commitment to a culture of safety. This commitment goes beyond policy and procedures, to safe thinking and acting, safe interactions and involvement. This includes resourcing with personnel and necessary finances for implementation of policy and procedures. In a church context this commitment needs to extend to all people God has placed in our care, from children to the elderly, and in particular those in need of special care (the vulnerable).

Some states and territories have legal requirements for child safety. For example the Seven (7) Child Safe Standards in Victoria. In complying with the Child Safe Standards, an entity to which the Standards apply must include the following principles as part of each standard: promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and promoting the safety of children with a disability.

ACC TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

This Manual contains the following terminology and definitions:

Child Protection Policy (Policy) is the document that defines the principles that are implemented to ensure that Children or Young People who access a program, service or facility are protected from harm by Ministers, staff, volunteers and other members of a congregation. This Policy reflects the moral and ethical standards of the ACC Movement, pursuant to Article 16.1 of the United Constitution of the ACC. The Policy was adopted by the National Conference April 2015 and is binding on all ACC People, with an implementation date of 1 December 2015.

Constituent Church (local church) includes a Registered Church, Provisional Church and a Satellite or Extension Service as defined in the United Constitution of the ACC. In this Manual, constituent churches will be called 'local churches'.

ACC People includes officers or employees of ACC or its State or National ministries, ACC Credential holders, officers of a Constituent Church, employees, volunteers and other members of a congregation of a local church who may or will have a Direct Role with children or young people, contractors (external agents) engaged by the ACC or a local church who may or will have a Direct Role.

ACC Safer Churches Guidelines (Guidelines) form part of the Child Protection Practice Guidelines noted in section 7 of the Policy, and have been developed by the ACC National Executive as part of the implementation of the Policy. The Guidelines are drawn from this SMR Manual (Manual), used in ACC Safer Churches Awareness Workshops (Workshops). The Guidelines assist church leaders in abiding by Work Health & Safety (WHS) legislation, applicable in all states and territories of Australia apart from Western Australia and Victoria. This legislation requires safe emotional and physical workplaces for all workers including volunteers. As such, the content of the Guidelines, Manual and Workshops are useful to all workers, both volunteer and paid i.e. not only ACC People as defined in the Policy. The Guidelines are found throughout this manual in clearly marked, shaded boxes, or in the Safer Churches section of Pastor's Login at www.acc.org.au.

Child/Children or Young Person/People: a person under the age of 18 years.

Codes of Conduct: The ACC has two codes of conduct outlining behavioural expectations for those representing local churches and/or the movement. The ACC Volunteer Church Worker's Code of Conduct is recommended for all local church volunteers, and the Ministerial Code of Conduct is policy for all credentialed persons in the ACC movement and recommended for all team leaders and paid pastors (non-credentialed) at local churches.

Direct Role: A role that includes, or is likely to include, providing services that are directed towards a Child or Young Person (whether in whole or in part), or conducting activities that may involve a Child or Young Person (whether in whole or in part), and includes the supervision of persons in Direct Roles (for example, a board member of a church is in a Direct Role, irrespective of whether they actually work with Children or Young People, because of their overarching supervisory duties).

Helpline: The ACC Safer Churches National Helpline 1800 070 511 (Monday – Friday 9am-5pm AEST) is established for local churches who have concerns and implementation enquiries. The Helpline is operated by Safe Ministry Resources.

Local Safer Churches Person/Team: This person or team is the local church contact point for reporting of Safer Churches type concerns. This person or team is to be appointed by the local church board or governing body. For a position description of this role, see the ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit.

State Safer Churches Officer: The officer holders appointed by the ACC State Executive to assist with the implementation of the ACC Safer Churches Strategy both at the state level and local churches.

For additional terminology and definitions refer to the Policy.

Chapter 1

Safer Churches - An Overview

This chapter aims to develop awareness of:

- the biblical basis for ACC Safer Churches
- the foundational concepts of ACC Safer Churches

The ACC Child Protection Policy (**Policy**) along with Safer Churches Guidelines (**Guidelines**) and associated implementation resources form the **ACC Safer Churches Strategy**.

For duty of care purposes and also for compliance with WHS legislation we recommend that the ACC Safer Churches Strategy is implemented across all ministry areas in ACC churches.

The ACC acknowledges that Safer Churches is everybody's business, including leaders, the wider congregation and our denominational leadership. We all have a vital role to play in providing God-honouring, life-giving, and harm-free churches.

The ACC Child Protection Policy states:

- We are committed to the safety and well-being of all Children or Young People who access any of our activities, programs, services or facilities.
- We are committed to providing Children or Young People with positive and nurturing experiences.
- We will support families and communities to promote Children or Young People's healthy development and well-being.
- We will take action to ensure that Children or Young People are protected from harm by identifying and addressing risk factors as soon as practicable.
- We will take action to ensure that Children or Young People are not harmed during the time that they are involved with any of our activities, programs, services or facilities.
- We will ensure that Children or Young People have access to adequate support to promote safety and intervene early.

The term 'Safer Churches' in this context is church events, programs, experiences and interactions that are *God-honouring, life-giving and harm-free*.



The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the key concepts foundational to Safer Churches.

These are the concepts upon which our Safer Church Guidelines and procedures have been built. In this chapter these key concepts are called the Safer Churches foundations.

These foundations provide both the 'why' and 'how to' of Safer Churches, as indicated in the diagram. God's love for all people, God's gift of boundaries, team ministry, duty of care, and our organisational responsibilities, make up the foundational concepts.

To best protect all people, children and adults, each foundation needs to be outworked through transparent and accountable practices.

1.1 God's love for all people

God is love! (1 John 4:16) This is the starting place for Safer Churches for all people.

God's love is expressed in God's nature as the community God, i.e. the triune Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is into this love God invites us. He created us in His image, i.e. relational beings. We are created in love, for love.

God's love is expressed in His revelation to us throughout His word, and through His incarnation. It is because "God so loved the world", John 3:16 states, that God came into the world to save us. John 3:17 continues that Jesus came not to condemn the world, but rather, to save the world.

Jesus is the hands-on demonstration of God's love for all people, not only the religious, important or wise, but also for children, women, the lowly, the poor, the sick, sinners and tax collectors - the outcast.

In Jesus, everyone is loved! The Greek word for love in many New Testament passages is 'agape' - a love that is self-giving in its nature.

This type of love is explained in Philippians 2:5-8 *"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!"*

In this passage we are called, in response to God's love for us, to put others first, consider others' interests, and to imitate the example of Christ who emptied Himself of the glory of heaven for the sake of the world.

Our primary motive for Safer Churches is God's love for us.

2

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 2 MOTIVE FOR MINISTRY

Our primary motive for establishing and maintaining Safer Churches environments for Children or Young People and all vulnerable people, is God's love for us. ACC People are committed to providing Children or Young People with positive and nurturing experiences and as such **shall** minister out of the love God has for everyone. We commit to church ministry events and programs built on solid Safer Churches foundations.

1.2 The gift of boundaries

In creation, God established boundaries. God created order from chaos, separating day from night, land from sea, each animal in its kind. In Genesis chapter 3 we read that in the garden, God gave humankind a boundary, i.e. to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When this boundary was violated by the first humans, this brought about broken relationships.

Relationship boundaries in the Bible provide humanity with the pattern for loving relationships; from the 10 Commandments, and the covenant between Israel and God, through to relational frameworks such as Ephesians 5:15-21. We are to submit to one another out of reverence for God.

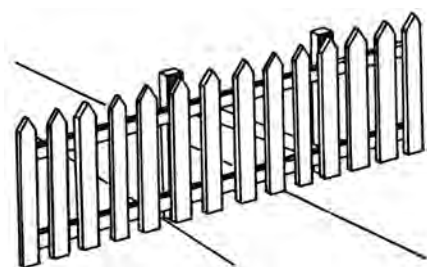
Boundaries and personal interactions

Boundaries in life

"With boundaries, we develop trust in relationships and minimize the potential to cause harm"
(Marie Fortune)

Boundaries in our lives are culturally and socially determined and include spiritual, financial, physical, emotional, language, sexual and other boundaries.

Boundaries define that I am distinct from you and that we are equal but separate beings.



A helpful analogy for understanding boundaries in our life is that of 'fences'. A fence is a boundary. A fence tells us where one piece of land stops and another starts. Not all fences are the same shape or size or have the same purpose.

There are flexible fences. These move depending upon the situation. For example, when to shake a person's hand or offer a hug; the appropriate time of day to send a text or phone someone; when and how to provide advice to a friend.

There are also inflexible fences, like a prison wall. This type of fence is a boundary that is not meant to be crossed. For example, breaking the 10 commandments, abusing another person, sexual boundaries found in the Bible.

Then we have fences that need to be crossed, such as a paddock fence that has a wooden ladder over it to allow safe fence crossings. For example; a person giving you permission to hug them.

Ministry boundaries

Ministry is first and foremost about serving people, not just running events or programs.

Our ministry role impacts the shape of our relationships and interactions.

It is not just that a relationship exists, but the very nature of that relationship with others, means that there will be personal interactions between those on ministry teams, as well as the people the leaders are ministering to and with. At times relationships between those involved in a ministry relationship can become strained and conflict may even emerge.

This is where it is imperative to be mindful of not just being respectful of the boundaries of others, but consciously engaging in respectful relationships and interactions.

The burden is on us to establish and maintain healthy boundaries and to cross boundaries only when and where it is appropriate. That is, we must put other people's needs before our own and act in other people's best interests.

In ministry, we will need to cross boundaries regularly, such as when we speak to a person, send a text message, shake someone's hand or challenge another person's point of view. These can all be part of normal and acceptable boundary-crossing within a ministry context.

We also need to be mindful of possible dual roles/relationships we have with others. Where we have two or more roles in a person's life, such as a pastor and congregation member who is also their family member, we need to ensure appropriate management of the associated implications.

In crossing a boundary, our focus is on what is good for the other person and acknowledging that they have the ability to retain or reclaim the boundary.

Four important questions we can ask ourselves before crossing a boundary are:

- Is this the right time to cross this boundary?
- Is this the right place to cross this boundary?
- Is this the right circumstance for this boundary-crossing?
- Is this boundary-crossing right for this person?

Some ministry boundaries are flexible: How we interact within the boundaries may be different depending on the time, place, circumstance and the people we are serving.

Some ministry boundaries are inflexible: They are designed to show us clearly where we must not go. Codes of conduct provide professional boundaries that should never be crossed. Further, inflexible boundaries are established by law. For example, when working with children in NSW, an inflexible boundary is the Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012, which includes *"Crossing professional boundaries: Sexual misconduct includes behaviour that can reasonably be construed as involving an inappropriate and overly personal or intimate: relationship with, conduct towards or focus on; a child or young person, or a group of children or young persons."* Similarly, in Victoria, such inflexible boundaries

are found in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, including 'Sexual misconduct', which captures a broader range of inappropriate behaviours of a sexual nature that are not necessarily criminal including;

- developing an intimate relationship with a child, for example, through regular contact with the child without the knowledge or approval of the organisation's management
- inappropriately discussing sex and sexuality with a child
- other overtly sexual acts that could lead an organisation to take disciplinary or other action.

It is an expectation of the Child Protection Policy that all ACC People will understand children or young people's rights. This includes ensuring that we only cross the boundaries of children and other vulnerable people in appropriate, life-giving and empowering ways.

Establishing and maintaining healthy personal boundaries along with boundary violating and appropriately crossing boundaries will be explored further in this manual.

3

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 3 MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES

ACC People shall abide by the relevant ACC Code of Conduct applicable to their role, as part of being respectful of the boundaries of everyone. See the Ministerial Code of Conduct and Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct at Pastor's Login.

1.3 Team ministry



Safer Churches are born out of God's love for all people. We carry out His ministry as the body of Christ together in respectful (appropriate boundary crossing) ways. Safer Churches is 'ministry' in a healthy team or body of Christ context rather than 'solo' or 'my' ministry.

Serving God and His church is a privilege and responsibility. It is a position of delegated authority to influence others for God.

We are not "just helpers" but rather representatives of God and His Church.

The New Testament and in particular Paul's epistles are filled with words about 'ministry' being the work of the Holy Spirit, who gifts the members of the body of Christ so that they can minister to each other. In 1 Corinthians 12 we are reminded that we are all a part of the body of Christ.

Verses 4-6

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Verses 27-31

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

Service in ministry roles is about playing our role in the 'body' of Christ.

We also see this idea in Romans 12:3-8:

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving,

then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully (Rom 12:3-8)

In team ministry we nurture each other, enter into relationships with each other and receive ministry from each other. Teams share in ministry together. When we are part of a team by which we are supported and encouraged, and provided with an appropriate level of accountability, this protects both us, as team member and also the people we serve, from actions which may cause harm.

4

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 4 TEAM MINISTRY

We establish and maintain Safer Churches environments for each other and those to whom we minister when we work as the 'body', or minister in 'team' context. All ACC People **shall** minister in transparent and accountable teams e.g. avoid unsupervised 1:1 contact with Children or Young People.

1.4 Duty of care



Duty of care is a term we are more used to hearing in relation to workplace safety, and is less thought of in the church context. However, duty of care finds its origins in Jesus' directive to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31) and is therefore foundational for our provision of safe ministry events and programs.

The key scripture that underpins these policy documents and guides us in all interactions within the safe ministry framework is: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and the second is this: love your neighbour as yourself*" (Mark 12:30-31). This scripture guides us into appropriate relationships and provides the basis for the establishment and exercising of safe programs and practices, run in safe environments by safe leaders in a safe and harm-free Christian community.

Duty of care is to do everything reasonably practicable to protect others from harm.

This applies equally to buildings, kitchens, parking lots and the way we treat people. Our duty of care does not end when our program is over. Rather, it applies to all people who enter church property at all times of the day, whether we are running a program or not.

This also relates to acts of negligence, or acts of inattention or omission. The church leadership needs to be able to demonstrate that it has done all it could reasonably have done to protect others from harm. In other words, simply having policy and procedures is not enough. The question that needs to be answered is, "In that particular situation, did the church follow its policy and procedures?"

The community and congregation have expectations that those in leadership will be diligent in their duty of care. These may include ensuring that:

- workers (volunteers and paid) have been recruited, screened, appointed, inducted, and are supervised;
- a safe spiritual, emotional and physical environment is provided for all people;
- complaints or allegations of abuse and misconduct are addressed according to good practice; and
- people receive pastoral support from the church.

The WH&S Act 2011 Section 19, which is applicable to ACC churches in several States and Territories, makes it a legal requirement for:

A person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of:

- workers engaged, or caused to be engaged by the person; and

- workers whose activities in carrying out work are influenced or directed by the person;
- while the workers are at work in the business or undertaking.
- A person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from work carried out as part of the conduct of the business or undertaking."

The ACC Child Protection Policy expects ACC People to commit to ensuring child-safe organisations, including working to ensure that "ACC People do not harm Children or Young People who are involved with our programs, services or facilities."

To ensure that we act with a duty of care and in so doing meet ACC policy requirements, community expectations and legal requirements, we need to ensure that all church-authorised programs are well-planned, having had all foreseeable risks identified, reduced or negated.

1.5 Organisational responsibilities



The Church is the body of Christ and it is expressed in local settings which have organisational responsibilities.

Fulfilling organisational responsibilities can often seem like a hindrance to 'real' ministry. However, when we view these responsibilities through the lens of God's love for people, these responsibilities become an outworking of God's love. They are ways in which we express love for each other.

Administration

Each local church will have office holders who are responsible for managing the 'business' of the church, its mission and ministry (board of governance). The church will have rules of governance, like constitutions, that need to be adhered to. Further, the administration of the church, financially and organisationally, also needs to be properly managed.

Denominational (ACC)

As constituent churches of the Australian Christian Churches (ACC), all local churches must adhere to the National United Constitution and policies of the movement. In the area of child protection, the ACC Child Protection Policy must be implemented by local ACC churches. This Policy, together with the Safer Churches good practice Guidelines, associated training, implementation resources and personnel, combine to form the ACC Safer Churches Strategy.

Legal

In general, the church needs to ensure that it:

- discharges its common law duty of care;
- practices due diligence in recruitment and supervision of all leaders (paid and volunteer);
- cultivates an environment that is free from violence and exploitation;
- fosters people's health as well as developmental and spiritual needs (e.g. self-respect and dignity); and
- has a process for responding to grievances and allegations of abuse and misconduct (including child protection and sexual harassment).

Specifically, the church needs to comply with all relevant State or Territory legislation such as:

- Work Health and Safety and/or other safety legislation;
- criminal codes (e.g. concealment of crime, consent, sexual harassment);

- child protection legislation;
- elder abuse legislation;
- working with children checks;
- building codes;
- Australian and NZ Standards;
- ACNC governance standards (does NOT apply to basic religious charities)
- copyright and music playing licences such as APRA, CCLI, CAL licences; and
- local government food preparation and storage guidelines.

Insurance

ACC churches, for the protection of both people and property, hold a range of insurances, from building to public liability and office holders' insurance. It is the responsibility of the local church to ensure that they have acted in ways that have been diligent and comply with all relevant national, state and local legislation.

ACS Financial as a wholly owned subsidiary of ACC is able to provide a tailored package for the insurance and protection needs of ACC churches. The program is specifically designed for churches and ministries and provides comprehensive cover for the activities of the church, including working with and ministering to children. Understanding the complexity of insurance policies can be challenging for churches and ACS Insurance Services has been appointed as the manager of the insurance and protection program for the ACC. They are also able to provide risk management advice and training in many areas of church life and in particular the risk management of children's programs. Please contact ACS Insurance Services on 1800 646 777 for information on this very important matter.

1.6 Transparency and accountability

Ministry is safest when our policy, procedures, practices and interactions are transparent and accountable. Transparency and accountability need to be practised across all of the foundational concepts of Safer Churches.

Transparency in ministry relates to the practice of being willing and able to show others how you are caring for people. Being transparent means not only doing the right thing, but also being seen to do the right thing. As places offering ministry to vulnerable people, it is essential that churches are transparent in their motives and actions.

We need transparency in our practices such as:

- having meetings in rooms which have see-through/glass panels in the doors /walls,
- sharing sensitive pastoral information appropriately on a needs-to-know basis,
- communicating online with kids and youth program participants with parental knowledge and permission,
- ensuring that all online communications between leaders and young people are visible to other team members (not personal communications).

Accountability is about being answerable and willing to be called to account to those in authority, those we serve with and those we serve. Accountability is vital within a Safer Churches framework. It implies taking responsibility for how our words or actions will impact another person, or to what degree they are consistent with the aims and objectives of the ministry and the church.

For this reason, ACC churches have a code of conduct available for accountability, including expected and acceptable behaviours leaders. In the state of Victoria, a code of conduct is one of the seven legislated 'Standards' for working with children (Standard 3).

The code of conduct should be made readily available to program participants, including children and parents/guardians.

The ACC Child Protection Policy expresses our commitment to parents and carers in terms of accountability and transparency including:

- communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the well-being and safety of their Children or Young People if it is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the Child or Young Person from harm and promote the Child or Young Person's development.
- being transparent in our decision-making with parents and carers as long as doing so does not compromise the safety of Children or Young people.
- seeking to involve parents whenever possible and practicable in the decision-making process that impacts on them and the Children or Young People.
- We will provide opportunities for formal debriefing and/or counselling families of Children or Young People who have experienced abuse and any other family in the community who may indirectly be affected by an incident.

Chapter 2

Protecting people

This chapter aims to develop awareness of:

- empowerment and participation
- understanding of harmful behaviours
- responding to concerns about harmful behaviours

The Policy expects ACC People to act on any concerns raised by children or young people and/or their parents/carers and to understand the definitions, indicators and impact of harm on children or young people.

“Experiences of harm are significant sources of trauma for Children or Young People and intensify the risk of Children or Young People developing a range of emotional, psychological, social and behavioural problems. Child physical abuse and sexual abuse is a crime. Intervention which identifies and prevents abuse from occurring is instrumental in supporting Children or Young People and families. When abuse has occurred, it is imperative that action is taken to protect Children or Young People from further experiences of abuse. Where there is a risk of harm, it is also imperative that action is taken to protect the Child or Young Person from that risk eventuating. We expect ACC People to know how to define harm, be aware of its indicators and understand its consequences. The more informed we are, the more effective we will be in our efforts to protect Children or Young People from all forms of harm.” (ACC Child Protection Policy)

Leaders need to be able to respond to any duty of care and/or WHS concerns that they have for any person at church. These concerns may be for a person/s at risk of harm, or concerns about a person's harmful behaviours towards others.

The aim of this chapter, is to help us understand the issues surrounding 'harm', and to recognise and respond to all concerns in relation to all people who may be at risk of being harmed.

This focus herein is on protecting people from harm, particularly, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional and/or spiritual harm in a church context.



This includes our pastoral, organisational and legislative responses to concerns about those who have experienced harm and the harmful behaviours of those who attend church or represent the church.

Like in the illustration (left) it is the fence at the top of the cliff that will prevent harm from occurring in the first place. Being committed to building strong and healthy people who are provided with the tools to protect themselves is also an essential part of the protection fence at the top of the cliff.

2.1 Being proactive

A proactive approach to protecting people must be our starting place for life-giving, harm-free ministry to the glory of God. A proactive approach includes the implementation of the ACC Child Protection Policy and procedures (using the resources in the Implementation Kit). This commitment to being proactive in protecting children is evidenced in the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

The ACC Child Protection Policy states:

We will listen to Children and Young People and appropriately address any concerns that they raise with us in the least intrusive way possible that is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the Child or Young Person from harm and promote the Child or Young Person's development.

Being proactive starts with church leadership being active in its ongoing commitment to safety. Principle 1, of the Principles for Child Safe Organisations states: '*Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture*'. This takes time and resources (human and financial), and without this ongoing commitment, implementation of policy and procedure may not be successful. This can lead to gaps in the proactive 'fence'.

The **ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit** provides a sample procedure for Participation and Inclusion (SC016).

Empowering people to protect themselves

By actively encouraging program and event participants to develop in their self-awareness and self-protection, we are protecting everyone. This is empowering, life-giving ministry! Empowering people to protect themselves is about being proactive, and helping to prevent harm before it occurs.

For example: The Victorian Child Safe Standard 7 states that organisations providing services to children must have: 'strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children'. Similarly, the second National Principle for Child Safe Organisations relates to "empowerment & participation of children".

A good resource for this area with younger children, called the 'Safe Series' can be obtained from the NSW Children's Guardian (<http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/safe-series/safe-resources> - see pictures right and below from the 'Safe series').



5

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 5 PROMOTING EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION

ACC People and constituent churches **shall** actively promote the empowerment and participation of all people at church in the protection of Children and Young People.

It is **recommended**, for example, that ACC People actively assist Children or Young People to: trust their feelings, say 'no' when they feel unsafe, understand when to be confidential and when to talk to others about concerns, raise concerns about abuse, find safe people to talk to, and know who to talk to when they feel vulnerable.

It is **recommended** that ACC People actively assist the families of Children or Young People to

- Access information about what child abuse is,
- Feel welcome and have a say in the activities and programs in which their Children or Young People participate as far as is practical,
- Engage in two-way communication between families and the church.

We can:

- Encourage people to trust their feelings and to speak up when they feel unsafe or at risk

We can learn to have a keen natural sense of when something is amiss. We can learn to recognise our feelings: good, bad or confused. However, past abuse can damage a person's ability to recognise and indeed trust their own feelings. Providing guidance in our language as to what is 'normal' in terms of feelings can be helpful, especially for children and with adults who may have experienced past abuse. This will include communicating with children and parents in relation to your response to complaint processes.

It is important people know who they can approach when they feel unsafe or at risk of harm. As a church, consider the strategies for communicating who people can speak to at such time. As leaders you can create a safer culture through encouraging people to speak up when they feel something is happening to them or others. Consider the internal and external people and supports that may be drawn upon to prevent or address potentially harmful situations.



This also includes empowering people to say 'no'. Religion may be used to make people feel as though they need to comply with a leader's directive, e.g. "God loves it when you serve the church in this way." Children are taught to be polite and obey adults. People, including children, must have permission and capacity (including language) to say "no" to an adult if they need to protect themselves, even if that person makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened. Ways to empower children to say "no" are to teach them about safe and unsafe touch and how to respond when touch feels unsafe, and to teach them that their body belongs to them, and how to respond if someone tries to touch their private parts.

Church also needs to be a place where people can be trusted with confidential information. However, it should never be a place where vulnerable adults are pressured to keep secrets to protect a leader's reputation. A transparent process for reporting concerns, which is clearly communicated to the whole congregation, can achieve this. With children, we need to avoid creating a culture of secret-keeping.

- Foster opportunities for stakeholders to have a voice in the organisation (feedback and input)

People are more susceptible to harm when they feel as though they have no say in decisions made about them. All people need to be free to express their opinions and ideas in an environment where these will be valued and, where appropriate, implemented. This is reflected in the Royal Commission's 2nd Child Safe Standard: Participation and empowerment. This will include inviting feedback and allowing input on the policy and procedures as seeking age-appropriate feedback from both children and their parents (care-givers) (The *ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit* provides a sample procedure for Participation and Inclusion (SC016) and sample feedback forms for children and care-givers (SC017 and SC018).

- Identify safe people and support networks

A support network provides trusted people to connect with when feeling threatened or fearful for any reason. In the case of children and young people, a support network may also comprise friends who may play a vital role in supporting a child or young person to feel safe and less isolated.

- Provide safe touch

Some leaders have developed such anxiety about being wrongfully accused of inappropriately touching a child or a member of the congregation, that they won't ever touch a distressed person.

There are some useful principles to apply when considering the area of touch between a leader and someone under their pastoral care.

1. In general, respond to touch initiated by someone under your care, rather than initiating it.
2. When touching a person who is distressed, touch only as long as to satisfy the immediate need.

-
3. Seek permission before initiating a touch with someone under your care. Such as asking: “would you like a hug?” and respecting their decision if they say “no”.
 4. Be aware of different types of touches and focus on good touches.
 - a. Good touches: where a person feels safe, comfortable and respected. These would include:
 - i. touches that focus on neutral body zones, such as brief side hugs
 - ii. touches that involve the hands, such as high-fives or shaking hands
 - b. Bad touches: where a person feels intimidated, degraded or is harmed, such as causing pain or touching in intimate areas or in an intimate manner
 - c. Confusing touches: where a person feels wary or uncertain about the intention or meaning of the touch, such as staring, prolonged or tight hugs, or tickling
 5. Manage the touch environment in order to protect yourself and the person under your care
 - a. If you are aware or suspect that someone under your care is likely to initiate a touch that may become prolonged or intense, circumvent the situation by encouraging the person to sit down and then arrange yourself at an angle to avoid close body contact between the two of you
 - b. If a person is becoming distressed and the interaction prolonged, request another leader to join you
 - c. Ensure an environment likely to involve touch takes place in a public setting where you are in view of others at all times.
 6. Be aware that young children are likely to initiate touch and have strategies for satisfying their immediate need (using Good Touches) and then affirm them by keeping them close to you after the touch.
 7. Be respectful of people’s personal space needs

• Set clear boundaries together

Respectful relationships are fostered through being mindful of personal behaviours and their impact on others. These can be helped by setting clearly defined appropriate boundaries for each ministry. Take the time to work with program participants on a clear set of behavioural boundaries for each ministry program.

Adult-based programs: Agreed-upon guidelines (boundaries) should be used for decision-making e.g. be willing to listen to the opinions of others; respect personal boundaries of others (physical, emotional and spiritual). Clearly communicate these boundaries!

Child-based programs: Agreed-upon appropriate behaviours. This is an area in which children can be given a voice, in helping decide on the ‘rules’. The **ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit** provides information and a sample Code of Conduct for Children (**SC019**).

Participation of care givers and the community

The 3rd National Principle of Child Safe Organisations is:

Families and communities are informed and involved.

The ACC Child Protection Policy states:

We will seek to involve parents whenever possible and practicable in the decision-making process that impacts on them and the Children and Young People.

A safe church is a place that invites the participation of those who are key stakeholders in children’s lives, e.g. parents and the broader community who interact with the church.

A helpful resource in relation to protecting children through participation can be found at the Australian Institute for Family Studies (<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/protection-through-participation>).

Respecting Diversity and Inclusion

The 4th National Principle of Child Safe Organisations is

Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account:

- a. The institution actively anticipates children’s diverse circumstances and responds effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities.
- b. All children have access to information, support and complaints processes.

c. The institution pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The **ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit** provides a sample procedure for Participation and Inclusion (**SC016**). See also see Chapter 4 in this manual "Safe Emotional and Spiritual Environments".

The Royal Commission: Final report Volume 6 states:

Increased risk is related to the intersection of the institutional environment, the presence of a perpetrator and the child's personal circumstances, including societal attitudes. Taking these factors into account, we heard that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can more often face a range of vulnerabilities. All child safe institutions need to be especially alert to children's diverse circumstances and how they may be excluded from protections or face additional risks

An institution should inform itself about known issues, for example:

- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children – understanding the historical context of colonisation, the impacts of collective trauma and contemporary effects; being aware of the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family structures; being responsive to cultural needs; and promoting anti-racist attitudes*
- *Children with disability – making additional efforts to ensure inclusion and avoid segregation; challenging stereotypes and discrimination; and understanding the effect of a child's particular impairment*
- *Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds – ensuring language and cultural interpretation; considering potential trauma backgrounds related to migration experience; and taking different family structures and norms into account. These issues are indicative only and each institution is responsible for considering and responding to the possibility of situational and vulnerability risks in their context.*

(source The Royal Commission: Final report Volume 6: Page 264)

Requirements for diversity and inclusion vary depending upon your state or territory. Some states have guidelines or standards that cover respecting diversity e.g. NSW Principles for child safe organisations, Victorian child safe standards, WA Guidelines and SA Child safe environments (including lodging a compliance statement).

A helpful document in understanding diversity and inclusion issues is found in the Victorian Child Safe Standards: Overview document. In Victoria those providing services to children must demonstrate that they are implementing the seven Child Safe Standards. In complying with the child safe standards an applicable entity to which the standards apply must include the following principles as part of their response to each standard: promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse background and promoting the safety of children with a disability (Source: Child Safe Standards: Overview, published by the Victorian Government, Department of Health and Human Services, November 2015).

2.2 Understanding harmful behaviours

Factors influencing our understanding

When it comes to understanding what is and is not harmful behaviour, it is helpful to first acknowledge that our understanding is influenced by a number of factors. Whilst there are some areas that clearly constitute harmful behaviours, there are some grey areas that will vary depending upon the factors that inform our view.

Factors that influence our understanding include:

- the amount of information we have (in general and a specific scenario);
- social discourse on the topic in our society;
- our proximity to the issue (how much time do you spend involved in responding to the issues in your work/life);
- the level moral disengagement or engagement with the topic;
- myths about abuse;
- perception of that situation (includes: parents' behaviour, experiences we have had at the hands of influential people around us, our values, our attitudes concerning what constitutes harmful and/or abusive behaviour, our views on people's rights, and our perceived responsibilities towards vulnerable people).

These can all influence whether or not we see a particular situation or behaviour as harmful towards others or not. You are not asked to be experts. They are simply to report all concerns according to church procedure. In considering how we can protect people from harm, it is important to first acknowledge that some people are at more risk than others when it comes to being harmed. That is they are more vulnerable to being harmed. This is not to say that harm cannot occur at any time. It is only stating that when people are more vulnerable, their risk is of being susceptible to being harmed is heightened.

Vulnerability

We need to be both proactive and reactive in relation to the protection of all people and particularly the vulnerable. **A vulnerable person or group of people are those who are in need of 'special care'.**

Remember that those who are vulnerable, including children, those with special needs and those with any other permanent or temporary need of special care, can be more susceptible to being harmed and/or abused by others. This focus on protecting special classes of vulnerable people is evidenced in the introduction of legislation in Australia both in terms of Working with Children and Working with Vulnerable People type legislation, and also as seen in Child Protection and Elder Abuse legislation.

There are a number of factors that can and often do combine to make a person at greater risk of being harmed (more vulnerable or susceptible). For example, in relation to children, they are at greater risk of maltreatment within an organisation dependent upon their age, gender, previous maltreatment, disability, a lack of assertiveness strategies, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. (Australian Institute of Family Studies Issues Paper "Child maltreatment in organisations: Risk factors and strategies for prevention" Irenyi et al, 2006)

The diagram (right) shows recognised protective barriers in a person's life.

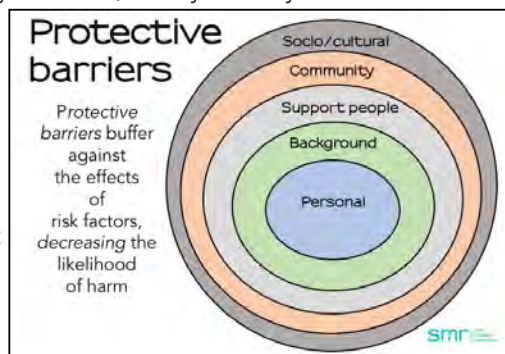
Such as:

Personal protection: Includes things such as: good health, physical, mental and intellectual ability, knowledge, protective skills, resilience, competent language, literacy and numeracy i.e. Development Assets - Search Institute Framework 1997 Internal Assets: positive identity, social competencies, commitment to learning, positive values.

Background: Includes stability, absence of prior trauma/dysfunction, family socially and economically secure, healthy and secure family attachments.

Support people (Family context and other support persons): Includes someone who looks out for the person, who protects the person and cares for the person, including friends and family as well as other external Developmental Assets. External Assets: support, empowerment, constructive use of time, boundaries and expectations. (Development Assets - Search Institute Framework -1997)

Community factors: Includes access to support services, facilities for help, doctors and other therapeutic services.



Wider socio/cultural factors: Includes legislation around protection, valuing of children, accepted well-being practices, or lack of history of oppression or discrimination.

When protective barriers are missing or damaged, a person may be more susceptible to being harmed. Some of these are more static such as a physical disability or history of family dysfunction. Others are more dynamic in that they change over time such as, grief, loss, stress, unemployment, or social isolation.

Power in relationships

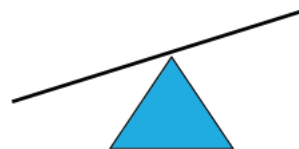
In all relationships there is a balance of power between the parties. Relationships are either equal in power, i.e. relationships in which two or more parties have the same amount of power, or alternatively, they are unequal, i.e. there is a power imbalance, as is the case between adults and children. In some relationships it is appropriate that the more powerful person takes steps to redress the balance of power.

In other relationships the more powerful person needs to consider how their actions will empower the less powerful person, whilst retaining the power imbalance.

The balance of power can be impacted by a number of factors such as: size, experience, knowledge and position (role).

Power is:

- *Relational* - we have power or resources in relation to someone else. I may have more power than my nephew and less power than my Board President.
- *Contextual* - power and/or resources depend on context. I may have power and authority vis a vis the congregant listening to my sermon or a student hearing my lecture, who then becomes my PA.
- *About resources* - what we have or don't have materially, psychologically, and socially.
- *Neutral* - power is neither good nor bad. Like fire, it can cook a meal or burn down a house.



[Note: God's power is more than neutral i.e. God is power (all-powerful) and gives us power through the Holy Spirit. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you"; (Acts 1:8). Paul encourages Timothy that God has given us a Spirit of "power not timidity" in 2 Timothy 1:7. God's power is good, it creates, it heals, brings salvation and is self-giving, empowering others.]

Vulnerability is:

- *Relational* - we are vulnerable in relation to a particular person. I am vulnerable to my therapist in ways I am not as director of my agency.
- *Contextual* - vulnerability depends on a context in which we have fewer resources. The Board of Trustees/Dean of Faculty can take steps to have me fired.
- *Absence of resources*

(Fortune, Responding to Misconduct, 2009, p.45)

The 'International Rules of the Sea' illustrate the burden on leaders in terms of their position of power. The Rules are the international standards for navigation on any body of water. The purpose of the Rules is to clarify that the vessel with greater resources has a responsibility to a vessel with fewer resources in terms of the power to manoeuvre.

Speed Boat is the "burdened" (obligated) party

- Has power and control of movement
 - Is obligated to avoid boats under sail
 - Has the "burden" (obligation) of responsibility
- Sailboat is the "privileged" party
- At the mercy of the wind; less control of movement
 - Is vulnerable to power boats
 - Has the "privilege" of being protected



The language used in the Rules is very interesting in this context. The vessel with greater power is the "burdened" party. The vessel with lesser power is the "privileged" party. These classifications by definition create a moral responsibility based on power and vulnerability. Although this runs counter to our standard social analysis which associates privilege with having power and resources and burden (of poverty, for example) with the absence of power and resources, it is language more fitting for our moral awareness as people of faith. (FaithTrust Institute, Boundaries 201, 2013, p.32).

In relationships where a person's position gives them power over another in order that the less powerful person might be protected or educated (e.g. teachers and pupils), it is inappropriate to change the balance of power. Within hierarchical organisational structures, or where someone is charged, for example, with upholding the law of the land, or where a person's health is being attended to, there exists an appropriate power imbalance.

In a church context, those in positions of leadership also hold varying levels of power to influence others for God. In the eyes of those under their authority, leaders may be seen as representing God's authority and, in some cases, God's will for their lives. Therefore, those in positions of power must have a sound understanding of, and must uphold, appropriate relationship boundaries so as to protect the less powerful person.

Boundary violations and abuse

In Chapter 1, we explored the gift of boundaries. Some boundaries are flexible, and can be crossed appropriately, determined by place, relationships, roles, and circumstances. However, others should never be crossed and are deemed to be inflexible boundaries. When boundaries are not crossed appropriately it may negatively impact the person on the receiving end of the action or inaction. These may be known as boundary violations and can cause harm to others.

All boundary violations are examples of people putting their own needs above those of others.

Boundary violations can occur across a variety of situations, be they spiritual, financial, physical, emotional, verbal, and/or sexual.

Not all boundary violations are carried out with malicious intent. Boundary violations can be thought of as a being on a continuum from unintentional 'wandering' across boundaries, to intentional actions of harm and/or carefully-planned, predatory-style boundary violations.

The following descriptions are not an attempt to define types of offenders, but rather to provide a description of the continuum from respecting boundaries, through to intentionally violating and/or predatory-type violations. Using this language can be helpful when addressing concerns with those who may be moving towards, or committing, boundary violations.

- **Boundary Respector:** Discovers that a boundary is approaching, or that they have unintentionally overstepped a boundary, and makes a deliberate correction to cross the boundary appropriately.
- **Wanderer:** Approaches a boundary and engages in inappropriate behaviour without boundary-awareness. Wandering behaviour is not intended to harm, but because it is not considering how the other person is experiencing the interaction, it has the potential to do great harm.
- **Intentional Violator:** The offender understands that the boundary should not be crossed, but does so intentionally in order to do harm to the other person.
- **Predatory Violator:** The predator heads directly for the boundary, and aims to break down a person's boundaries.

Abuse, using the language of boundary violations, is a *serious boundary violation/s leading to significant harm*.

It is a disrespecting of personhood which 'steals' or 'robs' from the other person their self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence, and can lead to short and long-term effects. Abuse 'robs' personhood, a violation of that which defines 'them' as separate from the offender. It often results in a sense of 'powerlessness' or 'voicelessness', eroding a person's self-worth, self-esteem and self-respect, and hinders the person's ability to act in healthy, life-giving ways, both towards their own self and others.

A biblical example of abuse as the misuse of power resulting in the robbing of personhood (abuse) is the recount of David, Bathsheba and Uriah found in 2 Samuel 11 and 12. In this story David sexually abused Bathsheba, and then, to cover this up, had Uriah murdered. David then took Bathsheba as one of his wives and she gave birth to a son. Chapter 11 verse 27 says, "But the Lord was displeased with what David had done."

In Chapter 12 the Lord sent the Prophet Nathan to confront David. Nathan used a story of a shepherd and sheep. However, interestingly, Nathan's charge against David had nothing to do with the covenant violations of coveting, adultery, rape or murder, but rather stealing.

Dr Marie Fortune comments: *It is the theft by the assailant of the security and well-being of the victim, the betrayal of trust, and the theft of her/his future. Let's be clear. It is not property theft, i.e. the taking of the property belonging to the male head of household. It is the theft of the sense of self of the person who is abused. Her/his boundaries are violated, trust is betrayed and relationships are often broken by the theft of the abuser.*" (Fortune, 2009, p.13)

Abuse can take many forms, such as actions of commission, like physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or acts of omission, like neglect. The types of child abuse and neglect are explored later in this chapter.

Given the broad scope of behaviours that are classified as misconduct and abuse, it is important to remember that not all misconduct will be illegal. Government websites are a useful source of information about crimes acts and abuse-related legislation.

Identifying types of child abuse

Who is a child? In Australia the definition of a child varies across states and territories. Herein, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years, with a subset of children known as young people (16-17ys).

Types and indicators of child abuse

ACC Child Protection Policy definition:

Harm, to a Child or Young Person, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the Child or Young Person's physical, psychological or emotional well-being. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation; a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

The Policy provides definitions of the types of child abuse and sexual grooming.

Complimentary to the definitions of the types of abuse in the Policy, the following pages contain the behavioural and physical indicators of child abuse to aid ACC People in their identification of when a child as at risk of harm.

These are not intended to be exhaustive but rather are a tool for identifying children at risk of abuse. It is important to remember that one or two indicators in isolation do not mean that a child is being abused. They must also be considered in the context of other indicators and the child's or young person's circumstances.

All ACC People **shall** learn the indicators of Child or Young Person abuse and neglect and report to their Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team when they have concerns about a Child and/or Young Person who is involved in the church.

a. Neglect

Continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development, (Source: NSW FaCS)

Examples: failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care, attention to hygiene or supervision, inability to respond emotionally to a child or young person, depriving of or withholding physical contact or stimulation for prolonged periods, absence of social support from adults.

INDICATORS/SIGNS IN CHILDREN	INDICATORS/SIGNS IN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• poor standards of hygiene leading to social isolation or poor health.• inappropriately dressed for weather conditions• extended stays at school, public places, others' homes• extreme longing for adult affection• self-comforting behaviour, eg. rocking, sucking• delays in developmental milestones• low weight for age and/or failure to thrive and develop• untreated physical problems e.g. serious nappy rash• extreme anxiety about being abandoned• child not adequately supervised for their age• scavenging or stealing food and focus on basic survival	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• unable or unwilling to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, safe home conditions• leaving the child without appropriate supervision• abandonment of child• withholding physical contact or stimulation for prolonged periods• unable or unwilling to provide psychological nurturing

b. Physical abuse

Non- accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person (Source: NSW FaCS).

Examples: beating, shaking, lacerations, burns, fractures, poisoning, attempted suffocation, physical mutilation.

INDICATORS/SIGNS IN CHILDREN	INDICATORS/SIGNS IN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• unexplained bruising to face, head or neck• bruising showing the shape of the object that caused it e.g. belt buckle, lacerations and welts• explanation of injury is not consistent with the injury• abdominal pain caused by ruptured internal organs• fractures of bones• burns and scalds (including cigarette burns)• drowsiness, vomiting, fits or retinal haemorrhages• aggression or withdrawal• inappropriate clothes for weather conditions• discomfort with physical contact, and emotional problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• explanation of injury is not consistent with the injury• a parent or caregiver says that they fear injuring their child• family history of violence or their own maltreatment as a child• frequent visits with child/ren to health or other services with unexplained or suspicious injuries

c. Emotional and psychological abuse

Behaviour by a parent or caregiver that destroys a child's confidence resulting in significant emotional disturbance or trauma (Source: NSW FaCS).

Psychological abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception and moral development. The harm experienced is assessed to be detrimental in effect and significant in nature on the child's wellbeing.

INDICATORS/SIGNS IN CHILDREN	INDICATORS/SIGNS IN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passive and aggressive behavioural extremes • habit disorders • feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves • inability to value others • lack of trust in people and expectations • lack of interpersonal skills necessary for adequate functioning • extreme attention-seeking behaviour • bullying • disruptiveness • persistent running away from home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constant criticism • belittling, teasing • ignoring or withholding praise and attention • excessive or unreasonable demands • persistent hostility and verbal abuse • rejection and scape-goating • belief that a particular child is bad or evil • using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment • domestic violence

d. Sexual abuse

Definition: Sexual abuse is when an adult or someone who is stronger, bigger or older (includes other children) involves a child in a sexual activity by using their power over a child or taking advantage of a child's trust. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity. Bribes or threats are often used to make them participate in the activity (Source: NSW FaCS).

Examples: sexual touching, sexual intercourse, sexual suggestions to children, including exposure to pornographic material, use of children in the production of pornographic videos or films, exhibitionism, child prostitution.

INDICATORS/SIGNS IN CHILDREN	INDICATORS/SIGNS IN PARENTS/CAREGIVERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child or child's friend telling you about it, even indirectly • describing sexual acts • excessive seductiveness • going to bed fully clothed • sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate for age • regressive behaviour e.g. sudden return to bed-wetting • bruising or bleeding in the genital area • sexually transmitted diseases • bruising to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs • self-destructive behaviour • suicide attempts/self-mutilation • child being in contact with a known sex offender • anorexia or over-eating • adolescent pregnancy • unexplained accumulation of money and gifts • persistent running away from home • unusual aversion to physical contact • inappropriate expressions of friendship with an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exposing a child to prostitution or pornography or using a child for pornographic purposes • intentional exposure of a child to sexual behaviour of others • previous conviction or suspicion of child sexual abuse • coercing a child to engage in sexual behaviour with other children • verbal threats of sexual abuse • denial of an adolescent's pregnancy by family • keeping tight control over a child's movements, e.g. not allowing child to develop relationships where they might disclose

e. Exposure to family violence

Exposure to family violence has been broadly defined as “a child being present (hearing or seeing) while a parent or sibling is subjected to physical abuse, sexual abuse or psychological maltreatment, or is visually exposed to the damage caused to persons or property by a family member’s violent behaviour” (Higgins, 1998, p. 104). Narrower definitions refer only to children being exposed to domestic violence between intimate partners.

Some researchers classify the witnessing of family violence as a special form of emotional maltreatment. However, a growing number of professionals regard the exposure to family violence as a unique and independent subtype of abuse (as it is presented in this paper) (e.g., Bromfield, 2005; Higgins, 2004; James, 1994). Regardless of the classification used, research has shown that children who are exposed to domestic violence tend to experience significant disruptions in their psychosocial wellbeing, often exhibiting a similar pattern of symptoms to other abused or neglected children (Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt, & Kenny, 2003; Tomison, 2000) (from Australian Institute of Family Studies <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/what-child-abuse-and-neglect>).

INDICATORS/SIGNS IN CHILDREN
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• displays of aggressive behaviour• development of phobias and insomnia• displays of anxiety• symptoms of depression• diminished self-esteem• poor academic performance and problem-solving skills• reduced social competence skills, including low levels of empathy• displays of emotional distress• physical complaints

Other types of harmful behaviours (which may be also reportable to government statutory child protection agency dependant upon laws in the jurisdiction):

Bullying behaviours between children

In a church context bullying must not be tolerated. Instead of being laughed at, it should be reported according to church procedure. In a children’s ministry context, parents of children involved need to be informed, consulted with and included in decisions relating to their child/ren. Targets of bullying need to be loved, valued, respected and restored as appropriate to the situation. Those who demonstrate bullying behaviours must be called to account in a loving way. For more information in relation to bullying behaviours by and towards adults, see ‘Identifying concerns about adults’, later in this manual.

Sexualised electronic interactions and grooming on the internet

The explosion of electronic communication has seen a sharp increase in the number of internet-based and telecommunications-based allegations of abuse and bullying. This involves the perpetrator using any form of telecommunication, or electronic communication to: sexually groom, bully, suggest an inappropriate relationship be formed, or engage a child in sexual language or behaviours. In some cases these interactions have led to people being charged with online grooming, or procurement of a child for sexual purposes. In NSW the Office of the Children’s Guardian includes “inappropriate personal communication (including emails, telephone calls, text messaging, social media and web forums) that explore sexual feelings or intimate personal feelings with a child” as part of its extended definition of sexual misconduct.

We acknowledge that the use of electronic media for communication is part of everyday life, however, we need to be mindful of the position of trust and power we have been entrusted with as leaders.

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 7 SAFE ONLINE AND DIGITAL PRACTICES

The use of electronic media is part of everyday life. ACC People **shall** be mindful of the position of trust they hold by actively being safe in all online and digital interactions, including maintaining transparency and accountably in the use of electronic communications with Children or Young People as far as is practical, that is as a team, not as individuals, e.g. group emails/text messages/Facebook.

ACC people **shall** not transmit, download or store any communication that is: discriminatory or harassing, derogatory, obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic, defamatory, threatening, for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to the Code of Conduct relevant to their position. In the case where ACC People receive such communication, they will report this to their Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team.

ACC people **shall** not send any electronic communication that attempts to hide their identity or represent the sender as someone else. It is **recommended** that electronic communications with Children under 16 occur with the full knowledge of the parent/s or carer/s of the Child or Young Person.

Sexual grooming

ACC Child Protection Policy definition:

Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a Child or Young Person, or the family unit of the Child or Young Person, with a view to abusing the Child or Young Person at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of Children or Young People. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The Child or Young Person may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a Child or Young Person in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom Children or Young People but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by SMS.

In some states and territories 'sexual grooming' is a criminal activity or sexual misconduct reportable for the protection of children. For example:

NSW: In 2018 the scope of grooming has been extended in NSW to include grooming of another adult to gain access to a child. Further, the Reportable Conduct scheme also includes sexual grooming in its definition of sexual misconduct, and as such all concerns about a worker should be reported.

VIC: In 2014 an offence of Grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years was introduced. This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. The offence of grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. The offence applies where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult. Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity – for example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time. The offence applies to communication with children under 16 years, but not communication with 16 and 17 year old children. This distinction between children aged below 16 and those aged 16 or 17 reflects the general age of consent (16 years) recognised by the criminal law in relation to sexual offences (adapted from <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/grooming-offence>).

QLD: The Queensland Criminal Code, Section 218B relates to the crime of Sexual Grooming children under 16. It states: (1) Any adult who engages in any conduct in relation to a person under the age of 16 years, or a person the adult believes is under the age of 16 years, with intent to; (a) facilitate the procurement of the person to engage in a sexual act, either in Queensland or elsewhere; or (b) expose, without legitimate reason, the person to any indecent matter, either in Queensland or elsewhere; commits a crime.

Identifying concerns about adults

Concerns about adults at church, including but not limited to any of the following:

- bullying behaviour (online or in person)
- harassment
- sexual harassment
- sexual misconduct
- sexual abuse (assault)
- physical violence
- stalking
- mental illness
- emotionally harmful behaviours
- domestic violence
- elder abuse
- self-harming / suicide risk
- homelessness
- any disability

The following pages contain specific information in relation to four areas which have become the focus of special attention in recent years due to their prevalence:

Bullying behaviours

A person in a church may state that they have been bullied. They may have experienced some uncomfortable things in church life. However, not all unpleasant experiences within a church fall into the realm of bullying behaviours. It is important to determine if what a person is experiencing is actually bullying or not.

Factors such as conflict in a situation, personality styles, or differing expectations might be at play. In these situations it may or may not be that the person has experienced bullying behaviours.

What is bullying?

Bullying behaviours can include: minimisation of concerns expressed by the target of the behaviours, lying, denial of bullying behaviours alleged, covert or overt intimidation of a target through words or actions, guilt-tripping, playing the victim role, playing the servant role, shouting and/or swearing at target, threats to target's position or family comfort if compliance is not achieved, speaking over target when they endeavour to express a viewpoint, ignoring the target – including face-to-face encounters and electronic interactions, consistent fault-finding and withholding favour and refusal to acknowledge presence of the target of the bullying behaviours.

Bullying in the church can come from any person, but it is most often a situation involving a power imbalance where the person exercising bullying behaviours has more power than the target of the bullying behaviour. Bullying does not have to be individual behaviour.

A group in the church can also be responsible for bullying and the target may be an individual or group – in some cases this sort of bullying is referred to as 'mobbing'.

What is NOT considered to be bullying

There are things that happen in churches that are not considered to be bullying, even when these experiences may be slightly uncomfortable for those on the receiving end of the behaviours.

The following are *not* considered to be bullying:

- Reasonable supervisor/team leader/pastoral action. This can include:
 - counselling you because of concerns about your behaviour
 - allocating reasonable tasks to you in keeping with your team or ministry area
 - requesting you to do things that are requested of everyone in a team or attending an event
 - changing your roster in a reasonable way, even if you don't like it
 - giving you critical feedback about your actions when this is done in privacy and in a respectful manner
 - asking you to move into a different ministry when this is in keeping with your skills and you are consulted first
 - being left out of meetings when they are not relevant to your role or ministry

- Good natured interactions with peers, such as:
 - joking, laughing and telling stories when it is not directed at anyone and does not contain offensive content
 - being respectfully told by another church member that you are bothering them or hampering their service
 - occasionally being left out of social gatherings, such as a group of church members going out for dinner together
 - someone disagreeing with your opinion in a respectful way
 - accidentally being overlooked in a social invitation (so long as this is not a consistent and repeated occurrence).

Perception & reality: Perception is the way we receive and interpret behaviour or information. We form our opinions from our perception. We make assumptions, develop attitudes and make judgments all based on our perception. The outcome of our perception becomes our reality with which we respond to a person or situation. As perception is unique and is a reflection of a person's reality, it is unlikely that someone will change their perception about a given person or situation simply because they are told to. Perception also impacts what someone labels as bullying behaviour.

Responding to bullying behaviours

The key principle to apply when addressing bullying is initially to address the behaviour in the least intrusive and least formal way. If the informal processes do not result in a satisfactory outcome, then more formal options can be considered.

Personal options:

- talking to someone you trust
- seeking medical attention or other help
- speaking to the perpetrator directly
- talking to your community/church leader
- talking to a senior leader in your denomination

Informal resolution process

An informal resolution process aims to ensure that the bullying incident is resolved as quickly as possible. Although a person has the right to make either a formal or an informal complaint, they should be encouraged to commence with the informal process first, as this can often achieve a more timely and satisfactory outcome for both parties.

No investigation or disciplinary action should be taken as a result of an informal complaint. Rather, a no-blame approach should be used to assist the individuals involved to reach an outcome that will ensure appropriate conduct in the future. The main focus is to return the individuals to beneficial participation in the community without interruption and with no further bullying behaviour.

Conciliation and mediation

Conciliation and mediation are confidential processes that involve only the conciliator/mediator and the individuals concerned. It is acceptable, however, for the individuals to have a support person present during a conciliation meeting.

If the informal process fails to reach a resolution, then the complainant should be advised that they have the right to make a formal complaint.

Formal investigation process

It is important that a person clearly understands what to expect from making a formal complaint. For example, you may wish to inform people that:

- the investigation procedures will adhere to natural justice principles to ensure fairness for all concerned;
- an investigation will occur as soon as possible after the complaint is received; and
- an investigation will be conducted by an impartial and independent (preferably external) person who can carry out the investigation without hindrance or bias.

A formal process usually has the following steps:

1. Verbally advising the senior church/community leader
2. Lodging the complaint
3. Initial response
4. Appointment of an investigator

-
5. The investigation
 6. Findings
 7. Appeal
 8. Access to counselling and/or rehabilitation
 9. Review

(Adapted from *"I think I am being bullied, what do I do?"* and *"Identifying and addressing workplace bullying"*, ACT WorkSafe 2012, https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/3533)

Workcover Australia provides guides for employers and employees in relation to responding to bullying in the workplace.

Sexual Violence - Harassment and Assault

Sex is a gift from God. Sexual expression is an action of intimacy, i.e. two becoming one flesh (Gen 1:24). Therefore all sexual interactions should be actions of loving intimacy where each party is able to freely consent to the interaction.

There has been much learning in the understanding of what constitutes meaningful consent in recent years in relation to areas such as: the age of consent, states of consent e.g. sober and intellectual capacity, and also the area of coercion, e.g. no meaningful consent is possible where a person submits due to the other person's positional power over them.

Disciplinary procedures for leaders should address allegations or complaints of sexual harassment and assault between adults, not only complaints relating to adults against children.

When considering whether or not a person has been sexually harassed or assaulted, it is important to remember that sexual violence can be perpetrated both in word and in action (non-contact and contact).

The **sexual violence continuum** begins with non-contact sexual violence such as sexual comments, sexual jokes aimed at a person, verbal sexual harassment, obscene phone calls, peeping and exposure, through to contact sexual violence such as unwanted sexual touching, acts of indecency, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, rape and rape-murder.

It is important to understand your state or territory's definitions of such acts because many words and actions on the sexual violence continuum constitute crimes.

Nationally the Sexual Discrimination Act 1984 (Australia) describes sexual harassment as an unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours or other unwelcome sexual conduct in circumstances where the person doing the harassing knows that the conduct would offend, intimidate or humiliate another person.

The following are some examples of state definitions:

- NSW: consent occurs when a person freely and voluntarily agrees to sexual intercourse. Sexual assault occurs when someone is unable to and/or does not give consent e.g. asleep or unconscious, significantly intoxicated or affected by drugs, unable to understand what they are consenting to due to their age (under the age of 16) or intellectual capacity, intimidated, coerced or threatened, unlawfully detained or held against their will or they submit due to the person being in a position of trust. (Abridged: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/parvan/sexualassault/Pages/default.aspx>)
- SA: 'Indecent Assault' is touching (or threat of touching) without a person's genuine consent. What is and what is not indecent is a matter for the jury to determine. Unlawful Sexual Intercourse is the legal name for sexual intercourse with a person under the age of seventeen years, regardless of whether the person consented. Indecent Behaviour is behaving in an indecent manner in a public place, or while visible from a public place or in a police station. What is indecent will depend on the circumstances, e.g. indecently exposing oneself (<http://www.lawhandbook.sa.gov.au/ch12s07s01s03.php>).
- TAS: children do not have the ability to consent to any sexual act, as they do not understand the implications of a sexual relationship and therefore cannot give 'informed consent'. Any person who has unlawful sexual intercourse (or activity) with another person who is under the age of 17 years is guilty of a crime unless:
 - (a) that person was of or above the age of 15 years and the accused person was not more than 5 years older

than that person; or (b) that person was of or above the age of 12 years and the accused person was not more than 3 years older than that person (Sexual Assault Support service <http://www.sass.org.au>).

- VIC: sexual activity involving a child under 12 years is a crime. Sexual activity involving a person aged 12-15 years is a crime where there is no consent or where there is more than 2 years age difference between the two people involved. Sexual activity involving a person aged 16-17 years is a crime where there is no consent or where one person is in a position that provides care or supervision for the other e.g. teacher, youth worker, doctor, foster carer (Victorian Legal Aid <http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/find-legal-answers/sex-and-law/sexual-assault>)

In addition to the law, insurance companies who provide sexual molestation cover will have a definition of sexual abuse, for example:

"Sexual abuse includes any assault or abuse of a sexual nature, any type of molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation, whether such act is the subject of criminal investigation or not. 'Injury' includes any physical, mental or psychological injury" (ANIP).

Domestic and /or family violence

Domestic and family violence includes the types of abuse listed previously, but occurs within a domestic or family relationship. This is often marked by a significant imbalance of power within the household. It is common for a perpetrator to be highly controlling. One form of domestic violence has been described aptly as *intimate terrorism*. Another form that occurs far less often is common couple violence, where both adult partners hold roughly equal power within the relationship, and both, at times, instigate the violence. The term *family violence* recognises that within a household it is possible for there to be multiple perpetrators and victims, e.g. teenage child abusing parent, parent abusing grandparent.

Domestic violence causes fear, physical and/or psychological harm. It is most often (but not exclusively) violent, abusive or intimidating behaviour by a man against a woman. Living with domestic violence has a profound effect upon children and young people and may constitute a form of child abuse (The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Action Plan, June 2010).

Many forms of domestic violence are criminal offences. Physical and sexual assault is a crime whether it happens in the home or on the street.

Domestic violence can include:

- physical assault (including punching, hitting, kicking, pushing, slapping, choking, or the use of weapons)
- sexual assault (being forced to have sex or participate in sexual activities, either by watching or physically participating)
- emotional abuse (making someone feel worthless, criticising their personality, their looks, the way they dress, constantly putting someone down, threatening to hurt them, their children or pets)
- verbal abuse (including yelling, shouting, name-calling and swearing at someone)
- social abuse (being stopped from seeing friends and family, isolating someone socially or geographically)
- damaging property such as furniture, the house or pets in order to threaten or intimidate someone
- financial abuse (taking control of money, not giving someone enough money on which to survive, forcing someone to hand over their money, not letting them have a say in how it is spent).

(Adapted from "Domestic and family violence", Department of Community Services, NSW, <http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents,-carers-and-families/domestic-and-family-violence>).

Supporting a person who experiences domestic violence

When someone is ready to talk, it is important to listen to them and take the issue seriously.

When someone is ready to talk:

- believe what they tell you
- focus on how they are feeling and how they are coping with the domestic violence
- let them know domestic violence is not their fault
- focus on their safety and the safety of their children
- let them know you are there for them (if this does not put your safety at risk)
- let them know about the Domestic Violence Line 1800 Respect (1800 737 732)

Things to avoid:

- avoid blaming the person who is disclosing abuse for the domestic violence
- avoid blaming alcohol, other drugs or mental health issues for the domestic violence behaviour
- avoid telling the person what to do
- avoid talking to the abuser about their behaviour
- avoid making negative comments about the abuser
- do not expect that the person disclosing abuse will leave the relationship.

(Adapted from "Supporting someone who experiences domestic violence", Department of Community Services, NSW, March 2007)

Elder abuse

Elder abuse "occurs when there is any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Abuse can include physical, sexual, financial, psychological and social abuse and/or neglect"(endorsed at the Healthy Ageing Taskforce, 2000).

Suspensions that abuse has occurred may be aroused by physical signs and symptoms or by the behaviour of the older person. It is important for leaders to be aware of any sudden or unusual changes in the behaviour patterns of their participants or congregation members. If someone shows one or more of the possible signs of abuse, it does not automatically mean she or he is being abused. Consider the context.

Concerns that require reporting may arise from a single event or a pattern or series of events. The indicators of child abuse herein may be used as a guide for concerns about the elderly.

2.3 Responding to concerns

Responding appropriately when we are concerned either about a person (child or adult) at church who is at risk of harm, or when we are concerned about a person's perceived harmful behaviours towards others, is important in terms of ensuring we have harm-free and life-giving ministry.

Reporting, dependant upon the nature of the concern, may include reporting to police, and statutory bodies and/or referral to specialists for assistance.

Responding fully may include legal, pastoral, denominational, risk management and insurance responses.

It is important that leaders report any types of behaviours that they are concerned about:

- if told about them (disclosures), and/or
- if there is a reasonable suspicion they are occurring.

If you are concerned about the harmful behaviours of a person at church or you have a concern that a child or other vulnerable person is at risk of harm, then it is important to report your concern.

This includes concerns about but not limited to:

- child abuse (or if a child is at risk of being harmed): sexual, physical, emotional, neglect, exposure to family violence, sexual grooming
- bullying behaviour, whether this is between children, or adults, online or in person.
- harassment.
- sexual misconduct
- physical violence
- emotionally harmful behaviours
- elder abuse
- sexual harassment.
- sexual abuse (assault)
- stalking
- Domestic Violence
- self-harming / suicide risk

Responding to risk of harm concerns about children

Child abuse is a serious and complex problem in the lives of children and young people. Often it occurs in environments that are isolated and stressful and affects those who are most vulnerable (Reporting Child Abuse, 2003). Abuse often occurs in situations where trust is involved and often by a person known to, and trusted by the child. Addressing the area of child abuse can be both confronting and disturbing. To begin with, the actions of abuse themselves are a display of humanity at its worst. Child abuse is in direct opposition to Jesus' words about welcoming children (Matt 19:14) and loving one another (John 13:34).

Prevalence of child abuse in Australia

It is almost impossible to determine the amount of abuse that does occur since only that which is reported to government authorities becomes the official statistics. Researchers estimate that as many 1 in 4 children will be sexually abused. Given the statistics of reported cases as seen above, this crime is highly under-reported and research has indicated that on average it takes females 7-14 years to tell someone about their sexual abuse, whilst males take an average of well over 20 years to talk about their child sexual abuse, if they ever talk about it at all.

The Annual Report *Child Protection Australia 2016-17* from the Australia Institute of Health and Welfare states that *In 2016-17, 168,352 children received child protection services. Of those children: 119,173 were the subject of an investigation, 64,145 were on a care and protection order and 57,221 were in out of home care (page 8). Between 2012-13 and 2016-17, rates of children who were the subject of a substantiation rose from 7.8 to 9.0 per 1,000 children, on care and protection orders rose from 8.2 to 9.9 per 1,000 in out of home care rose from 7.7 to 8.1 per 1,000 (page vii).*

Impact of child abuse

Experiencing child abuse has been demonstrated to have wide ranging implications. Studies (such as the *Adverse Childhood Experiences Study* conducted by the Centres for Disease Control) have linked multiple experiences of child abuse and neglect with long term outcomes including lower rates of income, higher rates of chronic illness such as heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, higher risk for intimate partner violence, higher rates of alcoholism, higher rates of depression, lower life expectancy, increased likelihood of early uptake of cigarettes, and lower levels of assets. The total 'cost' to the individual and society is enormous.

Volume 3 of the Royal Commission's Final Report provides an in-depth examination of the impact of child sexual abuse within the context of institutions. It includes:

effects of trauma on children's development, mental health, impact on interpersonal relationships, physical health, sexual identity, gender identity and sexual behaviour, connection to culture, spirituality and religious involvement, interactions with society, education, employment and economic security, fear, distrust and contempt for the institution, and then there is the ripple effects on the survivors families, other affected individuals, communities and Australian society.

Child-centred practice

When protecting children and responding to our risk of harm concerns about children, it is important that we are child-centred in our approach. The child focused approach is based on the best interests of the child. This approach is essential if we are to truly protect the vulnerable.

Child-centred approach means that the needs and welfare of children are the primary concern and focus of work practices. This is achieved through a solid understanding of child development and a concerted effort to give children a voice. 'Child-centred practice reflects a particular set of beliefs about the capacities, vulnerabilities and rights of children. Its core is a commitment to children's ways of understanding, describing and doing' (The Australian Childhood Foundation (2001 & 2003) cited in Mudaly & Goddard, *The Truth is Longer than a Lie*, (2006).)

Jesus' view on children is best explained in his explanation of who is the greatest in the Kingdom of God in Matthew 18-1:14:

¹About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" ²Jesus called a little child to him and put the child among them. ³Then he said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. ⁴So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. ⁵"And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me. ⁶But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea. ⁷"What sorrow awaits the world, because it tempts people to sin. Temptations are inevitable, but what sorrow awaits the person who does the tempting. ⁸So if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It's better to enter eternal life with only one hand or one foot than to be thrown into eternal fire with both of your hands and feet. ⁹And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It's better to enter eternal life with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

¹⁰"Beware that you don't look down on any of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of my heavenly Father.

¹²"If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost? ¹³And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice over it more than over the ninety-nine that didn't wander away! ¹⁴In the same way, it is not my heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish." (NLT)

If Jesus views children as being the greatest in his kingdom and that the Father does not will for one little one to be lost, then in a Christian framework for protecting children we must ask ... *How is the child experiencing their interactions with the world, with other kids and with grown ups?*

A good first question to ask when it comes to responding to our risk of harm concerns is: *Is this situation OK for the child?* Rather than, "What will happen to... me, the alleged perpetrator, the care-giver, the leader?"

The following section includes the ACC Child Protection Practice Guideline to be followed in reporting your concerns that a child and/or young person is at risk of being harmed.

The guideline includes mandatory reporting requirements, i.e. that in some states and territories ministers of religion are mandated to report by law, whilst in other states and territories there are no legislative requirements for ministers to report. For a summary of legislated mandatory reporting see page 37 of this manual.

Overcoming the barriers to reporting

Reporting our concerns is an important step in child protection. However, knowing how, what and when to report has proven to be problematic.

"What can I do about this?"

"The government will only make the situation worse?"

"Society can't even fix this problem!"

These are all examples of what is known as discounting.

West's **Discount Hierarchy** relates to four levels of resistance a person has to overcome to actually respond to a possible abuse situation.

- i. *EXISTENCE* - acknowledgement of the problem actually existing.
- ii. *SIGNIFICANCE* - Accept that there is a problem, but don't accept it's significant.
- iii. *SOLVABILITY* - Acceptance of the existence and significance of the problem, but believe that it cannot be solved.
- iv. *SELF* - Acceptance of the existence and significance of the problem, and that there are solutions, but a belief that they personally cannot initiate solutions.

(Source: Chris Storm: Bethany Community Support Melbourne, FEELING SAFE, BEING STRONG - AIFS Conference 2008)

There are also a number of community attitudes and organisational risk factors that may contribute to creating barriers to protecting children and in some cases may actually contribute to ongoing child abuse.

Community attitudes include:

- cultural acceptance of extreme physical punishment of children and the use of violence
- acceptance of parents' ownership of children and their right to treat children as they see fit
- the notion that the child deserved the treatment received as a result of behaviour
- lack of desire to 'get involved' in other people's business
- fears of retaliation should a notifier's name be made known to an abuser
- concerns about the break-up of a family unit should the abuse be exposed
- not being prepared to expose a person of high standing in the community
- concern by an abused person that by exposing an abuser, they will be publicly shamed

Organisational risk factors include: staff alone with children; abuse of positional power – people in authority taking advantage of the position of power; culture of bullying; lack of leader and staff accountability; inadequate resources; lack of experience; lack of awareness; inadequate training; internal investigations as opposed to external investigations, isolated locations (Beyer et.al, 2005).

When to report

The most common type of report received by government child protection agencies is when another person identifies the indicators of abuse, without the child having directly disclosed actual abuse.

State government child protection agencies have different requirements for reporting your concerns, as already mentioned. However, even with the child's best interests in mind, we may still be given to subjective decision-making based upon our own judgment. It is useful to apply the indicators of abuse to the equation before we make a judgment (see pages 23-25). We might call these indicators 'red flags', alerting us to potential problems. The indicators are objective and can help us make a decision based upon what is best for the child, rather than being based upon our own opinion.

Report when:

- a child tells you they are being harmed (disclosure)
- another person tells you a child is being harmed (second hand disclosure)
- when you have a reasonable concern that a child is at risk of harm (using the indicators)

Protection for those reporting

When suspicions or concerns have been reported about a child according to the legislation, then a person cannot be sued, even if the notification proved to be unsubstantiated. A notifier's identity will not be revealed to the person whom they have reported, unless determined to be in the best interests by the court.

Disclosures

A disclosure is whenever a child tells you that they, or someone else is being harmed. The fact that a child or young person tells you that they have been abused means that they have a high respect for you and that they trust you greatly, therefore, it is important that you respond appropriately.

Understanding your role:

- Your role is not to conduct an investigation.
- Your role is to nurture and minister to the child and not engage in discussions around the abuse or investigations.
- Please do not share what they have said to you with anyone other than those who need to know for pastoral, risk management and reporting purposes. In this situation, confidentiality is very important.
- Even if abuse is no longer happening it is still important to report the matter, as the adult may be abusing other children. Also it may be that the child will need guidance and help in overcoming the effects of the abuse.

Do:

- Listen ... do not add anything to what the child says (you will need to write this down, exactly)
- Reassure ... the child that they have done the right thing in speaking to you
- Inform ... the child that you need to tell people who will try to help you
- Ensure ... that the child is not in immediate danger

Don't:

- Start an investigation into the information
- Promise the child that the abuse will stop
- Tell anyone who does not need to know

Note: Keep it brief - this is not the only time the child will have to share their story and you may actually hinder an investigation. DO NOT have a long conversation.

Supporting a child after a disclosure

In a ministry situation it is highly likely that you will continue to have contact with the child after a disclosure. It is important to recognise that the child has disclosed to you because they trust you and feel safe with you. As you continue to nurture and minister to the child it may be useful to be mindful of the following: create a calm environment, engage in appropriate relationships, continue to include the child, provide an ordered program, foster appropriate behaviours, focus attention on the safe space.

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 8

REPORTING CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO MAY BE AT RISK OF HARM (AND/OR SUSPECTED ABUSE)

It is **recommended** that Constituent Churches appoint a Safer Churches Person/Team, whose roles include: receiving reports, assisting in the process of reporting of Child Protection concerns and keeping accurate records permanently and securely in accordance with privacy legislation.

ACC People **shall** report risk of harm / suspected child abuse concerns when:

- a Child or Young Person discloses they have been/are being abused/or are at risk of being harmed/abused
- someone else (regardless of age) discloses that they know of a Child or Young Person who has been/are being abused/or at risk of being harmed/abused
- there are concerns that the Child or Young Person may have been or is at risk of being abused based on their physical appearance or behaviour.

ACC People are not required, as an initial response, to establish or investigate if abuse has occurred, but rather report reasonable suspicions or concerns of abuse, including the grounds for concerns, to Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team (or equivalent) (See note below relating to Mandatory reporting in South Australia).

If a Local Church Safer Churches Person is not available and the abuse is currently occurring, or there are reasons to believe that a Child or Young Person is at risk, a report should be made immediately to the police and appropriate authorities.

Process for Reporting:

a) Report to Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team

Report concerns to one of the appointed Local Safer Churches People, except when a disclosure occurs at a program or event, or a Child's/Young Person's immediate safety is at risk (sexual and physical abuse). In this case, immediately phone the police and organise appropriate support for the Child/ren. This can be done with the help of the most senior on-site Leader, who will also need to assist with managing the immediate situation.

b) Complete applicable form/s and/or online reporting, e.g. Safer Churches anecdotal record and/or state government online reporting tool. The Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team will keep a Local Church log, upholding privacy principles.

c) Take the appropriate action with your Local Church Safer Churches Person - including:

- Police/government Child Protection agency reporting (police, government agency).
NOTE: In South Australia, individuals who are classified as mandatory reporters, must report directly to CARL (Child Abuse Report Line).
The department leader and or Safer Churches personnel will play a support role with the reporting, and also be involved in the church's pastoral, denominational and risk management responses of the church.
- Contact the National Safer Churches Helpline for advice and assistance 1800 070 511
- Initiate the correct complaints handling processes if the allegations are about ACC Leaders/Certificate Holders.

d) Provide ongoing support, pastoral care and risk management processes

It is the role of the Local Church Board to implement pastoral care and support for all parties involved, including the Child or Young Person and family, as much as is practical.

There may also be Local Church risk management action plans that need to be implemented, e.g. stepping aside a Leader/Certificate Holder who has been accused of harming a Child or Young Person whilst the investigation occurs.

It is recommended that all Child Protection records are kept securely and for not less than 45 years. For further record keeping recommendation see Royal Commission Recommendations 8.1 & 8.4. For sample forms see ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit numbers SC024 and SC025.

Mandatory Reporting

The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. All jurisdictions possess mandatory reporting requirements of some description:

Who?	What?	Agency
ACT Doctors; dentists; nurses; enrolled nurses; midwives; teachers; a person providing education to a child or young person who is registered for home education; police; counsellors of children; workers at child care centres; coordinators or monitors of home-based family day care; public servants who work with children and young people or families; the public advocate; an official visitor; a person who, in the course of the person's employment, has contact with or provides services to children, and is prescribed by regulation.	A belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person has experienced or is experiencing sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury; and the belief arises from information obtained by the person during the course of, or because of, the person's work (whether paid or unpaid).	Community Services Directorate Child and Youth Protection services: 1300 556 729 http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au
NSW A person who, in the course of his or her professional work or other paid employment delivers health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services or law enforcement, wholly or partly, to children; and a person who holds a management position in an organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services or law enforcement, wholly or partly, to children. From 24 January 2010, mandatory reporters use the Mandatory Reporter Guide to help with decision making.	Reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant of harm; and those grounds arise during the course of or from the person's work. Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, neglect and exposure to family violence	Dept of Family and Community Services. Child Protection Helpline: 132 111 https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/
QLD An authorised officer, employee of the Department of Child Safety, a person employed in a departmental care service or licensed care service. A doctor or registered nurse	Awareness or reasonable suspicion: - of harm caused to a child placed in the care of an entity conducting a departmental care service or a licensee - during the practice of his or her profession: harm or risk of harm.	Department of Child Safety Brisbane 1300 682 254 Central QLD 1300 703 762 Far North QLD 1300 684 062 Ipswich 1800 316 855 North Coast 1300 703 921 North QLD 1300 706 147 South East 1300 679 849 South West 1300 683 390 After Hours (07) 3235 9999 or freecall 1800 177 135. https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children
SA Doctors; pharmacists; registered or enrolled nurses; dentists; psychologists; police officers; community corrections officers; social workers; teachers; family day care providers; employees/volunteers in a government department, agency or instrumentality, or a local government or non-government agency that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children; ministers of religion (with the exception of disclosures made in the confessional); employees or volunteers in a religious or spiritual organisations	Reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected; and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person's work (whether paid or voluntary) or carrying out official duties: Physical abuse Sexual abuse Emotional/psychological abuse Neglect	Department for Child Protection Child Abuse Reporting Line (CARL) 13 14 78 - 24 hour service. https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au
TAS Registered medical practitioners; nurses; dentists, dental therapists or dental hygienists; registered psychologists; police officers; probation officers; principals and teachers in any educational institution; persons who provide child care or a child care service for fee or reward; persons concerned in the management of a child care service licensed under the Child Care Act 2001; any other person who is employed or engaged as an employee for, of, or in, or who is a volunteer in, a government agency that provides health, welfare, education, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children, and an organisation that receives any funding from the Crown for the provision of such services; and any other person of a class determined by the Minister by notice in the Gazette to be prescribed persons.	A belief, suspicion, reasonable grounds or knowledge that: a child has been or is being abused or neglected or is an affected child within the meaning of the Family Violence Act 2004; or there is a reasonable likelihood of a child being killed or abused or neglected by a person with whom the child resides Physical abuse Sexual abuse Emotional/psychological abuse Neglect Exposure to family violence	Department of Health and Human Services Child Safety Services: 1300 737 639 http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au

Who?	What?	Agency
VIC Registered medical practitioners, registered nurses, a person registered as a teacher under the Education, Training and Reform Act 2006 or teachers granted permission to teach under that Act, principals of government or non-government schools, and members of the police force	Belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection on a ground referred to in Section 162(c) or 162(d), formed in the course of practising his or her office, position or employment: physical abuse or sexual abuse.	Dept of Health and Human Services Eastern 1300 360 391 Southern 1300 655 795 Northern 1300 664 977 Western (Rural/Regional) 1800 075 599 Western (Metropolitan) 1300 664 977 After hours - 13 1278 https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse
WA Court personnel; family counsellors; family dispute resolution practitioners, arbitrators or legal practitioners representing the child's interests. Licensed providers of child care or outside-school-hours care services. Doctors; nurses and midwives; teachers; and police officers.	Reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child has been: abused, or is at risk of being abused; ill treated, or is at risk of being ill treated; or exposed or subjected to behaviour that psychologically harms the child. Allegations of abuse, neglect or assault, including sexual assault, of an enrolled child during a care session. Belief on reasonable grounds that child sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring	Department for Child Protection and Family Support Tel. (08) 9222 2555 Country free call: 1800 622 258 a/h: (08) 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008 http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au
NT Any person with reasonable grounds	A belief on reasonable grounds: that a child has been or is likely to be a victim of: physical abuse, sexual abuse emotional/ psychological abuse neglect, exposure to physical violence (e.g. a child witnessing violence between parents at home).	Territory Families Child Abuse Hotline: 1800 700 250 https://nt.gov.au/law/crime/report-child-abuse

Reporting crimes and child protection reporting, in addition to 'mandatory reporting':

1. School ministry

Those engaging in state/church school ministry programs should make sure they are familiar with the policy of the school about reporting. Teachers forming a reasonable belief should inform the Principal, unless the Principal is the alleged abuser. Ensure that your Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team is also informed of the situation. The Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team will then phone the school Principal and ask for proof of action taken, e.g. report number. If the Principal advises they are not making a report, or does not provide a reference number, your Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team will make a report.

2. Allegations against workers (paid or voluntary)

When an allegation of harm is made against an employee or volunteer or where a leader exhibits behaviours that might be deemed abusive or as 'ministry misconduct', the first step is to inform your State Safer Churches Officer. They will assist you in following the reporting process and offer further support.

In some states and territories additional legislation such reportable conduct schemes (NSW, ACT, Victoria), in addition to Mandatory reporting, will require specific action.

Other examples of relevant legislations:

VICTORIA: The 'Betrayal of Trust' reforms include: an offence for people who hold a position of responsibility who fail to protect a child from sexual abuse when they know someone associated with their organisation poses a risk of sexually abusing children, and an offence for individuals who fail to inform the police if they know or believe that a child has been sexually abused, and a Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The Victorian Reportable Conduct scheme requires organisations to respond to allegations of child-related misconduct made against their workers and volunteers, and report those allegations to the Commission for Children and Young People.

Under the scheme, the Commission for Children and Young People will have the power to:

- receive allegations and findings of reportable conduct
- assess an organisation's systems to prevent, notify and investigate reportable conduct
- provide oversight of workplace investigations
- investigate allegations in some circumstances
- refer findings to professional registration bodies and the Working with Children Check Unit
- build the capacity of organisations to respond to allegations of abuse
- report to parliament on performance of the scheme and trends.

(source: <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au>)

In NSW child protection concerns may need to be reported to:

NSW Police - under the Concealment legislation (Section 316 of crimes act) if a serious offence has occurred. Further as of 31 August 2018 'failure to report' and 'failure to protect' legislation apply.

NSW - Reportable Conduct Scheme: In October 2018 the NSW government announced that the NSW Reportable conduct scheme is to be expanded to include religious faiths and is to be moved from the Ombudsman's office to the Office of Children's Guardian (in line with the Royal Commission's recommendations).

The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) - Working with Children Check Act 2012 If a children's or youth worker (paid or voluntary) is the subject of an allegation of sexual misconduct or physical assault, then the church as a reporting body will be required to conduct a workplace investigation and make a report to the Office of the Children's Guardian, on any adverse findings. Reporting bodies must investigate allegations of such conduct to make an informed finding as to whether or not the conduct occurred.

Under Schedule 1 of the Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012, the conduct that must be reported is: (1) sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child, including grooming of a child, (2) any serious physical assault of a child.

The following information is an abridged version of the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian's *Information for reporting bodies: Reporting certain misconduct involving children (OCG: April 2014)* in relation to **Sexual misconduct**.

The term 'sexual offence' encompasses all criminal offences involving a sexual element that are 'committed against, with or in the presence of a child'. Includes (but is not limited to) the following: indecent assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, sexual intercourse and attempted sexual intercourse, possession/dissemination/production of child pornography or child abuse material, using children to produce pornography, grooming or procuring children under the age of 16 years for unlawful sexual activity, deemed non-consensual sexual activity on the basis of special care relationships. All cases involving a sexual offence would also involve sexual misconduct.

The term 'sexual misconduct' includes conduct that does not necessarily equate to a criminal offence. There are three categories of sexual misconduct in addition to sexual offences: crossing professional boundaries, grooming behaviour, and sexually explicit comments or other overtly sexual behaviour.

Crossing professional boundaries: Sexual misconduct includes behaviour that can reasonably be construed as involving an inappropriate and overly personal or intimate: relationship with, conduct towards or focus on; a child or young person, or a group of children or young persons.

Grooming behaviour: Grooming or procuring a child under the age of 16 years for unlawful sexual activity is a sexual offence. However, Schedule 1(2) of the Act also recognises grooming as a form of sexual misconduct. ... Behaviour should only be seen as 'grooming' where there is evidence of a pattern of conduct that is consistent with grooming the alleged victim for sexual activity, and that there is no other reasonable explanation for it.

The types of behaviours that may lead to such a conclusion include (but are not limited to):

- Persuading a child or group of children that they have a 'special' relationship, for example by:
 - spending inappropriate special time with a child
 - inappropriately giving gifts
 - inappropriately showing special favours to them but not other children
 - inappropriately allowing the child to overstep rules
 - asking the child to keep this relationship to themselves
- Testing boundaries, for example by: undressing in front of a child, encouraging inappropriate physical contact (even where it is not overtly sexual), talking about sex and/or 'accidental' intimate touching

- *Inappropriately extending a relationship outside of work (except where it may be appropriate - for example where there was a pre-existing friendship with the child's family or as part of normal social interactions in the community).*
- *Inappropriate personal communication (including emails, telephone calls, text messaging, social media and web forums) that explores sexual feelings or intimate personal feelings with a child. An adult requesting that a child keep any aspect of their relationship secret or using tactics to keep any aspect of the relationship secret, would generally increase the likelihood that grooming is occurring.*

Sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour: While it is not possible to provide a complete and definitive list of unacceptable sexual conduct involving children, the following types of behaviour give strong guidance:

- *sexualised behaviour with or towards a child (including sexual exhibitionism)*
- *inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature*
- *comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner*
- *unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child*
- *personal correspondence and communications (including emails, social media and web forums) with a child or young person in relation to the adult's romantic, intimate or sexual feelings for a child or young person*
- *exposure of children and young people to sexual behaviour of others including display of pornography*
- *watching children undress in circumstances where supervision is not required and it is clearly inappropriate*

ACT Ombudsman - Reportable Conduct Scheme - The Reportable Conduct Scheme in the ACT has been extended to all religious organisations. The reportable conduct scheme addresses employment-related child protection. "Broadly, 'reportable conduct' covers allegations or convictions of child abuse or misconduct toward children. The reportable conduct scheme does not interfere with reporting obligations to ACT Policing or Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) or any other relevant professional bodies." (The ACT Reportable Conduct Scheme: An Introduction - February 2018). For more information about reportable conduct, see The ACT Ombudsman Practice Guide No. 2: Identifying Reportable Conduct on our website: ombudsman.act.gov.au

Responding to concerns about adults

It has become evident to society that children are not the only vulnerable group of people in need of protection.

When responding to your concerns of abuse and other health issues in relation to adults consider:

- 1. Adults are self-determining:** Adults have the right to make decisions about their own lives, so long as the actions are not endangering themselves or others. This means we will need to work with the adult at risk rather than the principle of 'acting in the best interest of the child' used when considering a response in the area of child protection.
- 2. Legal issues:** Sometimes it will be very clear what to do as in allegations of criminal activity toward an adult e.g. sexual harassment or rape.
- 3. Denominational and/or church procedures:** For example all allegations of ministry misconduct or abuse by a leader against vulnerable adults need to be responded to with fairness and due process.
- 4. Pastoral responses:** For concerns about the conduct of people with special needs (e.g. intellectual or physical disability or mental health concern) speak to a pastor who may seek advice from relevant health services. There are times when this will mean utilising the local health services and working with the person and their family to provide comfort, support and access to resources and services.

If you have enquires, seek advice from the Safer Churches Officer at the State ACC office.

2.4 Care for all parties

In responding to Safe Ministry Concerns, one of the important responsibilities the church board and senior leadership have is to pastorally care for all parties impacted by the concern/s.

This will include care for: the person subject of the concern; and often the person subject of allegations; the families involved; leaders who are impacted and those managing the situation.

Each person has a unique response to receiving a disclosure or witnessing situations of harmful behaviours or being a secondary or even tertiary victims of harm. There may be some common reactions such as: shock, anger, sympathy for the victim and frustration. As a leader it can be very distressing to find yourself in this situation.

It is important that parties are provided with appropriate support, and provided ample opportunity to debrief by verbally and emotionally 'unloading' feelings about the experience e.g. of receiving a disclosure or reporting concerns.

Remember that confidentiality will mean that people may not be able to tell their own friends or family the details of the alleged abuse, but simply sharing feelings, without details, can be of help.

Some people may have severe reactions to disclosure which may in some cases have an invasive impact on their ability to function effectively within their ministry and life roles (e.g. eating and sleeping disturbances). If this occurs, contact your supervisor or pastor. It may be necessary to ask people to seek professional help to cope if they are finding usual strategies aren't enough to manage. Investing in good counselling early can help you to maintain a long and effective ministry. Where the church has the capacity, providing appropriate (external) counselling services is recommended.

For more in relation to self care see chapter 3.5 "Self care".

It is a requirement of the Policy to provide opportunities for ACC People to receive debriefing as required. Leader's own past experiences of trauma can be unexpectedly triggered by witnessing/hearing disclosures from others or having concerns for other people. These responses may prevent them approaching anyone directly for debriefing or assistance. As such, the local church leadership is encouraged to offer appropriate support to any leader who has heard a disclosure of abuse or has raised a concern.

Chapter 3

Safe church workers

This chapter aims to develop awareness of:

- the rationale behind the need for safe recruiting practices
- the need for ongoing supervision and training of leaders
- ACC processes for responding to concerns about leaders

The *Policy* defines **ACC People** as:

officers or employees of ACC or its State or National ministries, ACC Credential holders, officers of a Constituent Church, employees, volunteers and other members of a congregation of a Constituent Church who may or will have a Direct Role, contractors (external agents) engaged by the ACC or a Constituent Church who may or will have a Direct Role.

A **Direct Role** is defined as:

a role that includes, or is likely to include, providing services that are directed towards a Child or Young Person (whether in whole or in part), or conducting activities that may involve a Child or Young Person (whether in whole or in part), and includes the supervision of persons in Direct Roles (for example, a board member of a church is in a Direct Role, irrespective of whether they actually work with Children or Young People, because of their overarching supervisory duties).

In the *Policy* we commit to ensuring a Child Safe organisation including:

- *using best practice standards in the recruitment, screening and employment of ACC People.*
- *working to ensure that ACC People do not harm Children or Young People who are involved with our programs, services or facilities.*

This chapter contains the *Guidelines* for appointment and supervision of volunteer workers and information about processes for responding to grievances and allegations of misconduct/abuse.

3.1 Representing God

All those who serve in roles at church; from pastors and staff, boards and ministry councils, team leaders, ministry coordinators, team members and rostered helpers, are all representatives of God and His church. In this manual, all those who serve the church in any role are called 'church workers'.

When we are elected or appointed by our church, whether volunteer or paid, to a position of service, the church is asking us to represent God. That is, the church is saying, we trust you to represent the good news of Jesus and not to make the good news of Jesus into bad news, by harming others.

When church workers understand their role properly they will no longer see themselves as just doing a job but rather as representing God

Rather than a job to be done, ministry will be a privilege, a responsibility, a position of delegated authority to influence others for God. When a person offers to volunteer for service, even if it is a very small role, the senior church workers in the church have a duty of care for that person's safety, and also a responsibility to others, to ensure they are a safe person to represent the church.

This concept of all church workers being "representatives of God" is ultimately about the way that others perceive the role of the church worker, rather than about how the church worker perceives their own role. Consider the 'other person' as a new person coming to the church for the first time, or as a vulnerable person, such as a small child or person with an intellectual disability. If that person sees you 'doing' a task at church, how do they view you? It would be reasonable that they would think that you must be someone who 'works' here, an important person, a person with some degree of influence. In this way, no matter how large or small the role is, all church workers are representatives of God and His church. All church workers could be perceived by the most vulnerable as a trusted person, a representative of the church.

Safe church workers respect other people's boundaries, have other people's best interests at heart, are led by God, and are in accountable, transparent teams.

Jesus gave his disciples a pattern for representing God as servant church workers. Jesus said to his disciples that they were not to be like the workers of this world who lord it over others, but rather to serve, "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:25-28. This may be called servant leadership; it is the way in which non-abusive Christian church workers carry out their positions of trust and power. As church workers we need to be about serving others - being servants, serving like Christ served (Philippians 2:1-8).

3.2 Selecting and appointing church workers

The local church governance board (board) have the responsibility to ensure that church workers (volunteer and paid) are safe to serve in the church.

Selecting and appointing church workers includes ensuring that the practice of due diligence occurs. This is a legal term. In this context it refers to the care that must be taken both in appointing church workers and supervising them.

As such, the formal selection and appointment procedure needs to be one which would withstand the rigours of an investigative enquiry related to your degree of due diligence when selecting and appointing church workers.

The need for rigorous selection, appointment and supervision of church workers who are to work with children is evidenced in the Victorian Child Safety Standard 4: *"Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel"*.

Appointment of Church Workers

Thorough screening and selection of all volunteers paid and volunteer including ACC People is important in ensuring safe environment, for WHS compliance and in terms of ACC People for fulfilling the commitment in the ACC Child Protection Policy.

The guideline herein related to volunteer leaders and paid workers, the local church should have a written process that ensures due diligence.

Considerations for appointment:

- **Determine who has the authority to 'hire' and 'fire'**
 - Who is responsible for appointment and dismissal from a role?
 - Are lines of responsibility clearly communicated?
 - Who can appoint? Who can ask a leader to step down from a ministry or step aside for a period of time, where allegations of serious misconduct arise.
- **Provide role descriptions**

All appointments should be to clearly defined roles, having clear expectations and defined start and end dates for the position. The church will provide you with a role description.
- **Communicate expectations for the role**

For example, leaders are expected to:

 - commit to the aims of the ministry
 - support other ministry team leaders
 - fulfil ministry roles as described by ministry co-ordinators
 - undergo any training required for the ministry position
 - attend ministry team meetings as required
 - embrace the ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct

Leaders can expect that the senior church leadership will:

- provide mechanisms to support and supervise all leaders and ministry coordinators in their roles
- ensure resources (people, financial, administrative access and equipment) are available for approved ministry programs
- provide opportunities to access approved ministry training

- **Recruitment teams**

It is good practice for appointment to be the responsibility of more than one individual, i.e. a team. Where possible, a team should include representatives of both genders. In most cases the team needs no more than 2 to 3 people, including the team leader/ministry coordinator.

- **Minimum attendance prior to volunteering**

It is good practice to have a minimum qualifying period for previously unknown prospective volunteers, whereby they be a regular worshipper of the local ACC Constituent Church for a set length of time as determined by the Local Church Board.

9

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 9

APPOINTMENT OF VOLUNTEER WORKERS (INCLUDING ACC PEOPLE)

All people who have a Direct Role with children, as defined in the ACC CP Policy, in ACC churches **shall** be screened, appointed and inducted using a formal accountable / transparent process (For paid workers and leaders, additional steps may be required as part of the Local Church's written employment process).

As a minimum, it is **recommended** that:

a. Prior to Serving

The Volunteer Church Workers Declaration should be completed. This declaration refers to the working with children/vulnerable people checks (State/Territory Government statutory checks, legally required in many jurisdictions) and the Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct.

b. Induction

WHS legislation requires that all workers are provided with appropriate information/induction training to enable them to safely fulfil their role/s,

i.e. share in the ministry. This induction process should include prayer for the leader and clear communication with those who need to know that this person is an endorsed leader of the church.

c. Ministry Review

It is **recommended** there be a process of annual review of roles for Volunteer Workers. This process should be made clear to applicants at the time of appointment, as part of the induction process. This provides an opportunity for leaders to say they will or will not be available next year/time, which is important for the health of committed teams.

3.3 Supervision

Although thorough recruitment is essential, it is equally important that leaders are supported through ministry supervision. For example: A potential church worker may have great motivation for ministry and all the right gifts for leading in a ministry, at age 22. Their interview to ascertain their suitability for the role may be the best you have ever conducted and their application for ministry and referees may be glowing - a safe church worker! However, will that same church worker be appropriate for the same role in 5 years' time?

What life pressures such as children, death of loved ones, marriage, work, and housing arrangements are impacting upon the church worker? How will these impact his/her ability to lead others?

The components of healthy ministry supervision are: clear role expectations, adequate support for leaders, a commitment to leadership development, a clear set of boundaries (Code of Conduct), and well communicated processes for handling conflict and complaints against leaders.

The *ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit* provides a Ministerial Code of Conduct (SC013) and a Volunteer Code of Conduct (SC014).

Ministry expectations

A key aspect of effective supervision in ministry is linked to clearly understood expectations by leaders and ministry co-ordinators. Below are some guidelines related to ministry expectations.

Relevant ACC codes of conduct also provide a guide as to expectations, as do the Child Protection Policy (Section 9) and the Child Protection Guidelines.

As a church worker you could be expected to:

- commit to the aims of the ministry
- support other ministry team leaders
- fulfill your ministry role as described to you by your ministry co-ordinator
- undergo any training required for your ministry position
- attend ministry team meetings as required
- embrace the relevant code of conduct, policy and procedures

As a person in a ministry role within the church you could expect that your senior church leadership will:

- provide mechanisms to support and supervise all leaders and ministry coordinators in their roles
- ensure resources (people, financial, administrative access and equipment) are available for approved ministry programs
- provide opportunities to access approved ministry training

As a ministry co-ordinator you could be expected to:

- commit to the aims of the ministry
- support ministry team leaders and supervise them in their role
- fulfil your ministry role as described to you
- undergo any training required for your ministry position
- embrace the relevant code of conduct, policy and procedures
- ensure that all leaders are screened, appointed and inducted effectively into ministry roles.
- ensure that your ministry program has been approved by senior church leadership

Support for leaders

Another key aspect of supervision is leader support.

It is recommended that the Local Church Board make adequate provision for formal and informal support for all volunteer and paid workers.

Regardless of the type of mechanism implemented, it is important that all leaders have a clear understanding of:

- to whom they can go for support
- what type of support is available to them

Ministry review

Once a leader has commenced ministry, it is a helpful practice to spend time with them reflecting on how they are fulfilling their ministry role on a regular basis. This can be achieved through formal and/ or informal channels appropriate to the nature of their role. The key purpose is to provide a forum and expectation that a ministry coordinator or supervisor will assist those in ministry leadership to reflect on how they are fulfilling their role. It is not designed to be punitive or a way of removing people from roles per se, but more an opportunity for co-ordinators to affirm their ministry leaders and ensure that healthy practices including ministry–life balance are in place, that leaders are experiencing a healthy spiritual life and support them to reflect on their call to their role on an ongoing basis.

Commit to leadership development

It is recommended that the Local Church Board make adequate provision for developing all leader's skills (paid and volunteer). This may include things like regular team meetings, praying together, eating together and planning together. It is also advisable to invest in leadership development, both through in-house in-services and external training events. This may include a budget item for in-services and the like.

Code of conduct

A code of conduct is helpful for ensuring that leaders are clear on boundaries, given that they have been given delegated authority and a position of power to spiritually influence others.

Codes of conduct are not laws to be added to grace, rather, they are expressions of our respect and commitment to each other's safety.

Consider the code as a way of saying to your team, "I will love you by looking after your best interests. I will help you avoid high risk situations." In this way team members hold each other accountable. It is about peer mentoring and accountability, not wielding a big stick!

A code of conduct relates to expected and appropriate behaviour and accountability. It defines clear behavioural and activity boundaries rather than assume that people know the boundaries. Any person who holds a ministry role is deemed to be a leader and as such is subject to the code.

Promotion of and adherence to the Code by all leaders, assists the church to become accountable to those in its care.

In Victoria, as already stated, a code of conduct for children's workers is a legislated standard (Victorian Child Safe Standard 3).

In cases where serious misconduct is alleged, the use of a process that offers 'procedural fairness' to the person subject to the allegations is required (See Chapter 3.4).

Serious Misconduct: Conduct which, if proven to be more likely to have occurred than not (on the balance of probabilities), or admitted to, would lead to: restrictions being placed on a worker's role, or dismissal from a role or removal from a position (volunteer or paid). Includes: allegations of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, sexually inappropriate behaviour, financial impropriety, bullying behaviours, allegations of domestic and family violence, and criminal activity.

The **ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit** provides a Ministerial Code of Conduct (**SC013**) and a Volunteer Code of Conduct (**SC014**).

10

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 10 SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEER WORKERS (INCLUDING ACC PEOPLE)

All people who have a Direct Role with children, as defined in the ACC CP Policy, in ACC churches **shall** be appropriately supervised in their roles, including being provided with clear behavioural expectations for their role through a code of conduct.

(For paid workers additional supervision may be required as part of the Constituent Church's written employment procedures.)

As a minimum it is **recommended** ACC Constituent churches:

a. Provide adequate support

Local Church Board make adequate provision for formal and informal support for all ACC People. This support should include appropriate debriefing to church workers who are responding to child protection concerns, have experienced a disclosure or have been involved in a serious incident.

b. Develop skills

Local Church Board make adequate provision for developing Volunteer Workers. This may include things like regular team meetings, praying together, eating together and planning together. It is also advisable to invest in leadership development, both through in-house in-services and external training events.

c. Apply the relevant Code of Conduct

See the Ministerial Code of Conduct and Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct at Pastor's Login.

The applicable ACC code of conduct provides clear behavioural boundaries for representing the church.

3.4 Responding to grievances and allegations of misconduct

The Policy expects ACC People to:

- take action to ensure that Children or Young People are protected from harm by identifying and addressing risk factors as soon as practicable.
- work to ensure that ACC People have access to a senior person to assist in making decisions in relation to any action required to protect Children or Young People from harm.

To apply the Policy, local church boards need to be prepared to manage conflicts, grievances and allegations of ministry misconduct and/or abuse between leaders, or between program participants and ACC leaders.

Our pastoral, ethical, legal, denominational, risk management and insurance responsibilities must all be considered as part of the implementation of these processes.

The WHS ACT 2011, applicable in many states and territories, requires accountable and transparent response to complaints, bullying, harassment and abuse processes available to all workers, including volunteers.

The following information applies to the implementation of ACC policy, guidelines and processes.

These processes should be put in writing and clearly communicated to all workers (paid and volunteer).

It is important that all response processes that involve a child or group of children are child centric and accessible to the children.

It is recommended that you seek advice from experts when implementing processes with children. It is also recommended that your church actively and openly communicates your process for responding to grievances and allegations of misconduct to all those who are a part of your church.

National Principle 6, for Child Safe Organisations states:

Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused

- a. The institution has a child-focused complaint handling system that is understood by children, staff, volunteers and families.*
- b. The institution has an effective complaint handling policy and procedure which clearly outline roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints and obligations to act and report.*
- c. Complaints are taken seriously, responded to promptly.*

Circumstances with legal and insurance implications

Legal:

Sexual harassment (Australia)

The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Australia) describes sexual harassment as an unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours or other unwelcome sexual conduct in circumstances where the person doing the harassing knows that the conduct would offend, intimidate or humiliate another person. Sexual conduct includes statements of a sexual nature to a person, or in the presence of a person, whether orally or in writing.

Any complaints of sexual harassment must be managed appropriately and sensitively.

Reasonable steps to minimise sexual harassment include: specific instructions not to sexually harass other employees; training of employees on what behaviour amounts to sexual harassment; a policy outlining employees' responsibility not to sexually harass other employees.

The National WHS Legislation makes it essential to provide a fair and just process for all workers who make sexual harassment allegations.

ACC churches will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment. Allegations are to be referred immediately to the State or National Executive and the appropriate process implemented.

Reportable Conduct Schemes (NSW, ACT and Victoria) These schemes requires organisations to respond to allegations of child-related misconduct made against their workers and volunteers, and report those allegations.

NSW

Reportable Conduct Scheme: In October 2018 the NSW government announced that the NSW Reportable conduct scheme is to be expanded to include religious faiths and is to be moved from the Ombudsman's office to the Office of Children's Guardian (OCG) (in line with the Royal Commission's recommendations) (the timing of this is yet to be announced).

Concealment legislation (Section 316 NSW Crimes Act) There are occasions where people wish to and/or are given the opportunity to 'confess' past sin in order to experience forgiveness and freedom from the sin that binds them. When sin involves illegal activity, it puts the person hearing the confession a situation where they may be required to report the admission. In some States, the law makes it illegal for person/s hearing the confession to not report this crime. For example, Section 316 of the NSW Crimes Act. In such situations please speak to your Safer Churches Person/Team.

Failure to report: All adults in NSW will be required to report information to police if they know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child has been abused.

Failure to protect: In NSW, an adult working in an institution doing child-related work will commit an offence if they know another adult working there poses a serious risk of abusing a child and they have the power to reduce or remove the risk, and they fail to do so.

VIC

Betrayal of trust legislation (Victoria) (Child Safety Standards)

The Betrayal of trust legislation in Victoria includes a criminal charge against those in positions of power who fail to report child abuse.

Further, as part of the legislation there are Seven Child Safety standards, of these 5 relate directly to this area of responding to allegations of misconduct:

- Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of abuse

In such situations please speak to your Local Church Safer Churches Person/Team.

Insurance and known sexual offenders in congregations

The restorative nature of the gospel means that no one is outside the reaches of God's love. God's restoration and grace extends to all people, including those who may have committed past sexual offences, even against children. However, such offences do have some life long consequences. One consequence is that in many ACC churches, there is an insurance implication (exclusion) related to known past sexual offenders attending your church. If you have a concern in relation to a possible known sexual offender, speak to your local church Safer Churches Person/Team.

The ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit SC036 - Known offenders Guideline August 2017

11

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 11 RESPONDING TO CONFLICTS, AND/OR ALLEGATIONS

ACC People **shall** make an appropriate report to the relevant government department and to the relevant ACC State or National Executive, in respect to a Child or Young Person at risk of harm.

ACC People **shall** use the ACC Grievance Procedure when responding to allegations of misconduct and/or abuse by ACC Credential or Certificate holders.

When responding to allegations of misconduct and/or abuse by those who are not ACC Credential or Certificate holders, ACC People **shall** work through an appropriate process which affords natural justice to all parties; your ACC State Safer Churches Officers can provide assistance working through such a process.

In all instances, the Local Church **shall** consider the pastoral, legal and insurance implications of the conflict or allegation and respond with transparency and accountability.

In states and territories where Reportable Conduct Schemes are in place the local board will need to ensure that all reportable conduct matters are investigated according to due process and that the "Balance of Probabilities" burden of proof applied in such workplace investigations. For a sample workplace investigation process see The ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit SC034 Workplace Investigation Process.

It is also important that when responding to an allegation against a church worker that all conflicts of interests are managed appropriately. Refer to the ACC National Conflicts of Interest Guidelines 2015 (ACC Pastors can access this Guideline via their login at acc.org.au).

3.5 Self care

Healthy leaders maintain good self care boundaries by ensuring that they look after themselves. Maintaining self care boundaries in ministry is an expression of loving yourself as Jesus loves you. The concepts of ongoing supervision, coaching, and mentoring can all be important tools for ensuring that you are caring for yourself in ministry. Continuing accreditation programs for recognised ministers are another positive mechanism that assists in ensuring that those in pastoral ministry remain healthy. Self care in ministry relates to ensuring that your health and well-being is in the best place it can be to exercise your various ministry gifts. Be proactive by considering these three key areas: life giving activities; monitoring well-being and taking action when at risk.

i. Life-giving activities:

Life-giving activities are those that lift you up, that lighten your mood and refresh you as opposed to being life-draining. These often energise you, are pleasant and rewarding. They will often link into your areas of passion within your ministry role. However, it is also important to consider activities that are not linked to your ministry role such as: time with God (e.g. bible reading and prayer), hobbies; family time; connecting with others; being kind with yourself (e.g. remembering that it is ok to be upset or worried or frustrated); "treating" yourself in some way; seeking out calming activities; taking a break. Engaging in life-giving activities that are not related to your ministry role is important for keeping a clear perspective, particularly in times when ministry is hard, or when conflicts occur in ministry. It also helps with recovery from the 'giving out' nature of ministry. Remember, Jesus in his earthly ministry often retreated to be with His Father. In considering life-giving activities, ensure you are attending to all of your senses as well as all perspectives of your life, i.e. emotional, physical, cognitive (mental) and spiritual well-being.

ii. Monitoring well-being:

Well-being needs to be considered from multiple perspectives. It may be helpful to consider various perspectives using the metaphor of water tanks. Ask yourself, how full is each of my tanks?



To Ponder...

1. Consider the level of each of your tanks?

The sample shows that this person feels like they are operating at about 40% full physically and around 30% emotionally and cognitively and about 20% spiritually. They are not in good shape to be fulfilling their ministry role.

2. Ask yourself:

a. What is contributing to your level in each tank?

b. What life draining activities/circumstances are contributing to any low levels?

c. What life giving activities might enhance the levels of each tank?

d. Are you in "good enough shape" to be fulfilling your ministry role at the moment? If the answer is "no", then what actions might you need to take?



iii. Taking action when at risk:

Once a person has ascertained that they are not in good shape for ministry by either using the "water tanks" metaphor or some other method, it is important that they speak to their supervisor to discuss their situation at this particular time. It may mean that they need to have a holiday, or a break from their role/s for a time; or have their role tasks adjusted or to have more support in the practicalities of fulfilling their role. Whatever is considered in discussion with a supervisor, it is important to note that if a person has determined that their well-being is at risk if they continue as is, then something needs to change. This is part of a supervisor's duty of care towards the person.

Self care after trauma

There are times in ministry when a leader can be exposed to personal trauma. This might be as a result of situations like conflict in the church; misconduct of a church leader; death or serious injury of someone in the church or inappropriate behaviours and interactions in church life.

Each person has a unique response to being involved in situations where they feel traumatised. Even though general principles of self care apply in most situations, individuals will most likely have some self care needs that are unique to them.

Some general principles in self care after trauma might include:

- If your personal functioning has been impacted, consider taking time out of role for a period
- Advise your supervisor if you have been impacted by trauma in the context of your ministry role
- Consider if you may benefit from professional debriefing and counselling
- Consider what life-giving activities may be of value in assisting you move towards healing from trauma
- Other than professional therapists, consider who may be able to assist you to process the situation that led to the trauma and assist you to move towards healing
- Consider how your physical environment may be adjusted to assist you to move towards healing from trauma
- Consider what changes need to be made in your ministry role to minimise likelihood of further trauma

Addressing personal issues raised by Safe Ministry information and workshops:

Safe Ministry information and workshops provide detailed information about child abuse and neglect. Every child is different, and the impact on child abuse or neglect on any one child will depend not only on the harmful experiences they had as a child, but also on the supports that were available to them at the time, and the experiences they have had since.

If the information and/or workshop has caused you distress or you can't stop thinking about issues it raised, you may find it helpful to talk to someone about your concerns. You may be able to access a confidential employee assistance program through your employment or you may prefer to contact one of the services listed below.

Lifeline: (www.lifeline.org.au) 13 11 14

24/7 telephone support, referral and web-based service finder.

Alcohol and Drug Information Service 1800 422 599

Information and referral support for people using alcohol or drugs and their family and friends.

1800 RESPECT 1800 737 732

24/7 telephone support for anyone impacted by sexual assault, family or domestic violence

Mensline: (www.mensline.org.au) 1300 7899 78

24/7 telephone counselling and referrals, specifically for men.

Parentline: (www.parentline.org.au) 1300 1300 52

Telephone counselling, information and referral service for parents and carers of children 0-18 years.

Chapter 4

Safe Environments

This chapter aims to develop awareness of:

- management of risks in ministry programs
 - strategies for maintaining safe environments
 - responding to incidents
-

4.1 Safe programs

Safe programs are transparent and accountable in relation to both procedures and relationships.

A safe program ensures that the spiritual, physical and emotional environments are safe, and that safe practices are in place to run the program.

Safe programs are prepared for the fact that some activities or situations present more inherent risks than others.

The *ACC Child Protection Policy* contains two purposes directly related to the provision of safe environments:

- *To provide for and promote the care, protection and wellbeing of Children or Young People in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment and the right to be protected from Harm, and to maximise opportunities for Children or Young People to realise their full potential;*
- *To provide for and promote the provision of services that foster the health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity of Children or Young People including by ensuring that persons responsible for Children or Young People within the Movement are appropriately performing their responsibilities;*

These purposes are outworked through our commitment to ensuring child safe organisations, as part of the *Policy*:

- *We will work to create an environment in which Children or Young People are safe and feel safe.*
- *We will work to ensure that ACC People do not harm Children or Young People who are involved with our programs, services or facilities.*

Consideration has given to the participants' ages and cultural backgrounds. For example: the Victorian Child Safe Standards state:

In complying with the child safe standards an applicable entity to which the standards apply must include the following principles as part of their response to each standard:

- *promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children*
 - *promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds*
 - *promoting the safety of children with a disability.*
- (Victorian Child Safe Standards Overview)*

This chapter contains information aimed at helping *ACC People* implement a safe spiritual, emotional and physical environment; these are achieved through implementation of the Safer Churches Guidelines.

Approval for ministry

The local church board is ultimately responsible for any activities that take place in the name of the church. For this reason every ministry program should be approved by the local church board prior to it commencing.

There are a number of considerations to be mindful of when establishing a safe ministry event or program, these considerations might be called an Approval for Ministry Process.

The key components to consider include:

- Program has been outlined and required resources identified
- Appropriate leaders have been recruited, screened and selected
- Adequate supervision for ministry and activities has been arranged
- Appropriate activities have been selected
- Level of risks for activities have been assessed and minimised
- Programs and resources are developed
- Ministry approval has been given by the church governance body.
- Activities are monitored and reviewed
- Ministry leaders are supervised and accountability mechanisms are in place

13

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 13 ANNUAL PROGRAM APPROVAL

It is **recommended** that all Children or Young People's programs be approved by the Local Church Board through a formal, annual written approval process.

4.2 Identifying and Managing Risks

Risk Management is the process of managing your church's exposure to the possibility of such things as economic or financial loss or gain, physical damage, injury or delay, as a consequence of pursuing or not pursuing a particular course of action. The concept of risk includes the; perception that something could happen; likelihood of it occurring and consequence if it does occur.

Every ministry program/ event and activity has risks. Some risks will be managed at a whole church level, like due diligence in relation to leaders, or the overall WHS risks that are similar across the church.

What is Risk Management?

Risk management is the process of managing your church's exposure to potential liabilities. It does this by identifying risks in order to prevent them or reduce them, and by providing funds to meet any liability if it occurs.

It can be a useful exercise to do a risk assessment for your ministry/program at least annually. This does not replace a Hazard Identification. The Risk Assessment looks at what might happen, whereas Hazard Identification looks at what is present at the program at a specific time.

Considers five key areas:

1. How likely is this risk?
2. What is the consequence should it occur?
3. What is the overall level of risk?
4. What does this level of risk require to be managed appropriately?
5. How adequately are we managing this risk?

Descriptions and Ratings

Likelihood, i.e. what are the chances the risk situation will occur during your ministry/program?

Very likely	Occurs routinely and can be expected to occur
Likely	Occurs often and a good chance to happen
Moderate	Should occur at sometime
Unlikely	Could possibly occur at some time
Very unlikely	Could possibly occur but would be in exceptional circumstances

Risk Matrix

Consequence	INTOLERABLE	Significant	High	High	High	High
	MAJOR	Significant	Significant	High	High	High
	MODERATE	Medium	Medium	Significant	Significant	High
	MINOR	Low	Low	Medium	Significant	Significant
	INSIGNIFICANT	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Significant
		VERY UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY	MODERATE	LIKELY	VERY LIKELY
Likelihood						

Consequence, i.e. What harm could result if the situation occurred?

INSIGNIFICANT	No likely injuries to person, no property damage, no financial loss, no effect on reputation, no disruption to the ministry/program, aims/goals still achieved
MINOR	First Aid treatment for person, minor property damage, small financial loss, little impact on reputation, little disruption, most aims/goals achieved
MODERATE	Medical treatment to self or others, significant property damage, intervention by outside agency needed, significant financial loss, some damage to reputation, moderate disruption to ministry/ program, some of the aims/goals achieved
MAJOR	Extensive injuries or permanent impairment likely, major property damage, significant outside intervention, major financial loss, significant damage to reputation, major disruption to ministry/ program, most of the aims/goals not achieved
INTOLERABLE	Permanent impairment or death, property damage irretrievable, permanent intervention required (organisational church leadership), financial cost leading to closure, irretrievable damage to reputation, ministry/program unable to be continued, none of the aims/goals achieved

The **ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit** provides a Hazard Identification and Control measures form (**SC039**) and a Risk Assessment Management Guide (**SC043**).

14

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 14 MANAGING EVENT AND/OR PROGRAM RISKS

It is **recommended** that ministry coordinators manage individual program risk according to risk management good practice, including annual risk management as part of the annual program approval process.

4.3 Health and Safety

Health and safety is a common law duty of care responsibility.

In addition to this common law duty of care, the Work Health and Safety Act (WH&S Act) places specific responsibilities for health and safety on all people. For example the WHS Act Section 19 places a responsibility on the 'Person Conducting the Business or Undertaking' (PCBU) to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the physical and psychological health and safety of all workers (which includes volunteers).

Note: The WH&S Act has been passed (albeit with amendments) in all states and territories apart from Victoria and Western Australia who operate on state based legislation.

Extracts from the Work Health & Safety Act 2011:

The main object of this Act is to provide for a balanced and nationally consistent framework to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces... including...

- protecting workers and other persons against harm to their health, safety and welfare through the elimination or minimisation of risks arising from work; and
- providing for fair and effective workplace representation, consultation, co-operation and issue resolution in relation to work health and safety; and ...
- promoting the provision of advice, information, education and training in relation to work health and safety; and ...
- In furthering subsection (1)(a), regard must be had to the principle that workers and other persons should be given the highest level of protection against harm to their health, safety and welfare from hazards and risks arising from work as is reasonably practicable.

Section 5 *Meaning of person conducting a business or undertaking:* For the purposes of this Act, a person conducts a business or undertaking: whether the person conducts the business or undertaking alone or with others; and whether or not the business or undertaking is conducted for profit or gain.

Section 7 *Meaning of worker:* A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as: an employee; or a contractor or subcontractor; or an employee of a contractor or subcontractor; or an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking; or an outworker; or an apprentice or trainee; or a student gaining work experience; or a volunteer; or a person of a prescribed class.

Section 17 *Management of risks:* A duty imposed on a person to ensure health and safety requires the person: to eliminate risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable; and if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate risks to health and safety, to minimise those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

Section 19 *Primary duty of care:* A person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of:

- workers engaged, or caused to be engaged by the person; and
- workers whose activities in carrying out work are influenced or directed by the person;
- while the workers are at work in the business or undertaking.
- A person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from work carried out as part of the conduct of the business or undertaking.

Section 28 *Duties of workers:* While at work, a worker must:

- (a) take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety; and
- (b) take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons; and
- (c) comply, so far as the worker is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the person conducting the business or undertaking to allow the person to comply with this Act; and
- (d) co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure of the person conducting the business or undertaking relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been notified to workers.

Section 29 *Duties of other persons at the workplace:* A person at a workplace (whether or not the person has another duty under this Part) must:

- (a) take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety; and
- (b) take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons; and
- (c) comply, so far as the person is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the person conducting the business or undertaking to allow the person conducting the business or undertaking to comply with this Act.

Section 219 Compliance with WHS undertaking: A person must not contravene a WHS undertaking made by that person that is in effect. Penalty: (a) In the case of an individual—\$50 000. (b) In the case of a body corporate—\$250 000.

SMR recommends that local churches in states where WHS legislation applies appoint a WHS team and implement appropriate policy and procedures.

As far as is reasonably practicable, the church governance body will provide and maintain:

- *a safe working environment and safe systems of work*
- *all plant and substances in safe condition*
- *facilities for the welfare of workers*
- *information, instruction, training and supervision that is reasonably necessary to ensure that each worker is safe from injury and risks to health*
- *a commitment to consult and co-operate with workers in all matters relating to health and safety.*
- *a commitment to continually improve our performance through effective safety management.*

Workers will:

- *comply with safe work practices, with the intent of avoiding injury to themselves and others and damage to plant and equipment*
- *take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and others*
- *wear personal protective equipment and clothing where necessary*
- *comply with reasonable directions relating to health and safety issues*
- *not misuse or interfere with anything provided for health and safety*
- *report all accidents, incidents and hazards*

(adapted from Canberra and Goulburn Anglican Diocese)

12

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 12 COMPLIANCE WITH WHS LEGISLATION

It is **recommended** even in states where there is no legislated WHS requirement that each ACC Church:

- Elect a Health & Safety Team to oversee implementation of WHS compliance.
- Write and implement Health and Safety policies, including privacy policy and evacuations procedures.
- Keep Health and Safety on the agenda at the Local Church Board team meetings.
- Notify incidents such as serious events and dangerous incidents within a prescribed period to the Health & Safety Team.
- Address health and safety concerns within a timely manner of the concern being communicated to the Health & Safety Team.
- Notify incidents such as serious events and critical incidents within a prescribed period to the Health & Safety Team.
- Use incident report documentation to report serious incidents to your insurer and your ACC State Safer Churches Officer.
- Ensure all workers know and follow the church's abuse reporting and grievance procedures.
- Have the Health & Safety Team undertake a safe environment audit of the church centre at least twice a year.

Note: In States & Territories where the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Legislation applies to churches this guideline is written to assist with compliance to the WHS Act.

4.4 Emotional and spiritual environments

To ensure that people are safe, the physical environment is only part of what must be considered. In Chapter one, we discussed the gift of boundaries. This includes people's emotions and spiritual development. In fact many more people leave the church due to a feeling or perception that their emotional and or spiritual boundaries have been violated (harmed intentionally or unintentionally), rather than due to a physical injury.

Safe emotional and spiritual environments

This is fundamentally about putting other people's needs before our own agenda to ensure that a program runs successfully, respecting personhood, i.e. valuing individuals (background, personality, hopes, dreams and fears). It is about fostering a welcoming and caring ministry space, where people feel safe to share their ideas without being ridiculed.

Additionally, consider the areas below in your planning and preparation for events and programs.

Handling private information appropriately

Obtaining information about people is essential if we are to be equipped to care for them, not only physically but also emotionally. We need to respect people's information especially in critical situations or emergencies and guardianship issues. Where appropriate, dependent upon the age and vulnerabilities of program participants, obtain the person's name and a contact phone number. When it is apparent that the person is going to be attending fairly regularly, it may be necessary to formally obtain information. Please consider the principles in the National Privacy Act i.e: that private information is only collected if necessary; individuals concerned are advised of its intended use; personal information collected is stored securely and not divulged to others without the consent of the individual involved; any personal information the church is holding which is no longer required, is out of date or incorrect, is either destroyed or amended to be accurate.

Use *permissions form* for giving permission in situations including but not limited to:

- collecting, retaining and distributing of personal information of church members
- taking photos of church members in church contexts
- displaying photos of church members in hard copy or electronic forms such as church websites or social media sites
- providing details of persons appearing in photos in either hard or electronic forms.

Responding to the needs of the individual

When sharing in ministry our starting point should be, "How can I serve you?" It is important not to predetermine how much physical contact, or how many words, Bible verses, or 'your solutions' you need to provide a person with. Minister to the person. This is not based on the need of the leader to provide comfort. Ask a person what they need from you, e.g. "Would you like me to pray for you?" Touch, counsel, and emotional support is provided for the other person's well-being, not for your own ego or to meet your emotional needs.

Exercising principles of appropriate ministry interactions

Another aspect of the emotional environment includes our interactions during ministry. It includes our use of tone, volume and physical interactions either face to face or through electronic communication media.

Respect diversity

People may come to church programs with a variety of cultural norms and expectations. We need to be aware of the expectations, taboos, sensitivities and/or story that may exist in the cultural settings in which we minister.

Consider activities that may cause a problem culturally for those involved. If you suspect an activity could be a problem, ask the program participant or their family prior to asking them to take part.

Value the different cultural traditions and heritages of Australian indigenous and other cultural groups in our churches particularly when it comes to matters of child-raising and parenting.

As already stated, in the state of Victoria all seven Child Safe Standards must be implemented protecting the cultural safety of children with Aboriginal and culturally diverse background.

The power of the role model

The behaviour of leaders is observed at all times. Followers are quick to discern inconsistency between words and actions, and credibility can be lost if they perceive inconsistencies. In terms of children, they are likely to model the behaviours they see modelled by the people who are influential in their lives. If a child admires a leader, then they are likely to imitate the behaviours of that leader. As leaders, if we are discouraging, unreasonably punitive, disrespectful or sarcastic, this is what we are modelling. It can become a case of a leader “reaping what they have sowed”.

The power of words

Since words as well as actions can be misinterpreted, it is wise for leaders to think about what impact their words have. Leaders have a responsibility to ensure that their conversations are not abusive or offensive within the normal range of these terms. People will from time to time take offence at what we say, but our responsibility is to not be offensive or derogatory in our conversation with others. A general principle to be embraced by all leaders is to consider the impact of their words and actions before they speak or act.

If it is necessary to speak to a program participant privately, it is wise to inform your team leader or another member of your team of the intention to do so. This removes the risk of supposition by others looking on, that anything inappropriate could be happening.

When speaking with a program participant individually, do so ‘privately in a public setting.’ That is, move a few metres away from the rest of the group, but stay within the view of all of the group. This allows a leader to have a private conversation without others hearing what is being discussed.

Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication refers to all methods or channels of communication which do not use words. It includes body language, physical characteristics and appearance, the distance one person stands from another, the physical environment and the use of time. The use of all of these categories of non-verbal communication sends powerful messages to others.

A general understanding of the impact of distance and personal space is also useful for leaders. Most people need a certain degree of space between them and others. In most cases people can cope with others invading their personal space from the side. However, most do not tolerate invasion either in front or behind. It is useful for leaders to consider the distances they stand or sit from the people they are leading and determine if they may be making the person uncomfortable, because they are operating within an inappropriate space for a task.

Exercise safe practices when praying for children and young people

In general prayer as part of a ministry program ensure that parents are aware that prayer is part of a ministry program. Where a parent requests that their child or young person does not participate in individual prayer, it must be respected.

In the case of prayer for healing or specific charismatic gifts:

- permission must be sought and received from parents prior to praying for child or young person
- permission must be sought and given by the child or young person prior to praying for them
- advise parents of outcome of prayer

The use of electronic communication in ministry interactions

The use of the electronic communication mediums (such as telephone, email, social networking sites such as Facebook, and SMS) are a part of everyday life for many people in our ministry units. As leaders it is important that we consider how we can use this form of communication appropriately. We need to be mindful of the positional power dynamic that exists between those in church leadership and those under their care in pastoral relationships. This applies to all ministry relationships regardless of the age of the people involved.

We need to be mindful that electronic communication may be used to test or violate relational boundaries or even as a way to foster relationships for the purpose of preying on those who are vulnerable.

The following principles may be of value to consider when exercising safe ministry practices through the use of electronic communication in a ministry setting.

- Practise transparency and accountability in interactions
- Practise courtesy and engage in respectful interactions
- Practise privacy principles
- Practise care in social networking

15

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 15

SAFE SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS IN MINISTRY PROGRAMS & EVENTS

ACC constituent churches **shall** provide safe spiritual and emotional environments including a commitment to:

- servant leadership in our ministry to all people,
- upholding National Privacy Act principles,
- respect for diversity culturally, e.g. the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds,
- the safety of children with a disability.

The ACC Child Protection Policy states that ACC people **shall**:

- put the rights of a Child or Young Person to the protection from harm ahead of any cultural and religious practices of families who come to our Churches.

No cultural or religious belief will take precedence over the right of Children or Young People to protection from harm.

- understand and respond to the special needs of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities.

We acknowledge that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities have special needs. We expect ACC People to act in ways that communicate effectively with and are supportive of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities. We also understand that we will need to be proactive in recognising the additional vulnerability to harm that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities experience.

- to be respectful of Children or Young People.

As part of our commitment to Children or Young People, we will facilitate opportunities for Children or Young People to tell us their views and feedback about the services we provide to them. We will treat Children or Young People as individuals and respect their unique abilities and vulnerabilities. We expect ACC People to express attitudes and engage in behaviour that respects and supports Children or Young People (ACC Child Protection Policy)

4.5 Physical Environments

Providing safe physical environments is important if attendees are to participate freely in activities. To ensure that both leaders and ministry program participants are kept as safe as reasonably practicable, consider completing a risk assessment and action plan for your ministry program, as suggested in the Approval for Ministry Process. Completing the Approval for Ministry Process will provide transparency and accountability to the congregation and community in terms of a written risk assessment of your program or ministry event annually.

The **ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit** provides Sample Safe Physical Environment Procedures (SC045).

16

ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 16 SAFE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

It is **recommended** for the safe running of Children's and Young People's programs and events that the following matters are considered:

FIRST AID including:

- At least one on-site leader should have current first aid training, e.g. St John Ambulance.
- A suitable, up-to-date and accessible first aid kit is to be available at all times.

TRANSPORTATION including:

- Responsible, road-rule abiding transportation is to be provided.
- Never be alone in a car with a Child or Young Person.
- At no time should there be more passengers in a car than the number of seat belts that are in working order and available for use.
- All cars will be registered, in good working order and driven by licensed drivers abiding by any licence restrictions (e.g. Provisional licence passenger conditions)
- If a Child/Young Person is travelling in a vehicle driven by a worker who possesses a provisional licence, prior written consent should, wherever possible, be given by a parent/guardian, except in the case of emergencies.

FOOD SAFETY including:

- Prepare a Food Preparation & Storage Practices Guide
- Display Food Preparation and Storage Practices Guide in the kitchen or food preparation area.
- Checking with local council to ensure compliance with local requirements in relation to food handling.

SUPERVISION NUMBERS including:

ACC People should ensure that adequate numbers of leaders are present to supervise the program.

Precise numbers of leaders are hard to determine and will depend greatly on the size of the group, their age and the level of physical and or emotional risk inherent to the activity.

Programs aimed at younger Children and the disabled require more supervision due to the increased level of risk involved.

No matter what size the group is, ensure enough leaders so as to cope with any accidents and/or critical incidents that may occur.

An example may be requiring a minimum of two adult leaders on site for all programs in addition to the leader to participant ratio of 1:10. This will allow for safe supervision if and when accidents or critical incidents occur. Of course, many more leaders will be needed for high-risk activities such as taking Children or Young People off-site, swimming, bushwalks, games nights or the like, or if the group is large.

It is **recommended** that ACC People running Children's or Young People's programs:

- make the distinction between those adults who are part of the team, and who are junior leaders (under 18 years). Junior leaders are not to be counted in the supervision ratios.

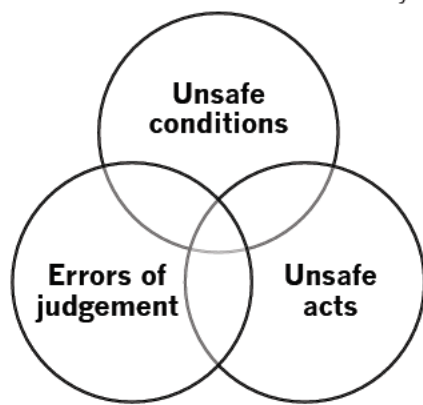
- use adult helpers over the age of 18 who are not leaders of the group, but rather are present on-site for supervision purposes. Such adult helpers, though still Volunteer Workers, would not actually run activities, whereas junior ministry leaders may run many. Adult helpers are important to help ensure the safety of the Children or Young People.
- do not allow leaders or helpers to be alone, one-on-one, with a Child or Young Person. One adult with a small group may be fine as long as there are other adults on site. Where possible, have both male and female leaders to provide support for both boys and girls.
- In relation to camps or overnight settings, it is not advisable that leaders sleep in the same room as Children or Young People. Leaders should be sleeping in a designated leader's space (cabin) nearby.

MANAGEMENT OF HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES including:

- For high risk and off-site activities: e.g. water sports, swimming excursions, white water rafting/ caving/bungy jumping, inflatable sumo suit wrestling, gladiator games, horse-riding, high ropes activities, roller blading/skating, skateboarding or activities involving live animals, an employee/ leader with appropriate (certified) training for the event should be running the activity.
- Active supervision is also required at all times. Supervisors must not be involved in any additional activities that will distract from their role as a supervisor.
- All participants involved in high risk activities should have a signed liability release from each parent/guardian. However, it is important to note that a liability release form does not actually indemnify against an accident. Individual leaders may be protected where all due care has been taken, but a church may still be deemed liable, where duty of care failures are proven.
- Contact the church's insurance broker/company contact for advice before running high risk activities as some high risk injuries may be excluded from the Church's liability cover.

4.6 Responding to Incidents

While we all hope that they will never occur people do have accidents and there are emergencies. At these times the health and safety of the person is of paramount concern and it may be necessary for a leader to administer first aid to a person.



Incidents

An incident is an undesired event which resulted or could have resulted in harm, damage or loss. Whilst some incidents are unavoidable, other incidents may have resulted from unsafe conditions, unsafe acts and/or errors of judgment. When two or more of these factors are present, the likelihood of an incident resulting is higher.

Critical incidents

A critical incident is an event or set of circumstances that have the potential to result in physical or psychological outcomes ranging

from mild trauma to a fatality for one or more people.

A critical incident response plan is a systematic approach to planning and implementing an immediate and long-term response to a critical incident. A *Critical Incident Response Plan* should be accessible from your *Church Safety Team*.

It has three main stages.

- preparedness
- response
- recovery

The **ACC Safer Churches Implementation Kit** provides a Sample Incident report form (**SC046**) and a Critical Incident Response Plan (**SC047**).

**ACC SAFER CHURCHES GUIDELINE 17
RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS**

When responding to incidents, ACC People **shall**:

- Respond to incidents appropriately and promptly and take adequate follow up action.
- Use of report forms: Injuries or accidents requiring secondary medical attention, e.g. visit to a doctor or medical centre are to be written up on an incident report.
- Incidents of a serious nature need to be reported to the National Executive insurance contact and for further reporting requirements.
- Report all incidents to parents and/or care-givers of Children and Young People, and in instances where the impact has been felt by a wider group, report, with the permission of those involved in the incident, to the wider concerned group.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This Child Protection Policy is a Policy of the ACC Movement that reflects the moral and ethical standards of the Movement pursuant to Article 16.1 of the United Constitution.

1 PURPOSE OF OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Australian Christian Churches (ACC) is a movement of Pentecostal Churches in voluntary cooperation. Each individual church is self-governing, but commits itself to work together with other churches in the movement for the purpose of mutual support and the spread of the gospel in Australia and the world. ACC strives for an inclusive approach that is committed to providing opportunities for all people to have caring relationships. Caring about the welfare of Children or Young People is a serious consideration and ACC is committed to protecting Children or Young People.

It is the responsibility of all at ACC, from the National and State Executives, constituent ministers to staff, pastoral care and volunteers, to understand the important responsibility they have:

- To provide for and promote the care, protection and wellbeing of Children or Young People in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment and the right to be protected from Harm, and to maximise opportunities for Children or Young People to realise their full potential;
- To provide for and promote the provision of services that foster the health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity of Children or Young People including by ensuring that persons responsible for Children or Young People within the movement are appropriately performing their responsibilities;
- To promote caring attitudes and responses towards Children or Young People, so that the need for appropriate nurture, care and protection is understood, risks to a Child's wellbeing are quickly identified, and any necessary support, protection or care is promptly provided;
- To recognise the family as the primary means of providing for the nurture, care and protection of Children or Young People and to accord high priority to supporting and assisting the family to carry out its responsibilities to Children or Young People;
- To promote and recognise the need to strengthen, preserve and promote positive relationships between the Child and the Child's parent, family members, leaders, mentors, spiritual advisors and significant others; and

- To provide for and promote a Child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access an ACC program, service or managed facility.

2 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

The ACC Child Protection Policy has been adopted nationally by the ACC through its supreme governing body, the National Conference, and is binding on Credential Holders and Constituent Churches. It consists of a set of principles and procedural benchmarks that underpin the other policies and procedures in relation to the protection of Children or Young People that the ACC and its Constituent Churches have in place for their Ministers, staff, volunteers and other members of a congregation.

3 HOW DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO THE ACC CONSTITUENT CHURCHES?

It is a requirement of the ACC National and State Executives and Constituent Churches to adopt the ACC Child Protection Policy or use it as a minimum standard.

4 WHO IS COVERED BY THE ACC CHILD PROTECTION POLICY?

The ACC Child Protection Policy covers all ACC People.

5 DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS POLICY

Term	Definition
ACC People	ACC People includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • officers or employees of ACC or its State or National ministries, • ACC Credential holders, • officers of a Constituent Church, • employees, volunteers and other members of a congregation of a Constituent Church who may or will have a Direct Role, • contractors (external agents) engaged by the ACC or a Constituent Church who may or will have a Direct Role.
Child/Children or Young Person/People	The ACC considers a Child or Young Person to be a person under the age of eighteen years.
Child Protection Policy	The Child Protection Policy is this document that defines the principles that are implemented to ensure that Children or Young People who access a program, service or facility are protected from harm by Ministers, staff, volunteers and other members of a congregation. The ACC Child Protection Policy has been adopted by the National Conference April 2015.
Child Protection Practice Guidelines	The ACC National Executive may develop and promulgate practice and behaviour guidelines to identify, and so prevent, behaviour that may be harmful to the Children or Young People in our church communities. Such guidelines may further identify how to appropriately deal with unacceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with Children or Young People.
Constituent Church	A Constituent Church includes a Registered Church, a Provisional Church and a Satellite or Extension Service as defined in the United Constitution of ACC.
Direct Role	A role that includes, or is likely to include, providing services that are directed towards a Child or Young Person (whether in whole or in part), or conducting activities that may involve a Child or Young Person (whether in whole or in part), and includes the supervision of persons in Direct Roles (for example, a board member of a church is in a Direct Role, irrespective of whether they actually work with Children or Young People, because of their overarching supervisory duties).
Emotional or psychological abuse	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a Child or Young Person does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a Child or Young Person. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviors continue to an extent that results

	in significant damage to the Child or Young Person's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing or development.
Grooming	Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a Child or Young Person, or the family unit of the Child or Young Person, with a view to abusing the Child or Young Person at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of Children or Young People. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The Child or Young Person may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a Child or Young Person in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom Children or Young People but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by SMS.
Harm	Harm, to a Child or Young Person, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the Child or Young Person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or • sexual abuse or exploitation; • a single act, omission or circumstance; or • a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Member of a congregation	Member of a congregation is an individual who participates in an ACC or Constituent Church activity, program, service or facility.
Physical abuse	Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a Child or Young Person to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally, or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a Child or Young Person. Physically abusive behavior includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning and kicking. It also includes giving Children or Young People harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a Child or Young Person at risk of being hurt
Risk	A Child or Young Person is at risk of harm if harm has not yet occurred but is likely to occur in the future, given risk factors identified in the present. A Child or Young Person may be assessed as in need of protection if the level of future risk is identified as likely (probable), not just possible (may occur); the probable harm will have a significant detrimental effect on the Child or Young Person if it does occur; and there is not a parent able and willing to protect the Child or Young Person from future significant harm.

Sexual abuse	Sexual abuse occurs when a person with a position of power involves a Child or Young Person in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the Child or Young Person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a Child or Young Person, engaging Children or Young People to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a Child or Young Person's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a Child or Young Person. Encouraging a Child or Young Person to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging Children or Young People to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.
Sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation occurs when Children or Young People are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos whether published on the internet or not. Exploitation can also involve Children or Young People who are forced into prostitution.

6 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE ACC CHILD PROTECTION POLICY?

The ACC National Conference is responsible for the development and endorsement of the ACC Child Protection Policy. It delegates the implementation of the ACC Child Protection Policy to the ACC National and State Executives and Constituent Churches. The role of each entity in relation to the implementation and enforcement of the ACC Child Protection Policy is detailed in the table below.

Entity	Role/Responsibility
ACC National Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the ACC commitment to the ACC Child Protection Policy; Support review on an annual cycle as a minimum, of the ACC Child Protection Policy or at a time governed by legislation, regulations or organisational learnings that requires a change to the ACC Child Protection Policy; Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to Child protection; Advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children or Young People in support of this Policy.
ACC State Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the ACC Child Protection Policy is implemented and adhered to by the State Executive and Constituent Churches and ACC Credential Holders;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all ACC People understand their obligations in accordance with the ACC Child Protection Policy; • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation; • Advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children or Young People in support of this Policy; • Proactively share resources and experience in the development of Child safe initiatives as they are identified; • Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of Child protection.
Constituent Churches and Credential Holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all ACC People within the respective Constituent Church understand, and adhere to, their obligations in accordance with the ACC Child Protection Policy; • Advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children or Young People in support of this Policy; • Develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of Child protection. • It is acknowledged that not all Credential Holders will have sufficient influence to achieve these objectives with a Constituent Church, but it is expected, as a minimum, that a Senior Minister and/or their appointee/s will have such influence.

7 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF CORRESPONDING CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICE GUIDELINES?

The role of developing and implementing corresponding Child Protection Practice Guidelines in accordance with the relevant State/Territory legal obligations rests with the ACC National Executive (or its delegate).

The ACC State Executive and Constituent Churches are required to adopt the approved Child Protection Practice Guidelines (or for Constituent Churches, an alternative guideline that is at least consistent with the Child Protection Practice Guidelines).

As Child or Young Person protection is a matter affecting the national Movement, the administration and enforcement of the Child Protection Policy and the approved Child Protection Practice Guidelines shall be vested in the State Executive and Constituent Churches in consultation with the National Executive.

In accordance with article 9.7 of the ACC United Constitution, in circumstances where the National Executive considers the interests of the Movement within a State are in serious jeopardy it may intervene so as to replace the role of the State Executive in all respects for such period as it determines.

In the statements which follow, references to “we” and “our” are references to the ACC National Executive, the ACC State Executives, Constituent Churches and Credential Holders.

8 WHAT IS OUR COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Australian Christian Churches and Constituent Churches recognise that Children or Young People under the age of 18 years need special care and protection.

ACC makes the following commitments to the Children or Young People and families who access its activities, programs, services and facilities.

Our commitment to Children or Young People

- We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all Children or Young People who access any of our activities, programs, services or facilities.
- We are committed to providing Children or Young People with positive and nurturing experiences.
- We will support families and communities to promote Children or Young People’s healthy development and wellbeing.
- We will take action to ensure that Children or Young People are protected from harm by identifying and addressing risk factors as soon as practicable.
- We will take action to ensure that Children or Young People are not harmed during the time that they are involved with any of our activities, programs, services or facilities.
- We will ensure that Children or Young People have access to adequate support to promote safety and intervene early.

We will listen to Children or Young People and appropriately address any concerns that they raise with us in the least intrusive way possible that is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the Child or Young Person from harm and promote the Child or Young Person’s development.

Our commitment to parents and carers

- We are committed to supporting parents and carers to protect their Children or Young People.
- We will offer assistance that builds on a family’s strengths, is sensitive to their cultural and religious beliefs and empowers them to meet the changing needs of their Children or Young People.
- We are committed to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their Children or Young People if it is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the Child or Young Person from harm and promote the Child or Young Person’s development.
- We aim to be transparent in our decision-making with parents and carers as long as doing so does not compromise the safety of Children or Young people.
- We will seek to involve parents whenever possible and practicable in the decision-making process that impacts on them and the Children or Young People.
- We will provide opportunities for formal debriefing and/or counselling families of Children or Young People who have experienced abuse and any other family in the community who may indirectly be affected by an incident.

Our commitment to ACC People

In order to fulfill our obligations to the protection of Children or Young People, the ACC National Executive, ACC State Executive and Constituent Churches make the following commitments to ACC People.

- We are committed to providing ACC People with the necessary support to enable them to fulfill their roles.
- We will put in place a management structure that supports and develops ACC People in their roles.
- We are committed to providing ACC People with regular supervision and development.
- We will work to ensure that ACC People have access to a senior person to assist in making decisions in relation to any action required to protect Children or Young People from harm.

Our commitment to ensuring a Child safe organisation

- We are committed to using best practice standards in the recruitment, screening and employment of ACC People.
- We will work to create an environment in which Children or Young People are safe and feel safe.
- We will work to ensure that ACC People do not harm Children or Young People who are involved with our programs, services or facilities.

9 WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS OF ACC PEOPLE IN RELATION TO PROTECTING CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE?

The following are requirements of this Policy which are to be reflected by the approved Child Protection Practice Guidelines, codes of conduct and operational procedures developed and implemented by the ACC National Executive or Constituent Churches.

We expect ACC People to understand Children or Young People's rights.

Children or Young People have a right to be safe, and this Policy is aimed at ensuring the safety of Children or Young People.

We expect ACC People to understand and acknowledge the significance of family relationships for Children or Young People.

Children or Young People's experience of their family is foundational for their development. Families can act as supportive resources for growth and resilience in Children or Young People. Family relationships can also restrain and harm Children or Young People's social, physical, cognitive and emotional development. Families are the single most significant influence in shaping the way Children or Young People develop and perceive their sense of identity. We expect ACC People to recognise, respect and work to strengthen the capacities of parents/carers and other family members to care and protect their Children or Young People.

We expect ACC People to make available information about this Policy to Children or Young People and parents/carers. The information will be made available in developmentally appropriate language and translated to accommodate the main communities that access our services.

We expect ACC People to put the rights of a Child or Young Person to the protection from harm ahead of any cultural and religious practices of families who come to our Churches.

No cultural or religious belief will take precedence over the right of Children or Young People to protection from harm.

We expect ACC People to understand and respond to the special needs of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities.

We acknowledge that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities have special needs. We expect ACC People to act in ways that communicate effectively with and are supportive of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities. We also understand that we will need to be proactive in recognising the additional vulnerability to harm that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities experience.

We expect ACC People to be respectful of Children or Young People.

As part of our commitment to Children or Young People, we will facilitate opportunities for Children or Young People to tell us their views and feedback about the services we provide to them. We will treat Children or Young People as individuals and respect their unique abilities and vulnerabilities. We expect ACC People to express attitudes and engage in behaviour that respect and support Children or Young People.

We expect ACC People to act on any concerns raised by Children or Young People and/or their parents/carers.

We will take seriously any concerns or issues raised by Children or Young People and/or their parents. We will investigate all complaints or allegations made against any of ACC People. We will ensure that we promptly report any suspected, alleged or reported crimes against Children or Young People or other family members to the police or other authorised body in accordance with the policies and operational procedures of the ACC at a local level. We expect ACC People to follow our complaints procedure without hesitation in response to concerns raised by Children or Young People and/or their parents/carers.

We expect ACC People to understand the definitions, indicators and impact of harm on Children or Young People.

Experiences of harm are significant sources of trauma for Children or Young People and intensify the risk of Children or Young People developing a range of emotional, psychological, social and behavioural problems. Child physical abuse and sexual abuse is a crime. Intervention which identifies and prevents abuse from occurring is instrumental in supporting Children or Young People and families. When abuse has occurred, it is imperative that action is taken to protect Children or Young People from further experiences of abuse. Where there is a risk of harm, it is also imperative that action is taken to protect the Child or Young Person from that risk eventuating. We expect ACC People to know how to define harm, be aware of its indicators and understand its consequences. The more informed we are, the more effective we will be in our efforts to protect Children or Young People from all forms of harm.

We expect ACC People to know and follow regulations in relation to the care of Children or Young People.

There are number of regulations governing the provision of Child care. These regulations

define our minimum responsibilities and obligations towards Children or Young People and families. We expect all ACC People to know and follow these regulations. It is the responsibility of the managers of our Child care services to ensure that the regulations are adhered to by all ACC People under their supervision.

We expect ACC People to know and follow the law in relation to reporting harm.

We expect ACC People to know and follow relevant laws in their state jurisdiction as set out in a relevant State Child protection policy by making an appropriate report to the relevant government department in respect of actual harm to a Child or Young Person or a risk of harm to a Child or Young Person. Notwithstanding our obligations under the law, we expect ACC People to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing or safety of a Child or Young Person. For the avoidance of doubt, when there is no mandatory reporting obligation at law, nevertheless we require a report to be made to the relevant government agency and/or law enforcement body.

We expect ACC People to co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations.

In every circumstance, we expect ACC People to co-operate to the best of their ability with any formal investigation undertaken by the ACC (National or State Executives), police or other authorised body in relation to the care and protection of Children or Young People.

We expect ACC People to use the policies and operational procedures defined at the local level whenever they have a concern that a Child or Young Person may be experiencing harm.

The State Child protection policies have been designed to facilitate decision making in relation to the protection of Children or Young People. At all times, we expect ACC People to have a comprehensive understanding of the contents of this Policy and the relevant policies and abide by them whenever they have concerns about the possibility that a Child or Young Person has experienced or may be at risk of experiencing harm.

We expect ACC People to always follow any Child Protection Practice Guidelines implemented by the ACC or Constituent Church that has engaged or employed them.

Where Child Protection Practice Guidelines have been promulgated ACC and Constituent Churches ACC People will be asked to personally endorse these Guidelines and ensure that they adhere to it when they are at work and away from work. These guidelines will aim to ensure that ACC People are always safe adults who act protectively of Children or Young People.

We expect ACC People not to contravene any policies, regulations or laws in relation to the safety and protection of Children or Young People.

It is a serious breach of this Policy, and possibly the law, if any ACC People contravene any regulations or laws in relation to the safety and protection of Children whether or not they are working, volunteering or participating in a Church related activity, service or program at the time. Breaches of this Policy include, but are not limited to, ACC People who:

- sexually abuse Children or Young people;

- physically abuse Children or Young People;
- abduct Children or Young People;
- verbally abuse or bully Children or Young People;
- emotionally abuse Children or Young People;
- groom Children or Young People;
- take, reproduce and/or distribute photos or videos of Children or Young People without the consent of their parents or guardians (unless the Child or Young Person is of a sufficient age and maturity to give informed consent freely and voluntarily – this should be the exception rather than the rule);
- publish any material containing images of Children or Young People who are involved in one of our activities, services or programs that can be used for the sexual gratification of others;
- access, download, store or distribute any form of Child pornography;
- condone or encourage, in any way, the harm (whatever the kind) to Children or Young People;
- fail to take appropriate action in response to a complaint, risk, or suspicion of harm.

We expect that ACC People will support Children or Young People and their families as directed by senior ACC People in the event that a Child or Young Person is harmed by any ACC People.

We recognise that the impact of any form of harm on Children or Young People and their families is traumatic. It is even more complex when the perpetrator of the harm is within ACC. In these situations, we will provide opportunities for appropriate debriefing and/or counselling to the Children or Young People and their families who have experienced the harm and any other Child or Young Person and family in the community who may indirectly be affected by the incident(s).

10 WHAT SUPPORT WILL WE PROVIDE ACC PEOPLE?

In this section the intention is that the support envisaged will be primarily delivered by the local church followed by the relevant ACC state or territory entity.

We will ensure that ACC People receive training about this Policy.

On a regular basis, we will ensure that all ACC People are provided with training to understand and recommit to this Policy and the approved Child Protection Practice Guideline (or an alternative guideline as described at 7). Such training will also form part of any induction we provide to ACC People.

We will make opportunities available to the ACC People to allow them to feel clear about what is expected of them in relation to Children or Young People's welfare and safety.

We will provide regular opportunities to clarify and confirm the procedures for staff to apply when taking action in relation to Children or Young People's welfare and safety. This will include a discussion of this Policy as a standing item for regular meetings at all levels of ACC National Executive and Constituent Churches. The National Executive will publish an annual report to all ACC People about the effectiveness of the implementation of this Policy across

the ACC.

We will ensure that ACC People are aware of the formal recruitment, screening and employment practices of the ACC in relation to individuals with specific roles in working or volunteering with Children or Young People and families.

All ACC People will be informed during their recruitment that their employment or volunteer services will be subject to clearance under the Working with Children Check system (or equivalent checks under other state legislation). It is a serious breach of this Policy if an individual, who has convictions that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance, gains employment or is allowed to volunteer with Children or Young People who access our services. It is also a serious breach of this Policy, if an individual continues in his/her employment or volunteer role with us if he/she has been charged or convicted of a crime that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance. ACC People who have been charged or convicted of a crime that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance have an ongoing obligation to inform the Constituent Church of this matter and the Constituent Church will deal appropriately with this by removing the person from employment or volunteering service.

We will provide ACC People with guidance in relation to their role with Children or Young People and families.

We recognise that caring for and working with Children or Young People and their families can be complex and challenging. As such, we will provide guidance for ACC People in relation to their specific roles with Children or Young People and families.

We will provide opportunities for ACC People to receive debriefing in the event that it is required.

We recognise that responding to Children or Young People who are at risk of or have experienced harm can be stressful. It is even more complex when the perpetrator of the harm is another staff member or volunteer of the ACC or Constituent Churches. In these situations, we will provide opportunities for formal debriefing and/or counselling to ACC People as required.

VOLUNTEER CHURCH WORKERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Codes of Conduct are a part of the ACC's commitment to safe emotional and physical environments, an expectation of our Child Protection Policy and a commitment to providing appropriate duty of care, including health and safety considerations.

Volunteering in church life is a highly valued and important part of service to the church. This **Volunteer Workers Code of Conduct** outlines the standards of behaviour that are expected for all *volunteer workers* in ACC Churches.

Volunteer workers are all volunteers involved in serving the local church in teams, on rosters and in any other way.

ACC volunteer workers lives are on display and are subject to public scrutiny and as such these standards of behavior should apply not only to your church life but also your personal life.

The **ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct** (a separate document) applies to ACC Certificate and Credential holders.

1. SERVANT HEARTED

Volunteer workers are servants of Christ, who should endeavour to become servant leaders as modelled by Jesus (John 13:3-14). The misuse of authority can be a particular temptation when being given a position of trust and power – this must be avoided.

2. BEHAVIOUR

Volunteer workers:

- will act in the best interests of those we serve.
- must not be abusive in any way toward others, spiritually, emotionally, physically or sexually, including domestic and family violence.
- will avoid the use of offensive language (e.g. swear words, sexual connotations, and racial or religious slurs).
- will exercise caution with all potentially addictive behaviours and/or harmful substances. Drunkenness is never acceptable.
- will refrain from using any illicit substances.
- will use caution when initiating or receiving physical contact with those we serve, including gestures of comfort as such gestures can unwanted or misinterpreted.
- will act with sexual integrity. Sex is a gift from God and integral to human nature. All inappropriate sexual behaviour is forbidden (e.g. sex outside of marriage). Sexual innuendo and harassment of a sexual nature are always inappropriate.
- will report their concerns of abuse according to *ACC Safer Church Guidelines*.
- will treat all program participants fairly and in accordance with ACC and local church policies, guidelines and position papers.
- will communicate with integrity, including accountable and wise use of electronic communication.
- will acknowledge when they are out of their depth, do not possess the required skill set in difficult pastoral situations, such as helping a victim of abuse, or a person who needs professional counselling, and seek help from a supervisor or church leader.
- will not take property belonging to others, including intellectual property (copyright).

3. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Volunteer workers are encouraged to have integrity in their financial dealings. Volunteer workers must not seek financial gain from their church role.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

Trust is essential in serving the church. Confidential information must not be disclosed, and must be treated with the utmost care. Exceptions include when disclosure is required by law, abuse notifications whether required by law or not, there are concerns for the safety of the person or others, or when the information is in the public domain. Disclosure is a serious matter and the assistance of a supervisor or church leader should be sought.

5. COMMITMENT TO TEAM MINISTRY

Volunteer workers:

- will embrace the vision, values, and mission of the Church, and continue to develop ministry skills through a variety of means including team meetings.
- are accountable to team, watch out for each other and protect each other's integrity.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

Any breach of this code involving a criminal offence may lead to a report being made to the relevant authorities. Any breaches relating to the harm, or risk of harm, of a child or young person will be dealt with under the ACC Child Protection Policy – a copy of this policy should be provided to a volunteer who has a direct role with a child or young person. Any other breach will be considered in the light of the best interests of the volunteer and those we serve and may result in the volunteer being stood down either temporarily or otherwise.

Volunteer workers need to be open to correction and humble enough to modify behaviours so as to not discredit the gospel.

VOLUNTEER CHURCH WORKERS DECLARATION

Thank you for your desire to volunteer at _____. This declaration is part of our church's commitment to ensuring our duty of care to all people, and also to fulfil our insurance obligations, health and safety and other requirements.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname: _____ First and Middle Names: _____

Any Former Names: _____

☐ Male ☐ Female (Please select) Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Mobile Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK AND/OR WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

I hereby consent to an Australian Federal Police Check if one is considered necessary for my role.

My state based working with children check (or similar) details, where required are as follows:

State of Issue: _____ Reference Number: _____ Expiry Date: ____ / ____ / ____

CONSENT TO HOLD INFORMATION

I consent to the information contained in this application including the subsequent pages to be kept by our church. I understand that this information will be kept in a confidential file and used only for screening and disciplinary purposes.

REFEREE CHECK (if you have been at the church for less than 3 years)

Please nominate a character reference. Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Contact Number: _____

Name of my previous church and pastor (if applicable): _____

DECLARATION

1. I understand that the church operates in an environment of numerous legal and ethical restrictions, and I will fully cooperate with the church in abiding by these. I assure the church, in considering me for a volunteer role that:
 - I have no health impediment that will put me or any other person at risk in the fulfilment of my designated role
 - Other than those matters disclosed by me to the church (noted above) at the time of making this declaration, i know of no past behaviour that renders me unfit to serve as a volunteer or which detracts from the obligation of the church to operate as a place of safety to a minor or any other person. Such past behaviour may include being the subject of an allegation of sexual abuse (whether convicted or not), including any type of molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation.
2. I understand that if I am unclear as to any of the statements in this document, I will seek clarification from a team leader or church leader before signing.
3. I have provided this information, and any documents accompanying it in good faith and declare they are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
4. I understand that any material misstatement in or omission from this questionnaire may render me unfit to hold a particular role in the church.
5. I have received a copy of the *Volunteer Church Workers Code of Conduct* and I agree to uphold it.
6. I understand that when considering whether there is an avenue for my voluntary services, my church may refer to ACC and local church policies, guidelines and position papers.
7. I will respect the decision of my church as to where I volunteer my services within the church, and whether my services are required, from time to time.
8. I understand that a team leader will be available to me to discuss my service.

Proposed Volunteer's signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____
(if under the age of 18, please have the form co-signed by your parent/guardian)

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Signature: _____

Endorsement of church leadership for this person to volunteer:

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Reference Guide

The following reports, policy documents, handbooks and websites were used in the writing of this manual and are a good list of resources:

- ACT Government Department of Education, Youth and Family Services, Reporting Child Abuse: Keeping Children And Young People Safe (Canberra: ACT Government Publishing Services, 2003)
- ACT Government Justice and Community Safety website: www.ors.act.gov.au
- ACT Ombudsman website: ombudsman.act.gov.au
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia Now: Australian Social Trends, 2003, ABS website www.abs.gov.au
- Australian Government - Australian Institute of Family Studies website: www.afis.gov.au
- Australian Government - Office of the Australian Information Commissioner - Privacy Act 2001 - website www.oaic.gov.au
- Australian Government Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2013 website www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au
- Child Protection ~ Watton on the Web ~ part of River Ministries, Norfolk, UK, <http://www.watton.org/abuse/policy/>
- Child Protection System, Reporting Child Abuse, 1999, Victorian Government Department of Human Services
- Child Protection, by UNICEF, <http://www.unicef.org/protection/index.html>
- Child Protection: NSW Ombudsman, <http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/our-work/employment-related-childprotection>
- Child Protection: Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse Against Employees (March 2001 edition) , NSW Ombudsman, www.ombo.nsw.gov.au
- Children and Young People Act 1999, <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2008-19/default.asp>
- Children and Young People Act 1999, <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1999-63/current/pdf/1999-63.pdf>
- Children's Charter, General Synod Children's Network from the Children's Charter from the Office of Children's Guardian
- Chris Storm: Bethany Community Support Melbourne, Presentation Paper Feeling Safe, Being Strong - at the AIFS Conference 2008
- Code of Good Practice, Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn
- Community Issues, NSW Police Force, http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues
- Domestic and Family Violence, Family and Community Services, NSW, <http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents,-carers-and-families/domestic-and-family-violence>
- Dyer, T, 2009, 4 sources of relational power in Christian ministry
- Elder Abuse Prevention and Assistance, ACT Government, Department of Disability, Housing and Community
- Elder Abuse Prevention, Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development
- Exploring Cultural Awareness, National CASA 2001, https://www.rccasa.org/filelibrary/03_CASA_ISE_Vol_1008.pdf
- Fact Sheet: Child Protection, by UNICEF, 2002, <http://www.unicef.org/protection/cpgeneral.pdf>
- Fortune, Rev Dr M, 2009 Responding to Clergy Misconduct: A handbook, Faithtrust Institute.
- Gestures: Body Language and Non-Verbal Communication
- History of Child Protection in Australia, by Adam M. Thomison 2001 <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/family-matters/issue-60/history-child-protection>
- <https://safeministry.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/FaithfulnessInService2014.pdf>
- <http://www.buv.com.au/default.aspx?PageID=d17c3620-7f03-4de1-95d4-332eade78eb8>
- <http://www.anglicancg.org.au/pages/safe-communities.html>
- <http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/child-and-youth-protection-services>
- <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/wellbeing-and-participation/preventing-elder-abuse>
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OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

Title:	Grievance Procedure for Certificate Holders
Document Type:	Procedure
Version:	2017:2
Date:	November 2017
Approval:	Amendments Approved by National Executive

A procedure to be used by all State Executives of the
Australian Christian Churches
when dealing with a complaint against a Certificate Holder

Background

This procedure, put in place by the National Executive, applies where a person issued with a certificate by the Australian Christian Churches is alleged to have engaged in improper conduct or heresy, contrary to the United Constitution.

Where there is any conflict between any element of this procedure and any constitutional or policy document ("conference document"), the conference document will prevail.

This procedure has been put in place:

- To provide a uniform procedure to be followed in all States and Territories across Australia
- To provide support and ministry for the complainants
- To ensure that serious allegations are treated seriously and investigated fully
- To appropriately support certificate holders in the midst of significant allegations
- To provide natural justice for the certificate holder
- To maintain and ensure high moral and ethical standards for certificate holders

There are four types of certificates issued by the Australian Christian Churches:

- Ordained Minister's Credential
- Probationary Minister's Credential
- Specialised Ministry Certificate
- Overseas Associate Minister's Certificate

All credentials and certificates are issued by the National Executive and the power to suspend or withdraw those certificates rests with the National Officers. In this procedure the words 'certificate' and 'credential' are used interchangeably.

This procedure is for guidance with the intention that it should be adhered to. The State or National Executive may decide to not follow the Procedure, or apply a truncated version of the procedure, where they reasonably consider it necessary in specific circumstances.

Where the nature of the allegation against a certificate holder raises the possibility of criminal conduct specific legal advice should be sought.

Confidentiality

Throughout the Grievance Procedure, the relevant Executive or committee will seek to maintain where possible the confidentiality of all the parties involved, and the content and nature of the complaint that has been made. However, this will not always be possible, especially where the information is already outside of the Executive's control, completing duties require the release of the information, or specific legal advice suggests otherwise. In such circumstances, the Executive may decide to release the information as it deems appropriate.

Step One – Receipt of Complaint

Where a person alleges that a Certificate Holder has committed improper conduct or heresy, that person (the "Complainant") must fully document the allegation in writing and forward it to the State Executive. Whilst another person may forward it to the State Executive on the Complainant's behalf, the Complainant must still be clearly identified.

Where an allegation of improper conduct by a person under some form of disability (i.e. such as because of age or intellectual incapacity) and who is consequently unable to fully document the allegation in writing, comes to the attention of the State Executive, it shall use all reasonable endeavours to assist such a person to fully document the allegation in writing.

For the purposes of this Procedure, this document is referred to as the "Complaint". The Complaint must include the Complainant's contact details.

It should be made clear to the Complainant that the written complaint will be made available to the Certificate Holder against whom the complaint is being made. This is a requirement of natural justice.

In the event that a Regional Leader receives the Complaint, it must be forwarded it to the State Executive within 72 hours.

The State Executive's insurer should be notified as soon as possible where improper conduct is alleged unless the State Executive considers the complaint to be frivolous.

The State Executive will consider the Complaint. If the State Executive considers (in its absolute discretion) that the complaint is frivolous, or that further action against the Certificate Holder is not necessary, the State Executive may decide to dismiss the complaint.

Where more than one complaint against the same Certificate Holder is received in a short space of time, or if similar complaints are received after an initial complaint, the State Executive may amalgamate the complaints into one investigation.

[Note: If the Certificate Holder who is the subject of a Complaint is considered to have a prominent national ministry and the National or State Executive consider it to be appropriate, the National Executive may assume responsibility for the Grievance Procedure from this point. In such a case, all references to the State Executive in the steps below should be read as applying to the National Executive.]

Step Two – Mandatory Reporting

Where a complaint involves an allegation of child abuse, the current policy dealing with such must be implemented in all respects, including mandatory reporting.

As there are circumstances under the law (which varies from State to State) which may require information to be passed on to authorities and failure to do so being an offence, the State Executive may need to seek legal advice on its' legal duties in this regard.

Step Three – Suspension

The State President will consider whether there is sufficient evidence of a serious breach of ministerial conduct to justify suspension of the Certificate Holder's certificate pending the investigation and final decision. In this regard, the National President (in consultation with the State President) has the power under the United Constitution to suspend all certificates pending investigation by the State Executive.

When the State President advises the suspension of the Certificate Holder's certificate, he/she will:

- Provide the Certificate Holder with a copy of the Complaint;
- Provide the Certificate Holder with a copy of the Grievance Procedure for Certificate Holders (this document).
- Invite the Certificate Holder to respond in writing within 24 hours regarding why the certificate should not be suspended; and
- Consult with the National President regarding the decision, taking into account the Certificate Holder's written response (if any).

The State President will advise the Certificate Holder in writing of the decision, including the period of the suspension (not exceeding sixty days).

If the investigation is not complete within the suspension period, the National Executive may extend the period of suspension for further periods, not exceeding sixty days each. The State President will provide the Certificate Holder with a further opportunity to respond before renewing a suspension period.

[Note: The initial suspension and any subsequent suspensions must follow the same natural justice procedure. It is a breach of natural justice to suspend without a defined end date as this is, in effect, a cancellation. The United Constitution stipulates the suspension provisions.]

Step Four – Consider whether a full investigation should be delayed pending criminal proceedings

If there is an ongoing criminal investigation into the circumstances of the Complaint, the State Executive will contact the relevant authorities before further investigating the Complaint. It must be understood that the relevant authorities may not respond but care must be taken not to prejudice any pending criminal proceedings. In this regard, further investigation by the State Executive will generally not proceed unless the criminal proceedings have concluded or the Certificate Holder otherwise consents to the investigation proceeding.

However, where the State Executive investigation is delayed pending any criminal proceedings, the National President may still decide to suspend the Certificate Holder's

credentials, and the National Executive may decide to continue to renew the suspension.

Step Five – Investigation by the State Executive

The State Executive may, depending upon the nature of the Complaint, appoint a person or persons (the Investigator(s)) to investigate the Complaint. The Investigator may be a member of the State Executive.

The Investigator will consider the Complaint and may contact the Complainant or any other person deemed necessary, for further information.

The Investigator will provide the Certificate Holder with a copy of the Complaint and details of any other statements obtained during the investigation, as well as a copy of the Grievance Procedure for Certificate Holders (this document).

The Investigator will then invite the Certificate Holder to provide a response to the Complaint and to any statements made during the investigation. The Certificate Holder is not obliged to provide a response at this time, unless requested to do so by the State Executive.

The Investigator will prepare a report for the State Executive, documenting the evidence it has obtained during the investigation (including statements by the Complainant and the Certificate Holder). The Investigator may comment on the credibility of the Complainant, Certificate Holder or other witnesses in this report, but **will not** conclude whether the Complaint has been proved.

Step Six – Consideration of the Investigator's Report by the State Executive

The State Executive will nominate a number of its members (the Committee) to consider the Investigator's Report and make a preliminary determination as to whether the Certificate Holder may have engaged in improper conduct or heresy.

If the Committee's preliminary determination is that the Certificate Holder may have engaged in improper conduct or heresy, it will request the Certificate Holder provide a written response for further consideration before recommending a final decision to the State Executive.

The request to the Certificate Holder will:

- Set out each Complaint in which it is alleged that the Certificate Holder has engaged in improper conduct or heresy. Where a Complaint contains separate allegations of improper conduct or heresy, the Complaints will be separately identified;
- For each Complaint, particulars will be provided indicating the evidence on which the Complaint is based;
- Enclose a copy of the Investigator's Report;
- Enclose any other material that the Committee intends to consider when making its recommendation;
- Invite the Certificate Holder to meet with a member of the Committee to discuss the allegations; and
- Invite the Certificate Holder's written response within 21 days.

Step Seven – The Committee’s Final Recommendation

The Committee will consider the Investigator’s Report and the Certificate Holder’s response (if provided) with a view to determining whether it considers the Certificate Holder has, on the balance of probabilities, engaged in improper conduct or heresy and make a recommendation to the State Executive accordingly.

If the State Executive considers the Certificate Holder has engaged in improper conduct or heresy, it will proceed to Step Eight. In its consideration, the State Executive will take into account the recommendation of the Committee which it may accept, vary or reject in making its determination.

If the State Executive considers that the Certificate Holder has not engaged in improper conduct or heresy, it will advise the Certificate Holder, Complainant and the National Executive in writing. If a certificate has been suspended, it will be reinstated.

The written report from the Investigator shall be kept on file by the State Executive but it must be kept in strict confidence.

Step Eight – Determination regarding appropriate disciplinary action

Where the State Executive decides that the Certificate Holder has engaged in improper conduct or heresy, it will consider possible action that might be taken in response to the breach.

Action that might be taken includes discipline and restoration (in accordance with ‘A Program for the Restoration and Reinstatement of Disciplined Ministers’), suspension of the certificate or cancellation of the certificate.

The Committee will provide the Certificate Holder with a written summary of the action the State Executive is considering recommending to the National Officers and provide the Certificate Holder with an opportunity to respond.

The Committee will take that response into consideration before a final recommendation by the State Executive to the National Officers.

Step Nine – Recommendation through the State Executive to the National Officers

The State Executive, taking into account the recommendation of the Committee, will make a recommendation on the appropriate action to be taken to the National Officers.

The National Officers will make the final decision on appropriate action to be taken, and a letter outlining this decision will be prepared. The Credential Holder will be invited to meet with members of the State Executive, where this final decision will be communicated, and letter of final decision presented. If the invitation to meet with members of the State Executive is not accepted, the letter of final decision will be forwarded directly to the Credential Holder by the State Executive.

It is recommended that where the final decision is that the Credential is to be withdrawn, a member of the National Executive or their appointee communicate this decision to the Credential Holder.

Step Ten – Right of Appeal

Pursuant to Article 11.8 of the United Constitution, the National Executive will consider any appeal by a Certificate Holder, provided written notice of the appeal is lodged by the Certificate Holder with the National Secretary within 30 days of notification of the withdrawal of the certificate.

The Certificate Holder must, at the time of lodging the Appeal, provide its reasons in writing for why the certificate should not be withdrawn.

The National Executive will consider the submission by the Certificate Holder and any other material available to it before making its decision. The decision of the National Executive will be final.

End of document.



OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

Title:	Conflict of Interest
Document Type:	Guideline
Version:	2015:1
Date:	April 2015
Approval:	National Executive

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This is a statement by the National Executive for the guidance of all Australian Christian Churches ("ACC") Church Leaders. The elements of this statement will also be applied to the interpretation of the ACC Ministerial Code of Conduct for Certificate Holders in the Australian Christian Churches.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 ACC views the identification and management of conflicts of interest as an issue of central importance in ensuring that there is no undue influence in decision making by the ACC National Executive, ACC State Executive, Board members of other ACC entities and ACC Church Leaders, owing to a competing interest that could erode the integrity of decisions.
- 1.2 Anyone who wishes to be a minister of the gospel must live a blameless life following the words of Paul the Apostle, "*Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others*" (Philippians 2:4) which has emanated from the example of Christ, the perfect sacrifice, Who always placed others before Himself.
- 1.3 The ACC acknowledges that conflicts of interest will arise from time to time. All reasonable efforts need to be made to ensure that all such conflicts are identified, disclosed and managed in a rigorous and transparent way that promotes public confidence in the integrity, legitimacy, impartiality and fairness of Church Leaders and the ACC as a whole in the decision-making processes.
- 1.4 Developing sound policies for the identification, disclosure and management of conflicts of interest is a prerequisite to ensuring that this is achieved.

2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 "*Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others*" (Philippians 2:4)
- 2.2 A person ought not to be in a position where the person has a conflict between that person's own interests and that person's duties to others and as Jesus Christ said, "you cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).
- 2.3 All Church Leaders are expected to:
 - 2.3.1 behave honestly and with integrity;

- 2.3.2 disclose, and take reasonable steps to avoid, any conflict of interest (real, apparent or potential) in connection with their role as a Church Leader;
- 2.3.3 not make improper use of their position, status, power or authority as a Church Leader, or inside information, in order to gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for themselves, or any other person, against the interests of the ACC or a Church Body.
- 2.4 Some conflicts of interest can be either inherent or unavoidable, but the principle remedy always involves proper disclosure.
- 2.5 If a Conflict of Interest does arise, disclosure by the Church Leader, at the earliest opportunity, must be made to the Relevant Persons.
- 2.6 A failure to disclose a Conflict of Interest may constitute improper conduct, leading to appropriate disciplinary action.

3 DEFINITIONS

ACC means the Australian Christian Churches Movement which is made up of the Registered Churches and Ordained Ministers Credential Holders governed by the United Constitution and subsidiary documents.

Church Leader Includes an member of the ACC National Executive and/or State Executive, any office holder of any National and State Entities or subsidiaries or any Certificate Holders.

Church Body includes a church or other body whether a body corporate, organisation or association, that is part of the ACC Movement.

Conflict of Interest involves an individual having two or more competing personal interests that may potentially affect or undermine an individual's impartiality in a given situation. The individual may find it difficult to fulfil his or her official duties and responsibilities if there are competing personal interests, which could potentially have an improper influence on their performance in their trusted role.

Relative includes a a spouse, a son or daughter (whether biological, step, or adopted or whether a child of whom the person is a guardian), mother, father, brother or sister (whether biological, step, or adopted), niece or nephew, grandchild, grandparent, in-law or direct relative of the person's spouse.

Relevant Persons differs depending on the role of the Church Leader who has the Conflict of Interest. Where the Church Leader is a:

- (a) ACC National Executive Member – to the ACC National Secretary, who is to bring this to the attention of the remaining National Executive members. If the ACC National Secretary is the person making disclosure, the ACC National President must be notified;
- (b) ACC State Executive Member – to the ACC State Secretary, who is to bring this to the attention of the remaining State Executive members. If the ACC State Secretary is the person making disclosure, the ACCC State President must be notified;
- (c) Office Holder of any National or State entity or subsidiary – to the Chair of the entity or if the Chair is the one making disclosure to all the remaining Board Members;
- (d) Certificate Holder – to a senior pastor, unless that person is the Senior Pastor, in which case, to a the ACC State Secretary;

4 WHEN A CONFLICT OF INTEREST ARISES

4.1 A Conflict of Interest arises in circumstances where one's personal or private interests can be impacted (positively or negatively) by their capacity as a Church Leader.

4.2 A Conflict of Interest can be either direct or indirect. The following are examples of direct and indirect interest that can give rise to a Conflict of Interest. This is in no way an exhaustive list.

4.2.1 Direct

- a A Conflict of Interest can arise because of a direct interest that a Church Leader has so that the circumstances of the Church Leader may be directly altered, for example:
 - i the Church Leader will receive a direct financial or other benefit or loss from the Church Body entering into a given contract; or
 - ii The Church Leader is or has become a party to proceedings in relation to a matter which involves a Church Body or the ACC as another party.

4.2.2 Indirect

- a A Conflict of Interest can arise because of an indirect interest.
- b Examples of indirect interests include:

- i A **close association** with a person, for example, who is directly interested in a proposed contract with the Church Body, or a close association with a person who is the subject of an allegation;
- ii An **indirect financial interest**, for example, if a contract were to be entered into by the Church Body with another person or Body and this person or Body is receiving or incurring a financial benefit or loss, and as a consequence of this financial benefit or loss, the Church Leader will also receive or incur a financial benefit or loss, if for instance:
 - A The Church Leader has a beneficial interest in shares of the Body which is contracting with the Church Body; or
 - B Where the Church Leader is owed money from the Body or person which is contracting with the Church Body.
- iii An interested party, where the Church Leader has an indirect interest in proceedings in relation to a matter which involves a Church Body or the ACC.

4.3 The following are more specific examples of Conflicts of Interest:

4.3.1 Relational Conflict of Interest –

- a a Church Leader is notified of an allegation made against, or notified about a conflict with, a Relative of that Church leader and the Church Leader would ordinarily be required by virtue of his or her position as a Church Leader to investigate and/or resolve the allegation or conflict. The Church Leader's personal interest arising out of his or her relation with the Relative, who is the subject of the conflict or allegation, is in conflict with the Church Leader's duty to the Church Body and Church Body's congregation to act in its best interests.
- b a Church Leader's Relative makes a complaint in relation to another Church Leader, Church Body, or the ACC generally. The Church Leader's personal interest arising out of his or her relation with the Relative, who has made the complaint, is in conflict with the Church Leader's duty to the ACC to act in its best interests.
- c a Church Leader's Relative wishes to be employed by, or volunteer for a Church Body in which the Church Leader is based. The Church Leader's personal interest arising out of his or her relation with the Relative of the Church Leader, who wishes to be employed or volunteer, may potentially

be in conflict with the Church Leader's duty to the Church Body and Church Body's congregation to act in its best interests.

4.3.2 **Positional Conflict of Interest –**

- a a Church Leader, who is also a member of, or connected to (even by virtue his or her relationship with a member of the Body) a Body (other than a Church Body as defined herein), or who is a controller of the Body, which wishes to engage, enter into a contract or other transaction with a Church Body. The Church Leader's personal interest in entering into the contract or transaction, is in conflict with the Church Leader's duty to the Church Body and the Church Body's congregation to act in its best interests.
- b a Church Leader, who is also of a particular profession (whether currently practising, expected to practice in the future, or has practised in the past in such a profession) and the Church Leader has been nominated to offer his or her professional services to a Church Body. The Church Leader's interest arising out of this profession and seeking to obtain a financial benefit is in conflict with the Church Leader's duty to the Church Body and the Church Body's congregation to act in its best interests.

4.4 A Conflict of Interest may also be:

- 4.4.1 **Real:** where a clear conflict exists between the Church Leader's current official duties and existing private interests;
- 4.4.2 **Apparent:** where it appears or could be perceived that the Church Leader's private interests are improperly influencing the performance of their official duties whether or not that is actually the case;
- 4.4.3 **Potential:** where the Church Leader's private interests are not but could come into direct conflict with official duties.

4.5 A Conflict of Interest should be distinguished from a **conflict of duty**. A conflict of duty arises because of duties that the person owes as a Church Leader being in conflict with the person's duty to another person. For instance:

- 4.5.1 a Church Leader who is also a psychologist and is given confidential information in the course of a consultation with a patient. Disclosure of this confidential information would be in the interests of the ACC or the Church Body, however, there is a conflicting duty owed to the patient to maintain the confidentiality of this information;
- 4.5.2 a Church Leader who is also a lawyer is representing a client who is commencing proceedings against the ACC or a particular Church Body. The

Church Leader is unable to properly fulfil his or her duty to the client whilst also fulfilling his or her duties to the ACC;

4.5.3 a Church Leader is a manager or member of a governing body of a Body that has a direct interest in a matter involving the Church Body. The Church Leader has a duty to act in the best interests of the Body as its manager or governing body member which may be in conflict with their duty to the ACC as a Church Leader; and

4.5.4 a Church Leader is a trustee for a person who has a direct interest in a matter involving the Church Body. The Church Leader's duty as a trustee may be in conflict with the Church Leader's duty to the ACC.

4.6 A conflict of interest will generally **not** arise, in the following circumstances:

4.6.1 Where the interest is so remote or insignificant as to not reasonably be regarded as capable of influencing the Church Leader;

4.6.2 Where the interest coincides with the Church Leader's duties as a Church Leader.

4.6.3 Where the Conflict of Interest arises in relation to the Church Leader's remuneration as a Church Leader;

4.6.4 Where the interest relates to a proposed contract or transaction which is subject to the approval of the members of the Church Body and will not impose an obligation on the Church Body if it is not approved by the members;

4.6.5 Where the Church Leader is willing to offer their professional services to the Church Body at arms length, that is, as if the Church Body were any ordinary customer of the Church Leader, or for less consideration than would be required from an ordinary customer;

4.6.6 Where the Church Leader's interest is held equally in common with several other Church Leaders;

4.6.7 Where the Church Leader has sought the fully informed consent of the ACC for this Conflict of Interest to exist.

5 AVOIDING A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

5.1 A Church Leader is expected to behave honestly and with integrity.

5.2 If a Church Leader is unsure of whether a Conflict of Interest does arise, he or she should seek the advice of a supervisor or superior or the Relevant Persons.

- 5.3** If a Church Leader is aware of a Conflict of Interest, a Church Leader should, at first instance and wherever possible, take all reasonable steps to avoid or eliminate the conflict of interest, by for instance, declining to take up the position as a Church Leader. Advice should be sought from a supervisor or superior or the Relevant Persons.
- 5.4** It is accepted that some conflicts of interest situations are inherent and again, disclosure becomes the principal issue.

6 DISCLOSING A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

6.1 Obligation to Disclose

- 6.1.1 If it becomes apparent that the Church Leader has an actual, potential perceived, direct or indirect Conflict of Interest, the Church Leader must, as soon as practicable make proper disclosure to the Relevant Persons of the Conflict of Interest.

MOLESTATION/SEXUAL ABUSE KNOWN OFFENDERS

General comments and recommendations

Introduction

It is strongly recommended that known offenders are not permitted to participate in church activities.

However, where a church board wishes to allow it, such participation should be managed with the upmost care with respect to relevant child protection legislation, WHS legislation, common law duty of care, the statements about the protection of children in the ACC Child Protection Policy, and liability issues related to 'known offender' insurance exclusions.

Local churches should take advice from appropriate professionals (i.e. psychologists, social workers, legal representative etc.) when deciding whether to allow a known offender to attend the church, and on what conditions. The following points should be carefully considered:

1) Local Board of management responsibility

This is a Local Church Board responsibility relating to local church pastoral, risk management, and legal issues. In these circumstances the Board has responsibility for the protection of vulnerable people and to provide a safe environment. They must also comply with the laws and policy as noted in (1) above. As such all ministry to a known offender must be carefully considered and with the Board's approval.

2) Consider insurance risks

Make contact with your church's insurer, to ascertain whether or not any insurance exclusion in relation to known offender exists.

3) Management of the pastoral and risk management situation

- a. Pastorally: Consideration should be given to providing the person with pastoral care outside of the church's normal meetings, so long as your church has the capacity, e.g. meeting with the person for prayer at a coffee shop etc.
- b. Risk management: The local church board should ask the person concerned not to attend church activities until a more complete picture of the risks associated with the individual is established and a risk management plan is put in place. This plan should be completed by professionals with the necessary skills, and the process would include:
 - i. Obtaining from the person concerned full particulars of what he has been charged with or convicted of (ask to see the police / court documentation);
 - ii. Completing a risk assessment of both the person and the church's capacity to manage the person; and
 - iii. Establish a life-long Safety Plan (appropriate conditions such as monitoring attendance and involvement with support and supervision).

ROYAL COMMISSION COMMUNICATION

Reference to 'pastors' and 'credentials'

19 November 2014

Email from Wayne Alcorn to all ACC pastors:

Royal Commission Update:

A number of critical issues arose from our attendance at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. We are preparing to address these in greater detail at National Conference, once we have received the official report and findings from the Royal Commission. Our commitment is to create even safer places for children and young people, with every local church aware of their responsibilities in this area.

Value of credentials: Executive discussions also revolved around the importance of our ACC credentials. One of the issues raised at the Royal Commission inquiry was when the title 'pastor' is used (for example, youth pastor or kids pastor), yet the title holder may not carry any form of credential. This is a huge reputational risk for a local church, as these days the community expects those who carry titles to have been sufficiently trained and recognised by a reputable body. We strongly encourage you and your team of staff and senior volunteers that you wish to carry the title of 'pastor' to commence the process of becoming credentialed by the ACC. The advantage of this is that creates leadership pathways for new leaders, and also enables us to participate in their development because of the requirements associated with ordination, such as training, theology and up-to-date resources.

December 2014

Newsletter #4: 'Value of credentials' (Mailed to all ACC pastors)

VALUE OF CREDENTIALS

Executive discussions also revolved around the importance of our ACC credentials. One of the issues raised at the Royal Commission inquiry was when the title 'pastor' is used (for example, youth pastor or kids pastor), yet the title holder may not carry any form of credential. This is a huge reputational risk for a local church, as these days the community expects those who carry titles to have been sufficiently trained and recognised by a reputable body. We strongly encourage you and your team of staff and senior volunteers that you wish to carry the title of 'pastor' to commence the process of becoming credentialed by the ACC. The advantage of this is that creates leadership pathways for new leaders, and also enables us to participate in their development because of the requirements associated with ordination, such as training, theology and up-to-date resources.

December 2014

ACC EMAG #4 (Link emailed to all ACC pastors; accessible on ACC website)

Article: Addressing Royal Commission Issues

Value of credentials

19 November 2015

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December 2015

Newsletter #4: 'Child Protection Update' – 'Credentials & Dues' (mailed to all ACC pastors)

PASTOR CREDENTIALS

With well over 3,200 credentialed pastors in our movement, we remain committed to raise up young generation leaders in ministry. Following last year's Royal Commission hearing, we need to remain careful about the terminology used for those working with children and young people. It may be time to encourage your department leaders to apply for an SMC (Specialised Ministry Certificate) if they are going to have a long term ministry position yet not tracking for ordination. Speak to your regional leader or State secretary about this process.

SC016 Participation & inclusion of children and their caregivers

The ACC Child Policy states:

It is the responsibility of all at ACC, from the National and State Executives, constituent ministers to staff, pastoral care and volunteers, to understand the important responsibility they have:

- To provide for and promote the care, protection and wellbeing of Children or Young People in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment and the right to be protected from Harm, and to maximise opportunities for Children or Young People to realise their full potential;*
- To promote caring attitudes and responses towards Children or Young People, so that the*
- need for appropriate nurture, care and protection is understood, risks to a Child's wellbeing*
- are quickly identified, and any necessary support, protection or care is promptly provided;*
- To recognise the family as the primary means of providing for the nurture, care and protection of Children or Young People and to accord high priority to supporting and assisting the family to carry out its responsibilities to Children or Young People;*
- To promote and recognise the need to strengthen, preserve and promote positive relationships between the Child and the Child's parent, family members, leaders, mentors, spiritual advisors and significant others; and*

Our commitment to Children or Young People

- We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all Children or Young People who access any of our activities, programs, services or facilities.*
- We are committed to providing Children or Young People with positive and nurturing experiences.*
- We will support families and communities to promote Children or Young People's healthy development and wellbeing.*

We expect ACC People to understand and acknowledge the significance of family relationships for Children or Young People.

Children or Young People's experience of their family is foundational for their development. Families can act as supportive resources for growth and resilience in Children or Young People. Family relationships can also restrain and harm Children or Young People's social, physical, cognitive and emotional development. Families are the single most significant influence in shaping the way Children or Young People develop and perceive their sense of identity. We expect ACC People to recognise, respect and work to strengthen the capacities of parents/carers and other family members to care and protect their Children or Young People.

We expect ACC People to make available information about this Policy to Children or Young People and parents/carers.

The information will be made available in developmentally appropriate language and translated to accommodate the main communities that access our services.

We expect ACC People to put the rights of a Child or Young Person to the protection from harm ahead of any cultural and religious practices of families who come to our Churches.

No cultural or religious belief will take precedence over the right of Children or Young People to protection from harm.

We expect ACC People to understand and respond to the special needs of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities.

We acknowledge that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities have special needs. We expect ACC People to act in ways that communicate effectively with and are supportive of Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities. We also understand that we will need to be proactive in recognising the additional vulnerability to harm that Children or Young People with developmental delays or disabilities experience.

To achieve these policy statements our church will promote participation & inclusion of children and their caregivers

PROCEDURE:

2.2.1 Children's participation & inclusion

- a. All workers will actively listen to children when they speak about matters that directly affect their sense of safety or wellbeing and will act on any concerns children or their caregivers raise with them.
- b. Ministry Coordinators will ensure that children will have opportunity to reflect on their experience at church and to make comments regarding the activities, program elements and other aspects of wellbeing, including workers' conduct.
- c. Ministry Coordinators will schedule time in the program to talk to children about their safety, usually at the beginning of the program or event and, as is practicable, will encourage the children to participate and contribute to safety discussions.
- d. The church board will provide information, including age appropriate signage, in relation to safety, acknowledging the need for sensitivity and consideration of those children of Aboriginal & Torres Strait heritage, and those from culturally &/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as any child with a disability.
- e. The church board will take steps to respect and promote the cultural identity of children of Aboriginal & Torres Strait heritage, and those from culturally &/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, through engagement with the children and their caregivers in relation to taboos and symbols and activities that are important to the children's cultural heritage, as is practicable given the nature of the program.

2.2.2 Engaging with caregivers & community

- a. The church board will promote open communication with parents and caregivers, and other community stakeholders, encouraging feedback on the program that their child has attended.
- b. The church board will, when reviewing the church Policy and Procedures, seek input from targeted groups of parents and caregivers.

- c. The church board will take reasonable measures to allow for communication and input from community members who have relationships with children accessing our programs, including up-to-date information on our website [where website does not exist – state where information can be obtained].

SC017 – Children’s Feedback Form

Tell us what you thought!

<i>I attended:</i>			
<i>I liked:</i>			
<i>Something I thought could be better is:</i>			
<i>Something that I did not like so much was:</i>			
<i>Would you recommend **** insert church name/program details** to your friends or family? Why or Why not?</i>	Yes	No	Maybe

Any other Comments or suggestions?

Thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think!

We hope to see you again sometime soon! 😊

SC018 – Parent Feedback Form

Your opinion matters to us. Please take a few minutes to talk to your child/ren about **[insert program/event name]** and then email us some feedback. You might like to use these questions to guide your comments.

<p><i>How would you rate your child's overall experience at</i> <i>**Insert church name**</i> <i>A = excellent</i> <i>E - Terrible</i> <i>What was done well?</i></p>			
<p><i>What did your child like most about **insert event**?</i> <i>What can we do better?</i></p>			
<p><i>Would you recommend **** insert church name/program details** to your friends or family?</i> <i>Why or Why not?</i></p>	Yes	No	Maybe

Do you have any specific concerns about the program?

Any other comments?

Thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think!

We hope to see you again sometime soon! 😊

SC024 Record keeping procedure

1. A procedure for record keeping relates to the documentation and safe and secure storage of records in relation to keeping all people safe, of reports of concerns about people and of reporting of incidents.
2. In the documentation and storage of records we will take into account the National Privacy Act principles, i.e.
 - private information is only collected if necessary;
 - individuals concerned are advised of its intended use;
 - personal information collected is stored securely and not divulged to others without the consent of the individual involved;
 - any personal information the church is holding which is no longer required, is out of date or incorrect, is either destroyed or amended to be accurate
3. The Governance Board will delegate the task of adequate documentation and secure storage of all records to <insert relevant person/s e.g. Management Group / HR>. The <insert relevant person/s e.g. Management Group / HR> is responsible for the implementation of our record keeping procedures.
4. Safer Churches Concerns records will be kept in secure (locked or passworded) storage for a period of not less than 45 years.
5. The Program Director will collect information using information and permission forms for giving permission in situations including but not limited to:
 - collecting, retaining and distributing of personal information of program participants;
 - taking photos, displaying photos of attendees in hard copy or electronic forms such as websites or social media sites;
 - providing details of persons appearing in photos in either hard or electronic forms.
6. Employment records, including all documentation as part of our Safe Ministry Procedures will be securely stored electronically by the <insert relevant person/s e.g. Management Group / HR>.
7. Child protection reports and records including all documentation as part of our Safe Ministry Procedures will be securely stored electronically by the Safe Ministry Officer/Team. These records will be kept permanently.
8. Incident reports and records including all documentation as part of our Safe Ministry Procedures will be securely stored electronically by the <insert relevant person/s e.g. Management Group / HR>. These records will be kept not less than 45 years.

SC025 Risk Of Harm Form

This form is to be completed by the Safer Churches Officer, using one or more **Child Protection Incident Report Forms** as the source of information.

The completed form will then be stored as a confidential document.

Attach the printed outcome generated by using the State/Territory Government online reporting form / e-report record.

Include documentation of any interaction with FaCS and or Police and the ACC Safer Churches Helpline.

The original copy of this document is to be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Documents must be kept for not less than 45 years

PART A

Name of church			
Details of person reporting disclosure/ possible risk of harm			
Name of reporter			
Relationship to alleged victim			
Contact details for reporter			
Nature of alleged abuse:	<input type="checkbox"/> physical	<input type="checkbox"/> emotional	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual
	<input type="checkbox"/> neglect	<input type="checkbox"/> witness to domestic violence	

Is this report due to a direct **disclosure** or **reasonable grounds**? (circle)

If disclosure: Date: _____ Time: _____

Describe why you have 'reasonable grounds' for this report (*add pages/ incident report forms*). Include, when and how you became aware of the information, names of other witnesses, description of any injuries, description of the behaviour of the child or young person, the carer's attitude regarding incident (*if known*).

Where disclosure has occurred provide a first person verbatim. Record the child or young person's actual words as best as you can. (*add pages/ incident report forms*).

PART B

Details of alleged abuse victim				
Name		Age		<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Address				
PH: Parent/Guardian				
Names of siblings				
Have the parents/guardians of the alleged victim been notified? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
If yes, person(s) spoken to		Date		
What were they told?				
Details of alleged perpetrator of the abuse (if known)				
Name		Age		<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Address				
Phone				
Does the alleged perpetrator know about the report? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
If yes, who spoke to him/her?		Date		
What was he/she told?				
Church's response to alleged abuse/risk of harm				
Safer Churches Helpline 1800 070511 contacted	Name of person who called the Helpline	Advised? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Date advised	
Helpline advice over the phone:				
Statutory Body/Police Response				
Name of Call Centre worker				
Ref. number (if given)				
In the case of sexual or physical abuse:				
Have the police been notified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Date		
Name of officer & station		Date		
Advice given by police officer				

Report submitted by: _____ Position in church: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____



12 December 2018

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

National Office for Child Safety
Department of Social Services

Dear [Redacted]

RE: Reporting on the implementation of recommendations by major institutions

This letter is to accompany the submission that Australian Christian Churches (ACC) is providing on behalf of its assembly of churches in response to your request for information, received by the ACC on 15 October 2018. The information requested relates to the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) by major institutions and peak bodies. As such, Hillsong Church provides this submission in support of the ACC and for the purposes of providing further information about Hillsong Church's commitment to child safety.

As you are aware, Hillsong Church was involved in two public hearings before the Royal Commission:

- *Case Study 18: The response of the Australian Christian Churches and affiliated Pentecostal churches to allegations of child sexual abuse (Australian Christian Churches)* in October 2014; and
- *Case Study 55: Institutional review of Australian Christian Churches and affiliated Pentecostal churches (Institutional review of Australian Christian Churches)* in March 2017.

Details of Hillsong Church's approach to child safety was provided as part of the *Institutional review of Australian Christian Churches* and are considered in the Royal Commission's final report in Part E of *Volume 16: Religious Institutions*.

As reflected in the report, Hillsong has adopted appropriate child protection policies and practice guidelines consistent with the requirements set by the ACC. Since then, Hillsong Church has remained committed to and cooperated with the child protection policy and framework provided by the ACC. Our Pastors have been held accountable by the ACC credentialing requirements, which include adhering to the ministerial code of conduct and training requirements.

As detailed in *Volume 16: Religious Institutions*, Hillsong Church has adopted a holistic approach to child safety with a focus on providing safe and secure environments for all vulnerable people in attendance at services, programs and events. The Hillsong approach is referred to as the 'Safe Church Framework' of copy of which is **enclosed**. To support safe environments dedicated focus is given to child protection, health & safety, food safety, transport safety, and venue security. These key functions are supported by the Safe Church Office, which also provides effective handling of complaints or disclosures of harm.

Since the final report was released in December 2017, Hillsong Church has continued to monitor the progress of regulatory changes and where appropriate engage in consultation around those changes.

In Victoria, the introduction of mandatory child safe standards and the reportable conduct regime (in so far as it has extended to 'religious bodies'), pursuant to the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), has caused us to review the Safe Church Framework. Safe Church Office has facilitated our inclusion in the reportable conduct scheme which commenced in January 2018.

In NSW, Hillsong Church have had the benefit of a longer involvement in the Reportable Conduct Scheme, being since 2015. Hillsong Church welcomes plans to expand the scope of the reportable conduct scheme to include 'religious faiths', as announced in October through the statement issued jointly by the NSW Premier, Attorney General and Ministers for FaCS and Health. This will satisfy concerns raised by Hillsong representatives during the *Institutional review of Australian Christian Churches* and secure Hillsong Church's involvement in the reportable conduct scheme, regardless of the duration of overnight accommodation provided for youth events.

Furthermore, Hillsong Church has maintained an active role in the Standing Committee for religious institutions being supported by the NSW Ombudsman. The purpose of the Standing Committee is to ensure that religious institutions implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission in a consistent fashion.

Hillsong Church personnel have participated in the NSW/ACT Professional Standards Inter-Denominational Network (PSN), to help identify areas of improvement and enhance standards across all religious institutions, particularly in respect of complaint handling and information sharing.

In Queensland, Hillsong has reviewed its risk management processes in respect of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (QLD). Hillsong Church continues to monitor the progress of the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 (QLD) as it relates to changes to the blue card system in Queensland, particularly in relation to the 'No Card, No Start' changes and generally simplifying the complex passages of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (QLD).

At a national level Hillsong Church has monitored the responses of the States and Territories of Australia to the Royal Commission's recommendations and notes with concern that the 10 Child Safe Standards (now incorporated as National Principles for Child Safe Organisations) although 'accepted in principle' or 'for further consideration' have not, as yet, been adopted by States and Territories.

Hillsong Church supports all efforts by the National Office for Child Safety to co-ordinate the consistent implementation of child safety measures nationwide, including the 10 Child Safe Standards. As an organisation operating in each of the States and Territories of Australia, with exception of the ACT and SA, a nationally consistent and coherent approach to child safety will be of significant benefit.

In respect of efforts made by the ACC, please refer to their submission of which this letter accompanies. For information relating to our ongoing commitment to child safety, please refer to the details enclosed which are also made publicly available on our website under the headings 'Safe Church Framework' and 'Annual Reports'.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Aghajanian'.

George Aghajanian

General Manager / Director

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Morton'.

Kirk Morton

Risk & Compliance Coordinator



Hillsong Safe Church Framework Overview

PREFACE

The purpose of the Hillsong Church's 'Safe Church Framework' is to enable the provision of safe and secure environments for all people who are a part of Hillsong Church and its community services, in compliance with relevant legislation.

This 'Hillsong Safe Church Framework Overview' document provides an explanation of Hillsong Church's approach to the protection of our people, the overarching governance arrangements within Hillsong Church, and how these arrangements work to achieve its safety objectives.

The Framework applies to Hillsong Church Limited and all related entities (i.e. 'Hillsong') operating within Australia. The Framework applies to all those who are a part of Hillsong Church, collectively known as 'Hillsong-Related People'.

The Framework Overview is principally an oversight tool for the Board of Directors and Executive Management to manage and monitor its approach to church safety. However, as important members of the Safe Church Framework, the Framework Overview is made available to all those who work for or operate on behalf of Hillsong Church.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Aghajanian".

GEORGE AGHAJANIAN

General Manager / Director

SAFE CHURCH COMMITMENT STATEMENT

The following is an extract from the Safe Church Policy describing Hillsong's commitment to church safety –

‘ ...

Hillsong is committed to providing physical, emotional, and spiritual environments that are safe and secure for all Hillsong-Related People.

Through the outworking of the Safe Church Framework, Hillsong aims to reduce the risk of harm occurring to Hillsong-Related People. It is committed to a caring and appropriate response, should any suspicion, allegation, disclosure, or complaint of misconduct or abuse occur.

In making this commitment, Hillsong acknowledges the shared responsibility of all Hillsong-Related People to:

- Understand and respect people's boundaries, in particular those who are vulnerable
- Take reasonable care for one's own health and safety
- Take reasonable care that one's own acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons
- So far as is reasonably able, abide by any reasonable instruction that is given by Hillsong Executive Management, to allow Hillsong to comply with relevant legislation
- Understand the indicators and impact of harm
- Act on concerns raised regarding people's well-being
- Know and follow the law in relation to the reporting of harm
- Foster and protect a culture of well-being and wholeness for all Hillsong-Related People.

Due to the significant proportion of children and young people who constitute Hillsong-Related People, Hillsong will maintain a zero tolerance approach to registerable sex offenders as it poses an unacceptable risk. Those who are registerable sex offenders are not permitted to take part in any of Hillsong services, programs, activities or events.

...’

SAFE CHURCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the Safe Church Policy Statement, the Executive Management have identified three (3) clearly defined objectives, which are:

- Provide safe and secure physical, emotional, and spiritual environments
- Reduce the risk of harm occurring to Hillsong-Related People
- Provide a caring and appropriate response, should any suspicion, allegation, disclosure, or complaint of misconduct or abuse occur.

The fulfilment of these objectives is the focus of the Executive Management and all those who have responsibilities within the Safe Church Framework. To assist with the fulfilment of these objectives, the Executive Management has established the 'Safe Church Office' and the 'Safe Church Framework Model'.

SAFE CHURCH OFFICE

The Executive Management recognised the need for dedicated focus on the matters relating to church safety. The Safe Church Office has been established and staffed by personnel who have roles and responsibilities dedicated to the Safe Church objectives. Within the scope of their responsibilities, Head of Safe Church Office has been given authority to ensure effectiveness and integrity in handling reports of concerns or disclosures of harm.

FRAMEWORK MODEL

The Safe Church Framework Model (Framework Model) has been developed to describe the multifaceted approach to safety adopted by Hillsong.

There are eight (8) key Elements within the Framework Model, which are:

- Strategy & Resourcing
- Policy & Procedures
- Culture & Code of Conduct
- Risk Management
- Recruitment & Selection
- Training & Monitoring
- Handling Concerns & Disclosures
- Caring for People Following a Disclosure

Each of the individual Elements of the Framework Model and their integration with each other have been graphically represented in Figure 1.



Figure 1 – Safe Church Framework Model Elements

MODEL ELEMENTS EXPLAINED

The Framework Model Elements are unique but work together to serve the common purpose of a safer church.

Element 1: Strategy & Resourcing

In relation to the prevention of harm, including child sexual abuse, Hillsong has adopted the strategic approach termed 'situational prevention'. The approach is promoted by the NSW Office of the Children Guardian as 'about creating safe environments rather than focusing on safe individuals'¹. It is achieved through the purposeful design of environments 'in ways that reduce problematic behaviour by any person in that environment'. The approach is considered proactive and preventative.

Hillsong is also well positioned to protect children through its culture of building relationship with and caring for families. The NSW Office of the Children Guardian refers to this as 'Extended Guardianship' where the care for children and young people is considered a collective responsibility, not just for the parents.

The key resourcing required for the effective operation of the Safe Church Framework is reviewed annually through established budgeting processes. Any additional expenditure required out of budget is given special consideration by the Executive Management.

Element 2: Policy & Procedures

Policy and procedures are provided for the effective operation of the Framework. Procedures explaining safe practices, including the recruitment and monitoring of Workers in child-related roles, are provided to Managers to implement. While the operation of the Safe Church Office is supported by clearly documented procedures and templates. The policy and procedures are updated as often as required, but at a minimum reviewed annually.

Element 3: Culture & Code of Conduct

Appropriate codes of conduct are utilised by Executive Management as a tool to develop and maintain positive culture. Various codes of conduct and lifestyle expectations apply to Workers depending on their role and responsibilities. All Workers, including contractors, in child-related roles are required to review and accept the Working With Children & Young People Code of Conduct.

Element 4: Risk Management

As part of the outworking of the Framework, Managers actively identify risks and implement treatment strategies under the supervision of the Safe Church Office. Any significant changes in operational risks are reported to the Executive Management and Audit Risk and Compliance Committee.

The Safe Church Office also has the responsibility for managing any risks identified during the conducting of an investigation. Appropriate responses to such risks are then implemented. These may include reporting to government agencies, including the police, and prohibiting some members of the community from attending services or programs.

Element 5: Recruitment & Selection

Workers are carefully recruited and selected using appropriate processes based on the role and level of associated responsibilities. Prior to commencing involvement in child-related roles, precautions are taken.

All volunteers must be congregation members of Hillsong Church and have regularly attended Hillsong Church for at least six (6) months.

All employees and volunteers must complete an application form which requests specific details that would otherwise preclude them from engagement, the contact details of two referees, and permission to contact them.

¹ NSW Office of the Children's Guardian. (2009). Child-safe Child-friendly Workshop., (p. 2). Sydney.

A state based Working With Children Check, which complies with the legislative requirements of the state in which the applicant is involved, are requested and received prior to the Worker commencing their proposed role. The check must show that the individual is not precluded from working with children and/or vulnerable people.

All applicants must undertake an interview in person which includes an assessment of their suitability and past experience working with children or vulnerable people.

Both referees are checked and spoken to, using an agreed set of questions. The questions seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the role or position and the conversation is documented and retained on file.

Before commencing involvement in activities or programs with children and other vulnerable people, applicants must be pastorally approved through the Hillsong Leaders and Volunteers check process.

Element 6: Training & Monitoring

All Workers in child-related roles receive training based on their level of responsibility. As a minimum, all new Workers appointed to child-related roles are issued with a copy of the Hillsong Safe Church Training Manual, and receive formal training.

Refresher training based on current best practice and changes to legislation or practices are provided on an annual basis.

All Workers are appointed to teams who are supervised by Managers. Managers have procedures for monitoring their team, handling Worker discipline (both informal & formal), and resolving any grievances that Workers may have.

All those working in child-related roles are monitored for compliance with:

- The requirements explained in the Hillsong Safe Church Policy and supporting processes and procedures
- Relevant state-based legislation
- Working With Children & Young People Code of Conduct.

If at any point a Worker is deemed not suitable for working with children, their involvement is required to be discontinued.

Element 7: Handling Concerns & Disclosures

As stated previously, a key Safe Church Objective is the effective handling of concerns or disclosures of harm, such as child sexual abuse. To enable the fulfilment of this objective, the Safe Church Office has been established. The Safe Church Office has distinct and targeted responsibilities, which include planning and conducting of investigations into reports of concern or disclosures of harm. Once an investigation is complete and a finding is reached, the Safe Church Office will assess the Church's obligations to report, and act accordingly.

Beyond any reporting requirements, the Safe Church Office will assess any improvements that can be made to the Framework, and identify any breaches resulting or contributing to the impact of harm. The Safe Church Office will make recommendations to Executive Management for changes to the Framework, and report any conduct of Workers requiring disciplinary action.

Element 8: Caring for People Following a Disclosure

The responsibility of caring for people involved in allegations extends to not only the alleged victim, but also the alleged perpetrator, and any other person adversely affected by the disclosure. Hillsong's caring response will be provided by Pastoral Care and any Case Managers who may be assigned. The Safe Church Office will manage communication with those affected, in relation to the investigation's progress and any resulting court proceedings or results of any other investigation.

Elements Combined

Each of these Elements work together to provide a structured and systematic approach to church safety. The Board of Directors also utilise the Framework Model in formulating a structured approach to

obtaining the assurance it seeks, which is, that those responsible comply with their duties or obligations under relevant legislation.

FRAMEWORK ELEMENTS RESPONSIBILITY

Careful consideration has been given to responsibilities which are to be held by the Board and Executive Management, and those that are shared by others who are considered to have key roles in the Framework.

As part of the consideration of who holds which responsibility, much consideration has been given to providing segregation of duties. This is important to mitigate the risk of conflicts of interest and breaches in privacy.

Each of the responsibilities have been clearly articulated in section 5. of the Safe Church Policy. A summary of these responsibilities have been provided below and aligned to the Framework Elements.

ELEMENT DESCRIPTION	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY HELD
Strategy & Resourcing	Executive Management
Policy & Procedures	Safe Church Office
Culture & Code of Conduct	Executive Management
Risk Management	Managers & Safe Church Office
Recruitment & Selection	Managers
Training & Monitoring	Managers
Handling Concerns & Disclosures	Safe Church Office & Head of Agency
Caring for People	Pastoral Care

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibilities are shared between groups of people who are considered capable and competent to fulfil their duties. Individually, no person should feel that they carry the full responsibility for church safety. However, just as equally true, each person should feel that they have an important part to play in collectively providing a safer church for everyone.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

The Hillsong Safe Church Framework Overview document forms part of a suite of documents that explain Hillsong's approach to Church safety, referred to as the 'Safe Church Framework'. For a complete list of associated documents please refer to the Safe Church Office.

DOCUMENT AND VERSION INFORMATION

Document ID: 5-0-001

Document Title: Hillsong Safe Church Framework Overview

Framework Reference: Safe Church Framework

Version: 1.4

Version Approved: June 2016

Document Authorised by: George Aghajanian, General Manager

Document Maintained by: Keith Ainge, Head of Safe Church Office



the
Hillsong
Australia *story*



2017
Annual
Report



**The Church is all about
God and people.”**

Brian Houston, Global Senior Pastor, Hillsong Church

Contents

**EXECUTIVE
REPORTS**

04



JUSTICE

Mobilising & Impacting

26



WELLBEING

Caring & Loving

36



CREATIVITY

Innovating & Inspiring

60



FUTURE

Building & Resourcing

66



HOME

Welcoming & Including

08



DIVERSITY

Valuing & Empowering

14



EMPOWERMENT

Equipping & Releasing

46



HOPE

Connecting & Transforming

54

FINANCIALS & GOVERNANCE

72



Global Senior Pastors' Report

34 years on, in an ever-shifting social and economic climate, Hillsong Church remains focused on the gospel of Jesus Christ, and unified in our commitment to carrying this message; caring for the poor and working to bring solutions to the needs within our communities.

In 2017, I encouraged our church to carry a sense of "I Am The One"; a message focused personally that encouraged everyone to believe that you are the one that God has chosen, you are the one that God has graced, you are the one who can stand in the gap of need and solution; who can show this same value to your own communities. Already, we have heard great reports of the personal initiatives birthed from people carrying this sense of purposeful living.

Globally, we have created more opportunities for people to be connected to one another around the message of Jesus with the launch of weekly services in Norway, Portugal and San Francisco. Hillsong Israel began in 2016 and continues building momentum this year with regular small group gatherings. We also added a new location in Bali.

We remain dedicated to helping people find salvation in Christ, hope and peace, and saw over 33,000 people make a decision for Jesus through our programs and services in 2017.

As a church, we continued to respond to the humanitarian crisis at large in Aleppo, Syria and Mosul, Iraq. In Iraq, Hillsong Church partnered with Preemptive Love Coalition and World Vision Australia to provide emergency relief to families displaced by violence.

Here in Australia, Hillsong CityCare partnered with local organisations and the Hillsong Sisterhood to support families in need, including some of the most vulnerable in our community, such as refugees and those affected by domestic violence. We continued to provide individuals and families with food supplies through our Gold Coast Storehouse and Emergency Relief program, supported many in prisons and detention centres, and brought practical aid to dozens of our own neighbours in cities across this nation.

We held our first Worship and Creative Conference which exceeded our expectations – we saw over 6,000 delegates join us both on site and via streaming, representing 19 church denominations and 51 countries.

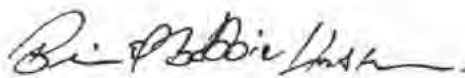
In 2017, our Hillsong Youth and Young & Free Teams launched a Schools Tour for the first time. These were seminar style presentations held in 16 high schools across Australia. These presentations were aimed at empowering young people with practical tools to deal with issues such as bullying, drugs and alcohol misuse.

On March 5, we had the honour of hosting the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Reverend Dr Glenn Davies, as we celebrated the Bible Society's 200th anniversary year. Churches from across many denominations joined together with our church both live and online from 50 locations. It was an incredible day attesting to the life-giving answers found in the Bible and to unity in the church.

As always, Bobbie and I are thankful for the Board of Hillsong Church for their ongoing dedication to ensure our Church home is thriving and operating with good governance.

We count it a privilege to pastor Hillsong Church and know that it is because of the contribution of each and every one, that we are able to have a remarkable impact; ordinary people who make extraordinary sacrifices to love God, love people and build the church.

We have seen God's faithfulness expand what is in our hearts and hands, and it is by His grace that we are able to continue carrying His message of hope, extending love and practical support to so many lives within our beautiful nation and beyond.



Brian & Bobbie Houston



Australian Lead Pastors' Report

We love our country and its people! It's made up of all kinds of everyday ordinary Australians, some who were born in this wide brown land, others who have found themselves on our shores from distant places... all of us, a huge big melting pot of diversity... and a reflection of our amazing God. At the heart of Hillsong Australia is a commitment to help every ONE find their place; every ONE to find hope in Jesus, every ONE to find HOME in Church, and every ONE to discover their value and purpose in God's glorious plan.

As Hillsong Australia continues to enlarge our reach, it is our goal that even though we may grow numerically, we will continue to embrace every individual into our church family. From pastoral care and connect groups, to weekend services, to children and youth programs, to all kinds of programs that serve our communities, plus our annual conferences... reaching and embracing the ONE, really matters to us.

In 2017, we started new campuses in Wollongong on the South Coast of New South Wales; on the West Coast of Australia in the beautiful city of Perth; and for the first time, as Hillsong Australia, we expanded from our Aussie borders and planted a new campus in Bali, Indonesia. We also moved into a permanent facility in the Northern Beaches of Sydney. This incredible new location has the potential for thousands to call it their church home.

Our Australian congregation is not made up of one 'type' of people group, rather it reflects the diversity of our community; 120 known countries represented across all our Australian Campuses, 42.8% of men and 57.2% of women, with 32.4% youth and children making up the future of generations.

Our new Epicentre building in the Hills District of Sydney has enabled us to better host various in-house programs across our church, but has also provided community-focus initiatives such as our Treasure Chest program which saw 56 additional needs children and 54 families supported.

With the isolated and rural regions of our wide brown land in mind, we launched the Church Of The Air™ initiative - an online community that connects Australians living in those remote communities with our weekend church services. In our first year, we have established 27 locations across Australia including external territories, with numerous stories of the positive impact this has had on individuals, families and their communities.

We continued to respond to Domestic Family Violence (DFV) by raising awareness, supporting those impacted by DFV and equipping our staff and volunteers with effective responses to vulnerable people in those situations. In 2017, we operated six Homes of Peace properties for those going through DFV, with 13 women and 12 children successfully transitioned into independent living. Our hope is to see Homes of Peace all across the nation. Hillsong Australia also responded to need within vulnerable groups across our community including refugees and asylum seekers through community engagement and support and practical relief through CityCare.

We are forever thankful for the continued vision and passion of our Global Senior Pastors Brian and Bobbie and the wisdom and support of a faithful board and eldership. Our Hillsong Australia staff and the enormous army of volunteers who willingly and generously love our church and communities are the heroes of our church.

It has been a joy and privilege to build the Church alongside stunning people. Pointing people to Jesus and extending His love to all will be our forever mandate.

We are honoured to serve the people of Hillsong Australia and Bali.

Until all have heard...

Love
Joel & Julia A'Bell

General Manager's Report

We are so grateful as a church for another year of opportunity to extend love and care to those who call Hillsong Church their home and the greater community that we serve. The 2017 Annual Report is a reflection of our commitment to playing our part in seeing generations of people find hope in the message of Jesus Christ.

Hillsong Church has been experiencing significant growth. In recent times, this has been most obvious in the global setting with a number of new international churches established along with existing locations growing rapidly. With the realisation that Hillsong Church, once an Australian Church with global outreach, is now very much a Global Church, Pastor Brian and our Board have been considering how best to structure ourselves for the future. With the help of professional advice, we have been on the journey of restructuring our entities which, in Australia, will streamline our church, property, education and welfare activities. Our global ministries, being overseen by a newly appointed Global Board, are positioned well to give greater attention to the opportunities before us around the world.

Throughout 2017 we implemented these changes, and therefore the financial results are looking measurably different. The 2018 financial results will reflect a full year under the new structure. We would like to express our thanks to Deloitte Australia and Prolegis Lawyers who have provided invaluable guidance through this process along with Ernst & Young our auditors, who have walked this road with us.

In 2017, we added numerous services to our Australian locations, with over 40,000 people gathering in 82 services across 30 church locations. This included expanding into Perth, Wollongong and Bali. We have also established a new facility on the Northern Beaches of Sydney and construction is underway on the warehouse we purchased in Knoxfield, which is in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

The newly built Epicentre facility on our Hills Campus continues to be an incredible resource – housing Hillsong College classes, providing facilities for the recording of Hillsong Channel, weekend services and holding youth and children's programs including Treasure Chest which supports children with additional needs from a broad spectrum of our community.

With future generations in mind, we looked into a sustainable energy source in order to reduce our carbon footprint, energy consumption and costs. In the latter half of 2017, the installation of an 825kW commercial solar panel system was completed on four buildings across NSW and QLD and is currently the largest solar program on a church site in Australia. This system will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 1,347t CO₂e per annum and lower energy consumption on those facilities by more than 30 per cent.

In 2017, Hillsong Foundation distributed \$3,060,220 from funds raised to support the activities of Hillsong CityCare, One80TC Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation. On a global scale we distributed \$714,065.86 from funds raised to support the benevolent activities of Vision Rescue, Hillsong Africa Foundation, A21 Thailand and Preemptive Love Coalition. The balance of the funds raised were invested into facilities needed to cater for our growing congregations.

The Safe Church Department diligently built on the new Safe Church Framework launched in 2016 to ensure the policies and procedures we developed were embedded across the breadth of church activities. The safety of our young people remains of paramount importance. We provided training for all pastors, staff and volunteers working with young people, and have ensured a proper process of vetting before allowing workers access to those programs. A number of new safety initiatives including Food Safety and Transport Safety are also being implemented.

Our Board continues to be committed to ensuring good governance and oversight for our church activities. Several of our board members undertook and completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors course in 2017. We also welcomed a new board member, with the addition of our Hillsong Young & Free Youth Pastor, Peter Toganivalu being appointed.

We are immensely grateful to the Lord for His continued blessing on our church. We are also very appreciative of our Global Senior Pastors, Brian and Bobbie Houston, whose leadership, inclusive hearts and ever-expanding vision, continue to carve out new roads for us to bring hope and practical assistance to the people and local communities we serve across Australia and abroad.



George Aghajanian





HOMER

Isolation in Remote Communities

"My husband and I are currently living in a remote community in the Northern Territory. We are about 7 hours drive from Alice Springs, surrounded by nothing but beautiful desert. Our community is about 440 workers. One tiny shop, a pool, a primary school and high school, and a wonderful health clinic is what makes up this beautiful community with a rich history. Living here is quite pleasant and while the local language has been challenging to get our heads around, the people are altogether friendly.

The most precious thing we miss living out here is a church and family community - a remote community can often evoke a sense of isolation, especially when there is a language and cultural gap, and we've really found ourselves needing something to sustain us for the long haul. When we found out about Hillsong's Church Of The Air™ program, we were overjoyed! We've been able to connect with a wider church family and log into a regular church service that provides spiritual input in our language. This connection has strengthened our faith in Jesus, helped us to feel better equipped to contribute to our community in positive ways and reminds us that we are not alone but are on this journey with others that care."

David and Sarah, Kintore, NT

Church Of The Air™

Church Of The Air™ (ChAir) is an online church community, extending access to weekly church services, where people living in remote and outback Australia, who don't have reasonable access to a local church, can engage in live praise and worship, Christ-centric messages of hope and connect via shared prayer requests and praise reports, social media groups and more recently State-based volunteers.


With approximately 2.6 million people living in outer regional or remote areas of Australia¹, Church Of The Air™ seeks to use the current technology linking our congregations across Australia to better connect isolated communities not just with weekly services, but church life events such as Sisterhood United nights and the Christmas Spectacular. Thus creating a way for communities and people like Sarah and David, though far in distance, to be included in connection and belonging across the waves of technology in the life of the church.

Bec, Church Of The Air™

See page 11 for further information

1. Australian Institute of Family Studies, Families in regional, rural and remote Australia. March 2011. Available from: <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/families-regional-rural-and-remote-australia> [Accessed January 2018]

2. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 4160.0 - Measuring Wellbeing: Frameworks for Australian Social 31 Jul. 2006. Viewed 20 Mar. 2018, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nst/0/4FDE4F3589A73648CA2571B80010B86B?opendocument>



**“ I see a church...
that beckons ‘WELCOME HOME’
to every man, woman and child
that walks through the doors.”**

Brian Houston, The Church I Now See



WELCOMING & INCLUDING

Belonging is a need that resides at the core of who we are, often dictating self-identity and security (ABS 2001).² We believe an environment that welcomes all to ‘come as they are’ places value on people, and provides the kind of healthy community that fosters positive change both individually, and as a society.

Our hope is that every person will hear strongly the message of ‘WELCOME HOME’; both those who walk through our doors and those who may never walk through our doors. Welcome to a place where you belong, welcome to a place that gathers around the broken, welcome to a place where love resides.

HOME:

Reach

We desire to build an environment that allows for every race, culture, age, at different stages of their Christian journey to find their unique place within Hillsong Church. The demographics across our Australian locations reflect a diverse people who share a common unity in their pursuit of truth. Our programs extend help to those in our communities through pastoral care and social justice programs.

We are committed to training and raising up Godly men and women, believing that a Christ-centric life dedicates itself to bringing hope and solution to a needy world. We endeavour to plant healthy churches in Australia and beyond; to equip and disciple people on their spiritual journey and ultimately share the good news and gospel message of Jesus Christ within our local communities.

Our church services are contemporary and creative, embracing people and building a community of support and friendship around the Christian faith. They include modern Christian worship along with practical and encouraging Bible-based teaching.

Connect groups are small mid-week Bible study and discussion groups which allow our church to remain personal, inclusive and provide opportunities for people to build strong communities of friendship and support. These small groups are gathered around age, interest, lifestyle and/or culture. In 2017, an average of 1,332 connect groups reported meeting on a fortnightly basis.

Our congregation also give generously of their time and resources to the charitable programs of our church and beyond. Our programs seek to include and build community across the cultural diversity of our nation and of our church, to build better and healthier Australian communities. This year, Hillsong Church Australia operated in 30 locations, with 82 services each week with new campuses launched in Wollongong, Perth and Bali (adopted under our Australian banner). In each of these locations there are pastors overseeing the day-to-day activities and care of those in their local communities. Some services are formed around Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD), including services for those with Spanish and Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese) speaking backgrounds. We also provide language interpretations in Auslan (Australian Sign Language), Arabic, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Kurdish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Farsi, Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Sinhala, Spanish, Tamil and Thai.

New church locations in 2017:
Perth, Wollongong and Bali

30

Church Locations
(2016: 27)

82

Church Services
(2016: 69)

For every one
person attending
our weekend services
more than

12

people watched the
Hillsong Channel

40,075

Hillsong Australia &
Bali Average Weekly
Church Services
Attendance
(2016: 37,384)

17,495

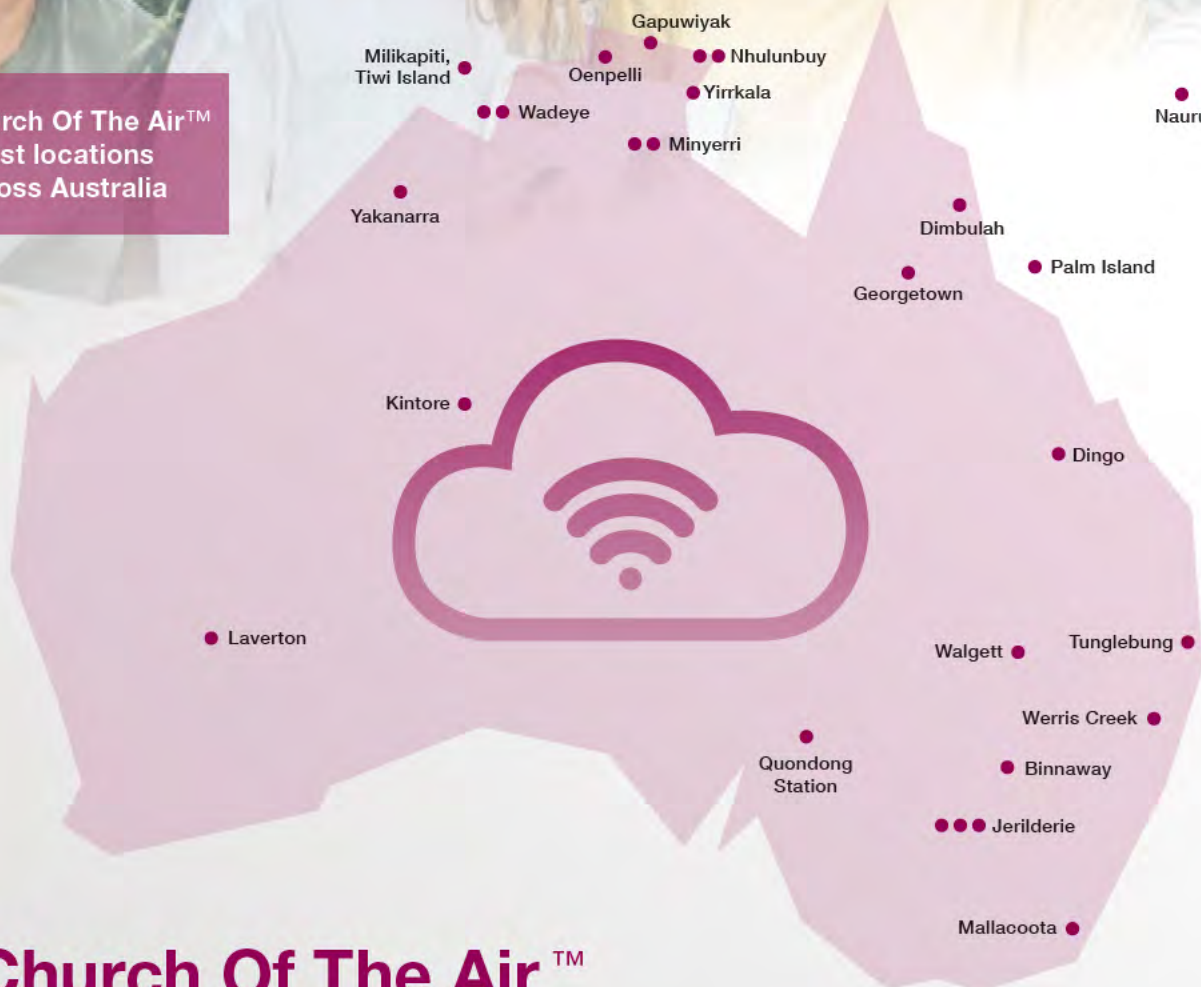
people visited our
website to access our
community services
in 2017

For every one person
attending our weekend
services an average of

3

people streamed
online

27 Church Of The Air™
host locations
across Australia



Church Of The Air™

Church Of The Air™ is an online church community for people living in remote and outback Australia. It allows someone to join the weekly Hillsong Australia church services and events as well as connect to our church community via social media groups and dedicated volunteers.

Since its inception in February 2017, we have been able to establish 27 host locations in 22 different rural towns. These hosts vary from family farmers, teachers and medics in remote communities, very small Christian communities, to people who have taken a posting to serve in local isolated communities with their specific expertise. ChAir hosts have the chance to join with others in their community and connect them with the life-giving message of Jesus in their own home.

***If you or any of your friends or family would like access to ChAir, please visit our website at hillsong.com/church-of-the-air**

HOME:

Our History

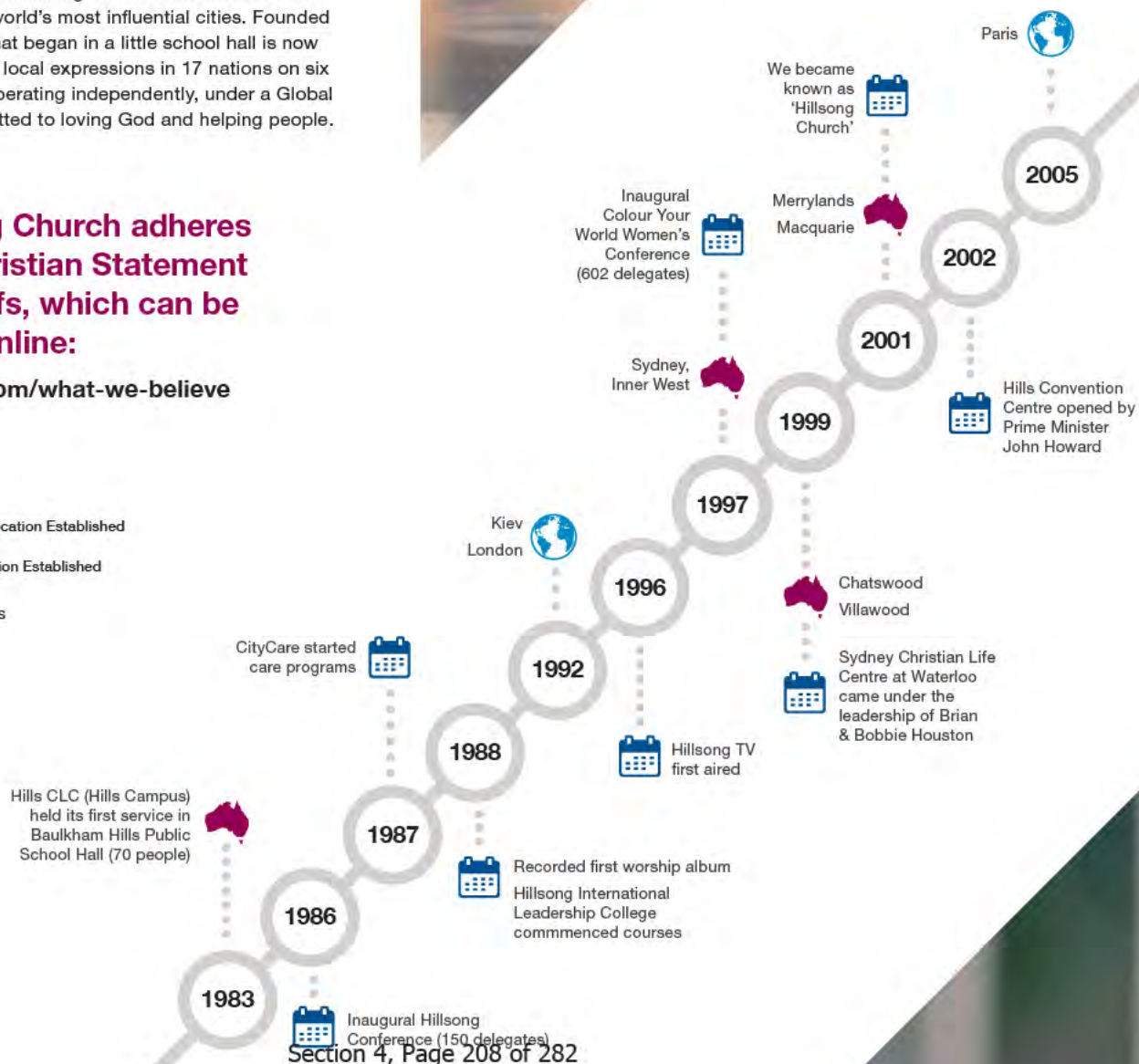
From the very outset of establishing this church, being a 'HOME' for a diverse people has been at the core of who we are. As part of the many layers of building a healthy church, our Global Senior Pastors Brian and Bobbie Houston had a strong desire to communicate clearly that all are welcome within this 'house' called Hillsong. Bobbie envisioned a message of 'Welcome Home' greeting everyone that walks into the church. This message not just literally frames the entrances of all our church buildings, but reinforces our core value of providing an environment that is welcoming and inclusive.

Hillsong Church began as Hills Christian Life Centre in 1983, a pioneer work of Brian and Bobbie Houston. Today, Hillsong Church has developed into an international, multi-campus church, with a network of contributing services and ministries in some of the world's most influential cities. Founded in Sydney, what began in a little school hall is now a church with local expressions in 17 nations on six continents, operating independently, under a Global Board committed to loving God and helping people.

Hillsong Church adheres to a Christian Statement of Beliefs, which can be found online:

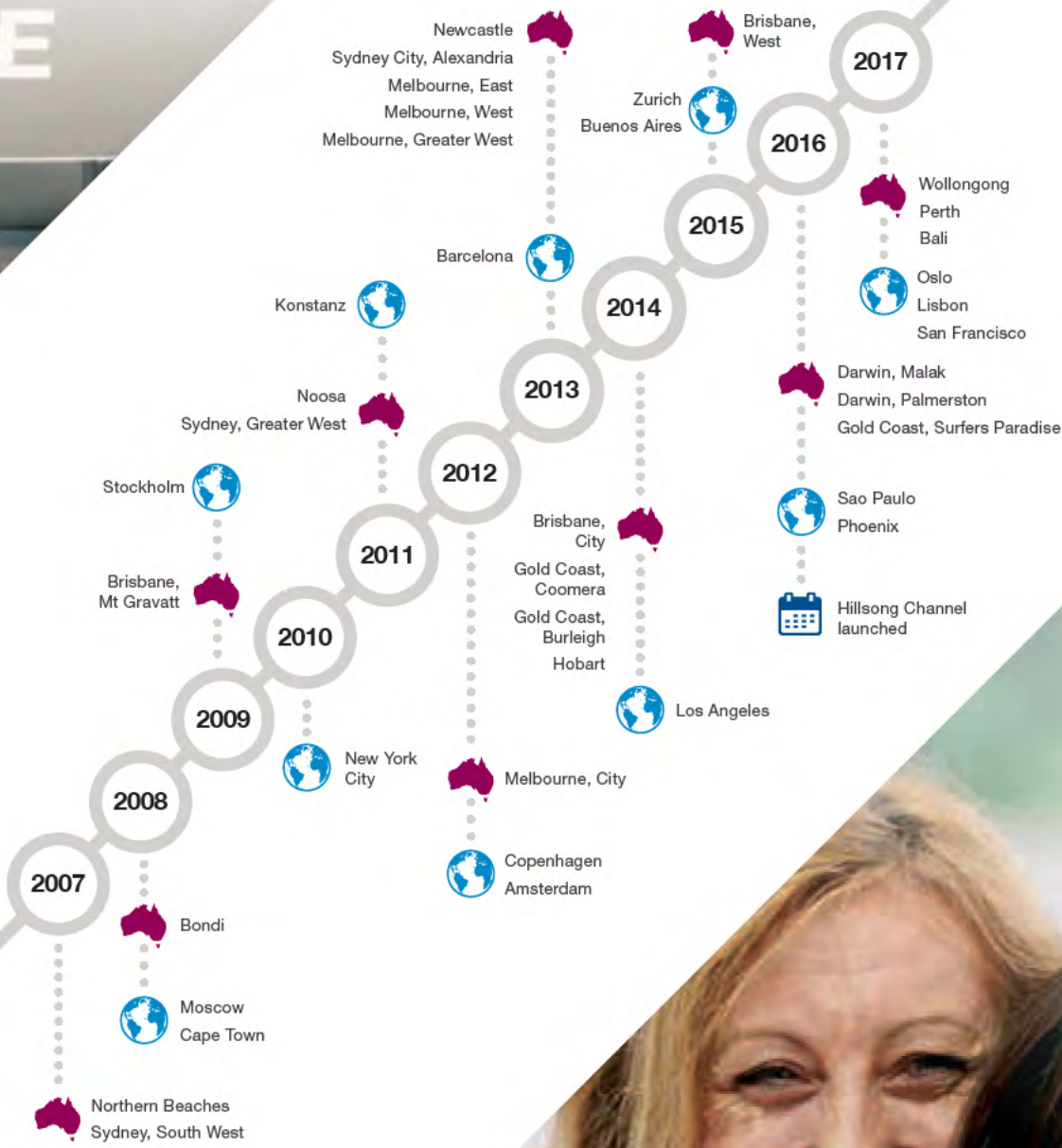
hillsong.com/what-we-believe

-  Australian Location Established
-  Global Location Established
-  Other Events





ME





DIVERSITY

Lost In Translation

"Back in Korea, I was a working mum living an average middle-class family life. When we first arrived in Australia, our lives took an unusual path with me studying again at the age of 38, whilst my husband worked cleaning houses and looking after the kids. It was a jarring transition, and whilst we believed we were meant to be here and appreciated the Australian culture of mateship, equality, fairness and honesty, we missed the familiarity of our own culture. At Hillsong Church, we met fellow Koreans who also found themselves feeling rather alienated in a foreign land - most of us were distant from family and speaking a language we are not fluent in, all whilst trying to adapt to new culture and customs.

Though I never imagined myself to be any kind of a leader, I felt a great need to help our people build a bridge across cultural and language barriers. As a result, I started translating in Korean for our regular church services, and began a Korean connect group which grew to a community of 50 people within a year - a reflection of the vastness of the need. I've discovered that cultural connections like these not just foster a sense of belonging, but develops in people the kind of confidence that encourages greater contribution to their wider community."

Angela, Hillsong Korean Cultural Leader

The Multicultural Community Initiative

"The Multicultural Community Initiative works to foster cultural inclusivity through culture-specific events and gatherings. From monthly multicultural events, small group gatherings and food festivals, to 'Master Your English' classes, and interpretation services, we organise both social connections and practical support to help every culture find community, and integrate into life here in Australia.

Australia is made up of a diverse melting pot of cultures, and there is such a need for people just like Angela to find a 'home away from home'. Over 120 nations are represented within our church gatherings across all our Australian locations. By creating specific spaces for distinct cultures and celebrating uniqueness, we place value on these people groups and communicate that they have a place to belong and a part to play within our community."

Kim, Multicultural Pastor

See page 21 for further information



Y

“ I see a church...
personal enough for every ONE
to find their place.”

Brian Houston, The Church I Now See

VALUING & EMPOWERING

We believe that a diverse community reflects a God who sees beauty in creating each one of us with unique specificities. It is our differences that provide us the opportunity to contribute to society in extraordinarily valuable ways, as we unite all our gifts and talents for causes greater than ourselves. This unity in diversity has incredible potential to build stronger communities and societies, fostering healthy relationships and mutual respect.

DIVERSITY:

The people of Hillsong Australia and Bali



Kids Curriculum

Relevant and engaging Children's Ministry Curriculum with a wide range of multimedia tools were made available to churches globally. In 2017, we released two kids curriculums; 'Draw Near' and 'Celebration'. There were 11,926 months' worth of BiG curriculum made available to churches globally in 2017 which also included our previous curriculums.



Hillsong Kids have been impacting and influencing the landscape of Children's Ministry for many years through their curriculum, their music and also their involvement in ACCkids Training and Conferences to leaders around Australia."

Andy Kirk,
ACCkids National Leader

Children

Hillsong Kids is passionate about coming alongside families, partnering with them to encourage confidence, faith and purpose in young lives. We believe that children have incredible potential and leadership capabilities even from a young age and our desire is to help them make a positive impact on the world around them. Our programs and initiatives seek to cultivate an empowering and safe community for every child to thrive.

Weekly Children's Programs

Hillsong Kids runs weekly programs in conjunction with our weekend services. In 2017, 5,758 children attended our weekend programs, with our Hillsong campuses in Perth, Bali and Wollongong launching weekly kids services.

Community Family Day Event

Hillsong Kids and Amplified Arts Academy (AMP) took a group of dancers aged between 5-12 to participate in the Mission Australia Family Day Event in Blacktown. The event was put on to encourage children in the area to be active and healthy. It was a great opportunity for our team and children to use their gifts and passions to have a positive impact in the community. The children were involved in dance and helped inspire the crowd to participate.

YouTube Channel

youtube.com/hillsongkids

gives children access to positive and educational entertainment, as well as equipping parents and children's pastors with tools to enhance learning. In 2017, our YouTube channel grew to 44,213 subscribers with over 5.1 million minutes viewed.





5,758

Children's Weekly
Attendance
(2016: 5,462)



Junior Leadership Program

A weekly average of 90 children volunteered to be involved with this skill-specific, age-appropriate program that develops leadership confidence and skills.

1,046

Summertime
Attendance (745 kids
and 301 leaders)

Events

▼ Kidsfest

A one-day festival event for children 3 years old to grade 6 designed to create positive community, packed with music, positive messages, festival rides and food



▼ Kidsong

An all-ages kids program that is run in conjunction with our annual Hillsong Conference that includes games, social interaction, music and messages engaging children with the story of Jesus.

▼ Colour Kids

A kids program for 1 year olds to grade 6 that runs alongside our Colour Conference women's event.

▼ Kids Summercamp

Annually held during summer holidays for children ages 7-12 years. These camps consist of fun outdoor activities and faith-based programs designed to build and foster friendships. In 2017 we held our first Summercamp in Tasmania.

2,674

Kidsfest Day Conference
Attendance
(2016: 2,603)

1,028

Leaders in Attendance
at Weekly Programs
(2016: 988)

DIVERSITY:

Youth

Hillsong Young & Free exists to create safe and vibrant programs for young people aged 12-25 to grow in their faith, build resilience, develop healthy relationships, increase self-esteem, all whilst having fun – on a consistent basis. Weekly small groups and Friday night services, along with various community, volunteering, leadership and mentoring initiatives provide a platform for young people to learn invaluable life skills such as empathy, collaboration, conflict resolution, stress management, leadership, resourcefulness and more. The foundation of Young & Free is that we would see young people living in freedom.

During such a crucial time in a young person's growth and development, the consistent engagement of positive role models within our leadership team provides a healthy and safe environment for them to achieve positive life outcomes. Including but not limited to the ability to make wise choices.

Young and Free Schools Tour

Young and Free Schools Tour led by Youth Pastors Peter and Laura Toganivalu and our Hillsong Youth and Young & Free Team, is a seminar-style presentation for high schools that was facilitated for the first time in 2017. The presentation involved empowering young people with practical tools to encourage them to 'live in freedom'. Across the tour we highlighted a wellbeing message; which included exploring topics such as; 'Disarming Bullying' and 'Disarming Drugs and Alcohol Misuse'. The Schools Tour saw us visiting 16 high schools in three states around Australia in five days.

Young & Free Summercamps

Our annual Summercamp, is a one-week, drug-and-alcohol-free camp split into two age groups - High School (Year 7-12), and Powerhouse (18-25 years).

These camps are geared towards providing young people with an opportunity to discover and learn values about identity, friendships, life choices, positive relationships and resilience. In 2017, a total of 3,787 young people across both age groups attended Summercamps.

Our heart is to encourage and empower young people to make right decisions in life that will help them to live out their God-given purpose whilst having copious amounts of fun and laughter involving water sports, tribal challenges, DJs and some incredible songs from our youth ministry.



The event executed was very professional and of excellent standard. Our school operates within a 30 minute lunch break window, Y&F were able to run an entire program for all students and staff that included free food, entertainment, resource awareness and a shared story within that time frame. The presentation was upbeat, fun, current, and was highly favoured by both students and staff."

**Dynene Mailei-Love,
Chaplain, Coombabah State High School**

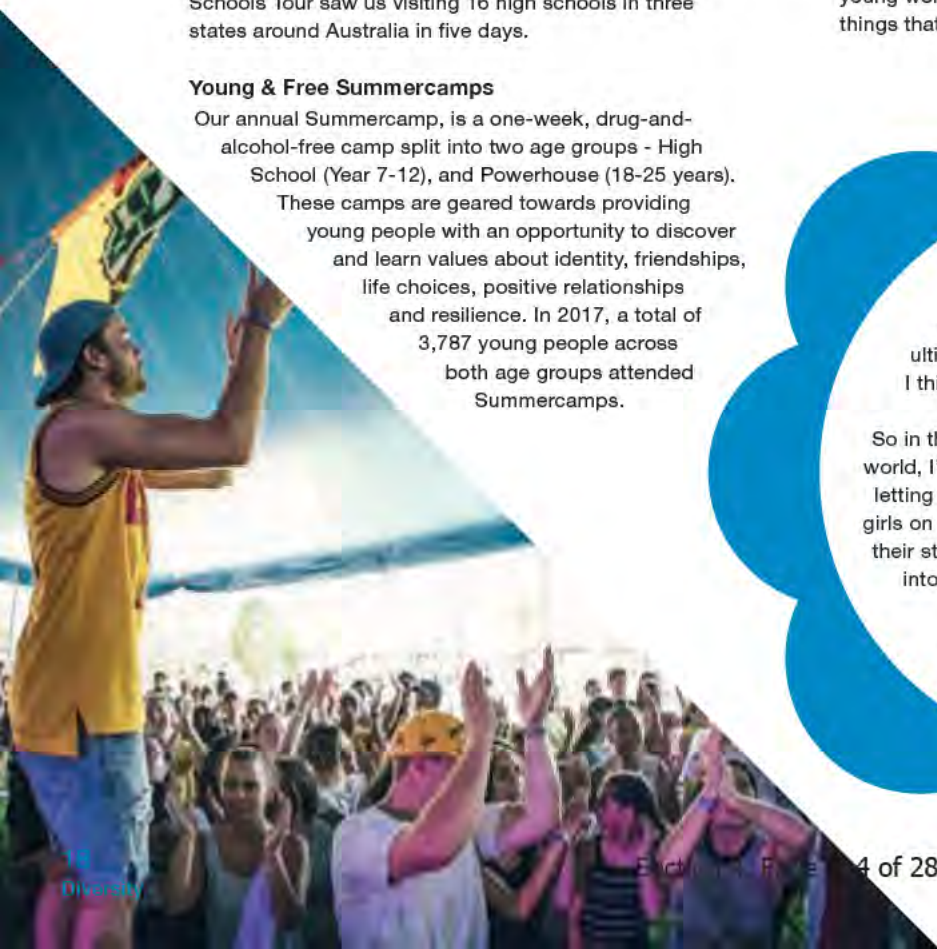
The Secret Garden TV

In thesecretgarden.tv online initiative, our youth pastor Laura Toganivalu interviews women from all walks of life on their unique stories and the incredible lessons they have learnt. It is a space designed to reach and influence young women by compelling them to dig deeper into the things that consume their hearts.

"When I look at the kind of women this world promotes as the ultimate examples of what life should be, I think there must be more to life than just keeping up with appearances.

So in this already over-saturated, content-crazed world, I'm offering just a little bit more content. I'm letting you in on the girls that cross my path, the girls on all sorts of different journeys, in hopes that their stories will compel you to dig a little deeper into the matters that consume our hearts."

**Laura Toganivalu,
Founder of thesecretgarden.tv**





4,238

Young & Free
Youth Conference
Attendance
(2016: 4,106)

Young & Free
Schools Tour Visited
16 High Schools in
3 States in 5 days

Encounterfest 2017
was held in 5 states
NSW, QLD, NT,
WA and VIC

Uprising

Uprising is about creating opportunity for young people to discover and develop leadership for all areas of their life, by providing opportunity for students to run regular weekly and annual events. It paves avenues for them to not only learn, but to practically apply what they learn through volunteering in areas they are interested in developing. Uprising encompasses a variety of areas including but not limited to leading teams, creativity, events and administration, technology, personal development as well as the opportunity to be involved in social justice projects.

Encounterfest

Encounterfest is an annual event held during the October school holidays. It is geared towards empowering youth and young adults in our community through Christ-centric teaching and practical masterclasses covering topics such as relationships, school leadership opportunities as well as creative topics.

A key component of Encounterfest is social justice where we encourage 'selfless' living, partnering with community organisations to provide practical support. During our 2017 Encounterfest Event, we had a total of 4,553 young people in attendance who gave generously towards a local and global cause, contributing a total of \$19,460.

Globally, we partnered with Preemptive Love Coalition and their work in Aleppo, Syria. After being moved by the stories of the many families that had been displaced in Aleppo due to the ongoing war, we were grateful for the opportunity to give generously to help those displaced rebuild their lives and homes. Through the generosity of the young people at Encounterfest, we were able to commit to rebuilding five homes.

Locally, we partnered with Hillsong CityCare to support a young boy and his family who had just recently moved to Australia as refugees (refer to the 'Justice' segment for further details).

Over 2,000 young people attended our weekly youth programs

DIVERSITY:



Seniors

Research indicates that older Australians deem their social lives and the extent to which they feel isolated from family and the wider community, the most influential factor on overall life satisfaction.³

Hillsong Church values the well-being and contribution of the older generations within our church, offering support, involvement in church activities and the opportunity to provide wisdom and leadership for the younger generations. Our church and community initiatives include:

Monthly meetings

Faith-based gatherings aimed at building positive social integration, community engagement and opportunities for personal support

Social activities

Bush Walks, garden visits, knitting groups, prayer groups, walking groups, craft activities and Bible studies

Volunteer opportunities

Weekend service roles, scripture teaching, hospital visitations and other various community programs

3. National Seniors Australia, Don't go it alone: Life satisfaction among older Australians report, August 2016, Pg. 6. Available from: https://nationalseniors.com.au/system/files/07161932PAC_LifeSatisfactionAmongOlderAustralians_PACReport_R4.pdf [Accessed January 2018]

ONE80TC

Each year, we organise for those in our Seniors community to connect with ONE80TC - a men's residential alcohol and drugs rehabilitation centre. The two groups share morning tea and encourage each other as they exchange life stories

Visitation and Care

A key services we provide for those in our Seniors Community is pastoral care in addition to practical support including services such as transportation, hospital and home visitations as well as meals



In partnership with Hillsong Sisterhood, our seniors knitting group contributed

1,564

teddies, blankets, headbands and beanies which were donated to various hospitals





Gatherings

- ▶ A monthly meeting where different cultural groups hosted a 'banquet table', serving authentic food from different cultures and building communities after our evening services
- ▶ Monthly culture-specific gatherings filled with music and food. In December we had 623 people attend
- ▶ Combined annual multicultural Christmas celebrations, held on 1st Friday of December
- ▶ English Language classes - CityCare runs a weekly English as a Second Language (ESL) class geared towards grasping the basics of the English language. Advanced classes are also available to ESL graduates through our Hillsong Evening College - 'Master Your English' and Conversational English

Multicultural Community

The Multicultural Community initiative exists to gather, endorse and embrace cultural uniqueness while uniting people together within a Christ-centric narrative. Our goal is that people will find a place of belonging, contribution and instills value and worth. In 2017, our church community represented 120 nations across six continents, our hope is that these multicultural programs will foster incredible community within these cultures.

Programs

Interpretation Services

We provide interpretation services for up to 19 different languages over our weekend services, which included: Auslan (Australian Sign Language), Arabic, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Kurdish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Farsi, Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Sinhala, Spanish, Tamil and Thai.

Church attendees
come from over

120

different countries



DIVERSITY:

Women

The empowerment of women is a key component of a thriving economy - improving community development and quality of life for all.⁴ At Hillsong Church, we take a strong stance on the wellbeing and equality of women regardless of culture, age, social standing, or religious beliefs. Through our various initiatives, we endeavor to build a community where women can not just find spiritual, social and physical support as they navigate through all stages of life, but come together to be a force for good in our world.

Hillsong Sisterhood

The Hillsong Sisterhood is a movement of everyday women who gather weekly, united in friendship and cause. Our aim is to place value on all women, advocate awareness of issues and mobilise our women to take action to help those who are vulnerable across the globe.

2017 Sisterhood initiatives:

- Weekly Sisterhood meetings where women connect with one another, experience a faith-filled environment with a practical message that builds hope, encouragement and resilience. The theme of 'Brave Women Run In My Family' was a focus in 2017
- Hillsong Sisterhood Small Groups are geared towards building an environment for people to find friendship and belonging
- The Colour Conference, an annual conference designed to gather, equip and mobilise women to invest in positive ways back into their local communities (refer to our Empowerment section for further details)
- Shine programs developed to build value and identity into young women throughout Australia (refer to our Empowerment section for further details)

2,481

Sisterhood Weekly
Attendance
(2016: 2,400)

8,597

Sisterhood United
Attendance in
November
(2016: 6,831)

4.2%

increase in the number
of people who were
part of Sisterhood
small groups

4. UN Women, Economic Empowerment. Available from: <https://unwomen.org.au/our-work/focus-areas/economic-empowerment/> [Accessed January 2018]

2017 Community initiatives

In conjunction with Hillsong CityCare we hosted a BBQ in the local park for over 300 Syrian and Iranian refugee families newly moved to the area to assist with their integration into community life



\$3,900

in donations were raised on Sisterhood United Night for Gove Hospital in Northern Territory to support the women of East Arnhem Land with basic practical supplies who have limited resources to provide for their newborns



115kg

of self-care products were donated to Gove Hospital by Hillsong Darwin Sisterhood



Our Hillsong Sisterhood continued to volunteer in the Westmead Children's Hospital (WCH) by:

Having a qualified massage therapist who provides neck and shoulder massages for the parents



Having a dedicated baking team who provides home cooked treats to the Grace ward (for newborns) and the Oncology Clinic. A high tea is also provided twice a year in the clinic for the families and staff

Supported Domestic Family Violence victims by:

Providing welcome packs when people arrive at the refuge, containing basic toiletry items



Providing gifts on request for mums who may have their child's birthday whilst in the refuge and are unable to provide a gift themselves

Pamper Teams of volunteer makeup and nail artists, hairdressers and masseurs visit on various occasions to care for these women



DIVERSITY:



57.2%
are women and
42.8%
are men within
our church

1,813

men and women
united to participate
in the 'Walk for Freedom' aimed at raising
awareness of human trafficking and the
work of The A21 Campaign who advocate
to bring solution to this issue



Men

Our passion is to build strong, Godly men; men who are courageous, resilient and steadfast; loving sons, faithful husbands, strong fathers. We focus on community, strength in vulnerability, identity in Christ, having hearts that love God and learning to find value in journeying life together with other like-minded men.

Annual Men's Event

Our annual Hillsong Men's Event is an evening geared towards bringing encouragement, strengthening social connection and faith-inspiring messages centred on Jesus Christ. In 2017, our Men's Event gathered close to 6,000 men. During this evening, we brought awareness to the issue of Domestic Family Violence. The men who attended generously donated over \$28,000 to CityCare's Homes of Peace.

ONE80TC

We continue our long-standing support of ONE80TC, a men's drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. As part of the organisation's commitment to foster healthy and lasting community, residents of ONE80TC attend Hillsong Church with staff members on the weekends.

For more information on ONE80TC
visit one80tc.org

5,987

Men's Event 2017
Attendance across
Australia
(2016: 5,656)



Hillsong Men

Our 90-minute program on a Thursday morning in the Hillsong Chapel consists of faith-inspiring music, an inspiring message and closes with a 30-minute connect group time where all the guys break off into small groups to talk about life and what they had learnt from the session. These connect groups have been the most transformational part of Hillsong Men so far as it has offered something that builds longevity and a healthy community. In fact, in 2017 we shaped our vision around community to fight the isolation a lot of men struggle with day to day.

Outside of our own program, we are committed to serving the women in Hillsong Sisterhood. Our belief is that a huge part of who we are as men who love God and love people, is to place value on the women in our worlds. What this practically looks like is having a weekly team to help logistically – from setting up staging, to holding an umbrella in the rain – we commit our time to assist. Our hope is to instill in every boy and man the utmost importance of placing value on women in the world we live in by serving them and championing their walks with God.





JUSTICE

A Family Displaced

From 2014, ISIS wrought devastation in Iraq, targeting Yazidi people in particular, in a campaign to establish a caliphate. Cities were demolished, innocent people were murdered and millions were displaced.

Around four years ago, Emad*, a courageous 9-year-old Yazidi boy living in Iraq, suffered horrific burns as a result of a terrorist attack. The only relief his family could give him at that time with no access to medical treatment was to run cold water over his burns. In the midst of this upheaval, Emad was kidnapped and held for months by ISIS. When he was finally released, the family fled to a refugee camp and connected with Preemptive Love Coalition, who then supported the family along their journey. In 2017, Emad's family were granted visas to live in Australia as refugees and they arrived in August of that year. In their bid to continue to help Emad's family, Preemptive Love Coalition alerted us to the arrival of the family and of Emad's medical needs and asked Hillsong, as the local church, to help.

At our initial contact, the family didn't know where they had landed, and the confusion around why they were here and how long they could stay was evident. They needed a community and a support network, just like they had in the initial part of their journey.

Hillsong CityCare immediately responded by contacting the local refugee settlement agency, working with a translator, and arranging appointments for Emad's treatment. Volunteers from Hillsong Church and the local community provided transport for Emad to attend his appointments for the first in a series of five surgeries that he was required to undergo, providing physical and emotional support to a family still suffering from immense trauma and disconnection from their home and old lives.

**Name has been changed to protect the privacy of this individual.*

Local and Global Response

"During the years since 2014, the attention of Hillsong Church has been on the Middle East as civil conflict raged in Syria, displacing 6.1 million people and driving 5.5 million refugees abroad.⁵ A humanitarian crisis of an unprecedented scale and intensity was unfolding and, as a church, we wanted to respond however we could.

In and around Aleppo, Syria and Mosul, Iraq, Hillsong Church partnered with Preemptive Love Coalition and World Vision Australia to provide emergency relief to families displaced by violence. Hot meals, monthly food packs and access to safe water were secured for families, along with shelter and access to child-friendly spaces. These simple, practical donations allowed our partners to be able to reach those we couldn't reach ourselves.

Here at home, we sought to extend practical support to families whose lives had been brutally disrupted by a war they didn't choose; families such as Emad's.

Whether in Iraq or Australia, as a church we are able to stand alongside Emad's family and others like them, acknowledging their value, resilience and capacity and partnering with them in friendship to see them empowered to reach their potential."

Catherine, Head of Social Justice Hillsong Australia

See page 28 for further information

5. IRIN Association, Ten humanitarian crises to look out for in 2018, January 2018. Available from: <http://www.irinnews.org/feature/2018/01/01/ten-humanitarian-crises-look-out-2018> [Accessed January 2018]



“ I see a church...
doing all we can to bring help and
solution to a needy world.”

Brian Houston, The Church I Now See

MOBILISING & IMPACTING

Underpinning our social justice initiatives is the belief that every person is made in the image of God with equal value and inherent capacity. When the truth of every person's value is distorted and humanity lives without a sense of their value and identity, disconnected from God, each other and creation, various expressions of injustice result such as conflict, discrimination and oppression. We believe in a God of justice who we seek to join with in actively bringing about reconciliation, wholeness and right relationships. As a local church, we desire to tangibly express the love of God and seek justice in holistic and sustainable ways and we desire peace for the cities that we call home and for our global community.

JUSTICE:

Local & Global Social Justice

In order to bring solution to human need and effectively respond to injustice and poverty, a holistic approach that addresses root causes and underlying issues is essential. Justice involves both social responsibility and structural justice and requires response at both an individual and collective level.

In response to our understanding of God's heart for justice and love for our local and global neighbours, Hillsong Church seeks to facilitate positive change for individuals

and communities, with a focus on the wellbeing of young people and families, social connection, relief in emergencies, and longer-term empowerment.

In 2017, Hillsong Church mobilised to engage in social justice in various ways through CityCare and our overseas aid and development initiatives, including the direct facilitation of services and programs, volunteering and financial contribution.

Local Community Services

Hillsong CityCare's mission is to mobilise the church to engage with their local communities through its programs and services. Our heart is to create strong, healthy families and safe inclusive communities by empowering youth, women and other vulnerable groups to lead and

impact in every sphere of life. The CityCare team works closely with their local church pastors to provide support to individuals and families within a 15km radius of all our locations.



Street Teams: Street Teams made 21,155 contacts with local residents through our community events, nursing home visits, homeless shower bus service and personal visitations.



Kilo of Kindness: 65,576 food and hygiene items were donated towards Kilo of Kindness.

Stuff the Bus: 149,995 unique food items and toys were donated to Stuff the Bus Christmas Appeal. These were distributed to 13,779 families facing difficult circumstances at Christmas time.



CityCare Storehouse Gold Coast: The Storehouse provided food relief and support to 9,041 families and also supported 14 schools by supplying and delivering food on a weekly basis for Breakfast Clubs, Open Pantry Projects and bags of Kilos of Kindness for struggling school families.



Shower bus: The shower bus service in the Melbourne CBD has had great consistency, seeing up to 50-60 participants on average each week.



Emergency Relief Program: 8,900 individuals and families were provided with food assistance through our Emergency Relief program in 2017.

Homes of Peace: 13 women and 12 children were successfully supported through the Homes of Peace program.



Hillsong Youth Services (HYS): We reached 57,947 students through all our school outreach programs across Australia.





HYS Hills Campus team engaged and connected with 23,243 students in the local government area of Blacktown and Baulkham Hills in 2017

Street teams

Street Teams connect with the community by offering practical and social support to people who are alone or in need of assistance. We provide this social network of support through personal visitations and large community events. We meet people in their environments with the aim of providing relational connection and referring them to appropriate networks of support. We are currently operating in multiple suburbs across New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria, interacting with local residents, the elderly in nursing homes and the homeless community. We engaged with 504 people through our Street Teams on a weekly basis.

Street Teams – Mobile Shower Service

In partnership with OneVoice we operate a mobile shower unit in Melbourne's CBD and in Sydney's Parramatta town centre to provide practical and relational support for homeless men and women. This facility provides a safe place where they can have the dignity of a warm shower and a supportive community of volunteers.

The number of people engaging with us and utilising our Monday night Mobile Shower Bus service in Prince Alfred Square, Parramatta, has significantly increased since we launched in July 2016. With the increased demand, we are now providing this service on Saturday mornings as well. In Melbourne, we have seen some of our regular shower bus patrons feel like they are a part of the team and love to get involved with setting up, serving and packing down.

Hillsong Youth Services (HYS)

Hillsong Youth Services (HYS) provides practical support through recreation and skills-based vocational programs for young people aged 12-25 years. We run both formal and informal programs in local schools and community youth hubs to empower young people to live life to their full potential.

Our HYS services in NSW are partially funded by the local state government and CityCare funded across all other Hillsong Australian campuses. We take a two-pronged approach of ensuring we build relationships with local schools and improve social connectedness with young people in our community.

HYS Funding by NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS)

In 2017, our HYS program received \$174,745 which enabled us to employ two full time youth workers and fund the operations within the local government area (LGA) of Blacktown and Baulkham Hills area.

On an average school week, our two youth workers reached 660 students through these schools each week by running breakfast clubs, ShineGirl and Strength Classes, Sports programs, and community networking activities.

CityCare funded HYS Services across Australia

HYS also operates its programs in other locations across New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria that are CityCare funded.

JUSTICE:



Gold Coast Storehouse

Hunger is a largely hidden social problem and many suffer in silence, with the most at risk groups being sole parents, children and elderly people⁶. One of our key objectives is to strengthen families by addressing poverty, hunger and social isolation for people experiencing hardship in the community.

The CityCare Storehouse supports individuals and families who are struggling financially with food and household consumables at the cost of a minimal handling fee or complimentary. It aims to create a financially sustainable food and emergency relief model that offers quality, low cost and complimentary fresh and packaged food, whilst providing a safe and encouraging environment that fosters genuine connection. This is possible because we partner with key food rescue agencies such as Foodbank Queensland and Oz Harvest and we also network with key businesses to create an eco-sustainable partnership. These businesses donate their surplus food stock free of charge as part of their corporate social responsibility.

6. Foodbank Australia, Foodbank Hunger Report 2016. Pg. 4. Available from: <https://www.foodbank.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Foodbank-Hunger-Report-2016.pdf> [Accessed March 2018]

Our CityCare Gold Coast Storehouse partners with organisations such as Foodbank Queensland, Village Roadshow owned theme parks, Oz Harvest, Second Bite, Gold Coast City Council and schools to help families and young people experiencing hardship.

Stuff the Bus & Kilo of Kindness

Stuff the Bus is our annual Christmas Appeal to help families and individuals in our local communities, who are experiencing financial and emotional hardship at Christmas. We want to place dignity on parents by resourcing them with unwrapped gifts to give to their children on Christmas Day and food hampers to enable families to celebrate around a Christmas meal.

Kilo of Kindness is launched as a part of our Cross Equals Love Campaign at Easter where the church is mobilised to donate non-perishable food items to help individuals and families in need in our communities.

Domestic Family Violence Response

At Hillsong, we believe every person is worthy of respect and has the right to be safe and live free from coercive control and violence.

Statistics show that one in four Australian women has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner (ABS 2014)⁷.

Three key ways of response:

- **Raise Awareness:** ensure our church and the communities we are involved with are informed, sensitive and understanding of this issue
- **Support:** engage, take action and practically support those impacted by DFV
- **Equip:** ensure our pastors, staff and volunteers are trained and resourced to provide informed, sensitive, and effective responses to individuals and families impacted by DFV

Homes of Peace

Our Homes of Peace program is one of the ways in which we provide transitional support for families leaving domestic violence, enabling them to successfully rebuild their lives. The current capacity of this program is six houses and the employment of one full time Social Worker to administer the program and assist in the case management of the families. We are about to recruit a second case worker to assist with the daily running of the program.

Our CityCare Homes of Peace program also partners with many community organisations and domestic violence shelters to provide the best holistic care to families. All referrals into Homes of Peace are received through these domestic violence shelters. Homes of Peace provide case management support to the families for the duration of their program involvement. After a family has exited from Homes of Peace, aftercare support is also provided.



Emergency Relief Program

Due to the rising cost of living, 3.6 million everyday Australians are forced to make decisions between skipping meals and paying rent and bills, in order to keep their families from experiencing homelessness⁸. This is the case for many of the individuals and families we have supported.

Our Emergency Relief assistance through CityCare helps individuals and families in financial or personal crisis by providing them with food hampers. Our food relief is made sustainable through our Kilo of Kindness food drive, which is launched each year at our Easter Cross Equals Love campaign. Every weekend thereafter, our campuses receive bags of non-perishable food items from church members who choose to consistently give in kind to this program.

- Hillsong CityCare Waterloo Centre partnered with Wesley Mission to expand our service provision, ensuring that we offer a more holistic approach to our local community. As a result of this partnership, we are now offering grocery vouchers, gas and electricity subsidies and access to brokerage support for larger scale expenses – all of which help alleviate a crisis situation
- Hillsong CityCare Waterloo Centre partnered with Oz Harvest to provide a weekly supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to individuals and families who are on a low income or experiencing a crisis. As local community members visit our centre to access this service, it provides a connection point for them to discuss other needs or challenges they may require longer term support for

7. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014 4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, 2014, 18 Dec 2015. Viewed 9 Apr 2018, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4102.0>

8. Foodbank Australia, Foodbank Hunger Report 2017. Pg. 6. Available from: <https://www.foodbank.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Foodbank-Hunger-Report-2017.pdf> [Accessed January 2018]



JUSTICE:

Overseas Aid & Development

In following the example of Jesus Christ who came to bring good news to the poor, we seek to be agents of love, justice and peace, not just in our own backyards but also our global communities and to create opportunity for people to overcome barriers to reaching their potential.

Through our overseas aid and development activities – facilitated by the Hillsong Foundation, the Colour Sisterhood Foundation and Hillsong Aid & Development Australia⁹ – we seek to respond to challenges faced by our global neighbours with compassion and solution and a focus on the rights of vulnerable children, women's empowerment and provision of relief in humanitarian emergencies.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children

Children are often among the most vulnerable groups in society and as a church we are committed to upholding every child's value and inalienable rights, with a focus on family-based care and education.

Access to Education

We have a long-term partnership with Vision Rescue, who provide formal and non-formal education pathways for children in Mumbai, India. In 2017, over \$258,700 was distributed to engage and sustain children in education through facilitation of a range of formal and non-formal education programs.

Over 1,510 children were enrolled in Vision Rescue education programs and 200 children were enrolled in formal schooling.


Community Development and Family-based Care

We partnered with Hillsong Africa Foundation, providing just under \$204,000 to support 'Our Community Project' in South Africa, incorporating a range of community programs with a focus on local leadership and empowerment. Across various communities, individuals completed personal development courses and received employment support through Accelerate Centres; students were engaged through a LightsOn after-school program and an annual Spelling Bee to support literacy development; and families were supported in providing alternative family-based care for vulnerable children including receiving training on early childhood development.

Child-centred Development

Hillsong Church enjoys a long partnership with Compassion Australia and in 2017, through Colour Conference, Hillsong Conference, Worship & Creative Conference and the annual Compassion Sunday in Australia, 3,256 children were sponsored. These children will receive access to education and other supports for improved wellbeing.

9. Hillsong Church partners with Hillsong Aid & Development Australia in the management of international aid and development project partnerships.



Orphans
and Vulnerable
Children



Humanitarian
Response



Women's
Empowerment

In 2017, the Colour Sisterhood raised funds to support the following initiatives:

- Restorative fistula surgery for women in Ethiopia, Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation
- Crisis pregnancy support for women in Cambodia, Mothers Heart
- Safe birthing kits for mothers in East Timor and Uganda, World Vision Australia and Birthing Kit Foundation Australia
- Sanitary products and education for students, Keep A Girl In School, Watoto
- Literacy and skills for income-generation, social support and access to education for children, Neighbourhood Mother Program, Watoto
- Group-based personal development programs for women, Shine

Women's Empowerment

We desire a world in which women live free from violence, poverty and inequality and seek to contribute to the removal of barriers that women face to their empowerment and realised potential, for the benefit of all of society.

Trafficking Reintegration and Repatriation

Over \$80,600 was distributed to the A21 Thailand Safe Repatriation Program, providing services and support to enable survivors of trafficking to return home or find a safe alternative care option.

32 survivors of trafficking were supported with repatriation and rehabilitation services. The Colour Sisterhood also raised support for A21 trafficking prevention and aftercare work in Eastern Europe, Greece and Thailand. Support was also raised for She Rescue Home, facilitating the restoration and safe reintegration of survivors of trafficking and/or sexual abuse in Cambodia.



JUSTICE:



Removing Barriers to Education - Vision Rescue, India

Nine-year-old Ananya*, from the slums of Chedanagar, Mumbai, walked into the Vision Rescue mobile Dental Clinic with pain and sensitivity in her teeth. Both of Ananya's parents are daily wage labourers and struggle to make ends meet. Despite a strong desire to educate their four children, they didn't have the means to send them all to school.

The Vision Rescue team met with Ananya's family and encouraged them to send their children to the non-formal education program. Being enrolled in the Vision Rescue Bus Program was a ray of hope and the children were incredibly excited to be able to access education.

As a result of consistent follow-up and support from the Vision Rescue team, all four children have now been enrolled in formal schooling. The Dental Team provided treatment for Ananya and she is currently enjoying grade 4 at school. Being in school not only keeps Ananya and her siblings off the streets and safer from exploitation but also helps to ensure a brighter future for their family.

**Name has been changed to protect the privacy of this individual.*

Humanitarian Response

Globally, an unprecedented 65.6 million people (including nearly 22.5 million refugees) have been forced from their homes¹⁰. Immediate, life-saving assistance is required for displaced families, as well as longer-term rebuilding and development for communities impacted by years of conflict.

Responding to the Refugee Crisis

As a church, we have endeavoured to respond in various ways to the record level of displacement in our world, with a focus on the Middle East region.

- Over \$185,000 was distributed for Preemptive Love Coalition's work in Syria and Iraq, which enabled the provision of monthly food relief packs, access to safe water for displaced families, and rebuilding of the homes of families returning home in Syria.
- Supported World Vision Australia for the provision of food, water, sanitation, shelter, emergency supplies, child-friendly spaces for healing and learning through play in Syria and Iraq and early childhood education in Lebanon.
- Support was also raised for A21, to provide clean water, warm showers, trafficking awareness information for refugees in Greece and training for frontline professionals in trafficking identification.

10. UNHCR, Figures at a Glance. Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>. Accessed 13 Feb. 2018> [Accessed February 2018]







WELLBEING

Additional Needs Families

"A few years ago my husband and I went through an incredibly difficult season after stepping down from 16 years of involvement in key leadership at our church, experiencing personal loss, and discovering our son Liam had Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Disillusioned by God and struggling with our faith, we moved to Sydney hoping to find a safe space to heal as a family and get better support for our son.

When we first started attending Hillsong Church, we were cautious about God and the church and stood at a distance. It was during one of the weekend services that we were introduced to Treasure Chest. On the surface, it was a program run to help parents with special needs children, but to us it became so much more than that. Working with children on the autism spectrum is especially challenging as they have no capacity to show thanks or appreciation, and in fact they would often display physical hostility when feeling overwhelmed. The consistency of the Treasure Chest team was incredible, they were patient, kind, willing to go the extra mile for my child and showed immense care for both Liam and ourselves. The rooms were designed with intentionality, keeping the specific needs of our children in mind. It was encouraging to see the support, acceptance, commitment and welcome week in and week out, even with no public recognition for what they were doing.

It was so unexpected for us, but this was the place that we found our healing. At a time when my husband and I could not give much, the church supported us not knowing us from a bar of soap! It opened our hearts again to love and God, more than our years of ministry and messages from the stage ever did."

June, mother, Treasure Chest

Treasure Chest

"Treasure Chest is the Additional Needs Program of Hillsong Church for children, teenagers and young adults with diagnosed disabilities or special learning needs and their families. It comprises of weekend programs run in conjunction with our services, fortnightly morning teas for the families, and additional support events such as periodic date nights for the parents.

With children such as Liam in mind, we consulted with professionals to design our Treasure Chest rooms and program structures in specific ways to help foster a more conducive learning environment. We believe that providing a safe and healthy space for families with additional needs children to thrive and develop positive lasting relationships, increases their sense of belonging and reduces the isolation that can sometimes arise.


Parents such as June and her husband often face incredible challenges day in and day out, and we are passionate about coming alongside them during their time with us so they can experience a moment of care and encouragement."

Lyndelle, Hillsong Pastoral Care

See page 42 for further information

11. *Habits for Wellbeing, What is Wellbeing?* Available from: <https://www.habitsforwellbeing.com/what-is-wellbeing/> [Accessed April 2018]

12. Eckersley, R. (2008). *Never better – or getting worse? The health and wellbeing of young Australians*. Pg. 9. Available from: http://www.richardeckersley.com.au/attachments/A21_youth_health_wellbeing.pdf [Accessed March 2018]



“ I see a church...
that loves God, loves people
and loves life.”

Brian Houston, The Church I Now See

NG

CARING & LOVING

Wellbeing is a term used to convey a complex combination of a person's physical, social, emotional, spiritual, environmental, occupational and intellectual health factors.¹¹ Whilst a church most obviously speaks to an individual's spiritual wellbeing, we believe that a holistic approach to wellbeing is crucial to an individual's health and function, impacting greatly on the way they perceive life and positively contribute to society. With a reported decline in wellbeing amongst Australians, especially amongst young people¹² – a majority reporting lower levels of wellbeing and higher levels of stress, depression and anxiety symptoms – we continue to be committed to providing support, programs and pathways for individuals to increase levels of wellbeing across the board.

WELLBEING:

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is the practical outworking of our belief that there is a God in heaven who loves each person, and a community of people who are here to love and support them, in the good times as well as the bad.

Our Pastoral Care teams comprise of dedicated people including pastors, trained counsellors and volunteers who respond to the needs of individuals and families in the church community as they arise. Our teams work hard to extend love in tangible and practical ways, helping and supporting those who are experiencing personal, social, moral, physical, mental or spiritual distress. These include (not limited to) those facing issues with relationships, physical and mental health, trauma and people experiencing grief and loss. Once involved, the Pastoral Care team will assess the situation, propose an action plan and allocate the appropriate resources.

Some examples of responses include:

- ✦ Marriage support
- ✦ Integration in community support programs
- ✦ Counselling
- ✦ Referral to health care professionals or government agencies
- ✦ Educational resources
- ✦ Providing meals
- ✦ Hospital and home visits
- ✦ Support over the phone
- ✦ Transport to appointments
- ✦ Practical home help (cleaning and gardening etc.)

Training

To ensure our Pastoral Care team are well equipped to support those in need, ongoing training is provided.

This year, we provided the following training courses:

- ✦ Clinical psychologist Dr Rebecca Loundar trained all pastors, CityCare team, receptionists, Hillsong TV and Channel staff etc. across Australia on Suicide Prevention. Following this, we are in the process of training all key leaders on an appropriate response when there is a risk of suicide
- ✦ Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training was held at Hills Campus and the Youth Mental Health First Aid training for all youth pastors in NSW
- ✦ Gottman Training: A recognised training course by The Relationship Institute, Australia – 2 of our pastors from the Hills Campus attended in order to help couples strengthen their marriages

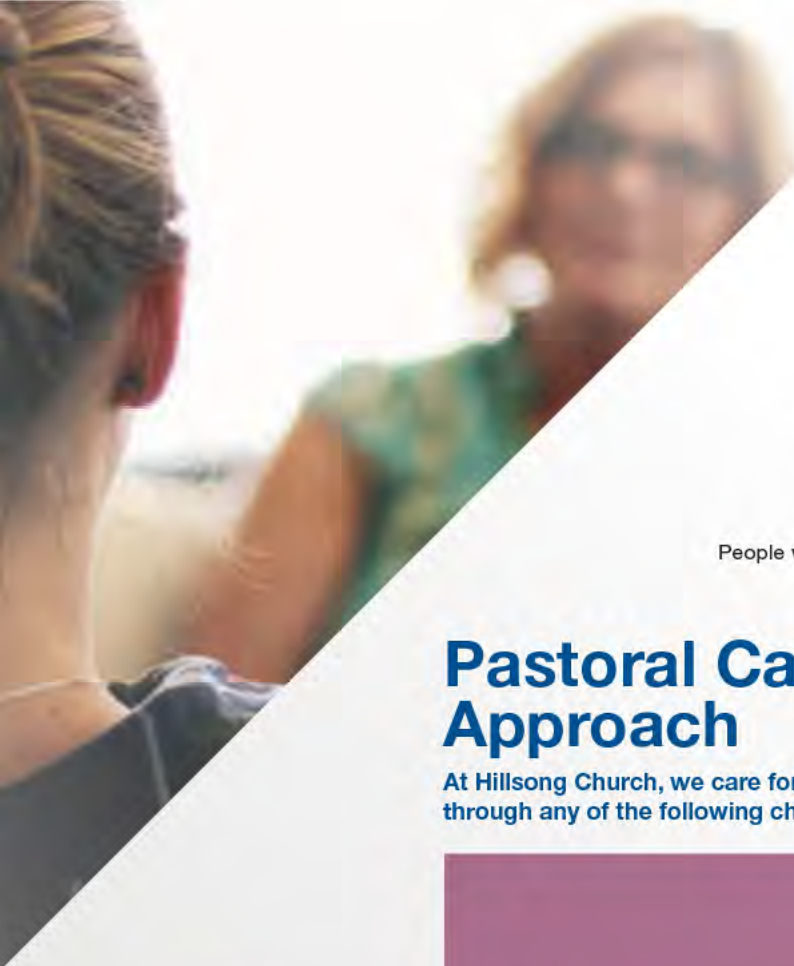
1,764

meals and food bags
were delivered to people
in need

Our pastors
and key team have
conducted thousands
of appointments across
Australia which included
hospital visits, onsite
counselling, home
visits

1,304

gifts were given to people
who had lost a loved
one or gone through
a significant health
challenge in 2017



Life Skills

11%

- Spiritual
- Life skills/guidance
- Behaviour
- Work
- Financial Literacy
- People who feel disconnected

Pastoral Care Approach

At Hillsong Church, we care for people through any of the following challenges:

Trauma

8%

- Victims of abuse
- Bullying

Relationships

24%

- Relationships
- Engagement
- Marriage
- Parenting
- Family relationships
- Separation
- Parents separated
- Solo parents

Mental Health

8%

- Mental illness
- Eating disorders
- Addictions

12%

Crisis

- Funerals & Wakes
- Grief/Loss support

Additional Needs

- Specific program (Treasure Chest)
- Integration with support for people with mild-moderate additional needs

2%

35%

Health

- Health/surgery
- Cancer
- Long-term illness
- Elderly people
- Support for whole family affected by a health situation

WELLBEING:



Sports Chaplaincy

The demanding nature of the sporting industry means that players are often faced with challenges such as mental health issues, depression, suicide, personal loss, isolation, relationship breakdowns and issues relating to family and personal well-being¹³. Sports Chaplains are skilled pastoral carers that provide confidential hands-on support to clubs. They are trained professionals that provide care, regardless of cultural or religious stance.

Sports Chaplains who are part of Hillsong Church are accredited with Sports Chaplaincy Australia (SCA), and provide support to a range of sporting clubs represented across Australia including AFL, NRL, Basketball, FFA, Cricket, Motor Racing, Rugby Union, Tennis, Surfing and State representative clubs. Sports Chaplains within our church also oversee and resource a number of Sports Chaplains who volunteer with sporting clubs and players across Sydney, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Noosa, Newcastle, Darwin and Melbourne to foster healthy communities. In 2017, in partnership with SCA, we had 39 sports chaplains and volunteer chaplains across Australia.

The pastoral care these chaplains provide include counselling through crisis, relational stress as well as loss and grief as those involved in sport go through the highs and lows of life. Chaplains also support players and staff who might be dealing with off field issues and assist with employment planning.

13. Sports Chaplaincy Australia, An Overview of Sports Chaplaincy in Australia. Available from: <https://sportschaplaincy.com.au/services/> [Accessed January 2018]

CityCare Health Care

Hillsong CityCare Health Centre based in Baulkham Hills, aims to provide a quality and affordable health care service to our local community. We believe in caring for the whole person by providing care through a team of qualified and experienced medical practitioners, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, physiotherapists and professional counsellors. Our General Practitioners offer bulk billing for Medicare and Veterans Affairs card holders and AHM/NIB health insurance members whilst overseas visitors are able to access services at a discounted rate.

3,897

appointments were
completed at our
Health Centre



CityCare Playgroups

We operate playgroups in NSW, which are registered with the NSW Playgroups Association. These currently operate in Sydney South West (Campbelltown), Sydney Inner West (Burwood) and Baulkham Hills.

Playgroup NSW, with over 30 years of experience, represents playgroups across NSW, and promotes and advocates the resourcing of playgroups in local communities. Our membership enables us to have access to the wider community where new parents in a local area can choose to be part of our playgroups.

Playgroups are a great avenue in which to give children an opportunity to have fun, develop friendships and learn new skills. It also allows parents and caregivers to spend quality time with their children and connect with others in a safe, supportive and nurturing environment.



5,700

counselling appointments were provided with the support of 86 volunteer and paid counsellors

245

children enrolled at Hillsong Childcare across Sydney and Brisbane

CityCare Counselling

Counselling is the opportunity to talk with a professionally trained counsellor who can offer support, clarity and pathways forward on issues a client is facing. People are not always in a financial position to pay for counselling which oftentimes can cause them to feel disempowered and stay in debilitating circumstances. As such, CityCare provides free counselling services to address issues of depression, relationships, self-image and behavioural challenges.

2017 Highlights

- ▶ 136 people on a weekly average were accessing our counselling services. We provided this service in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne across 42 weeks of the year
- ▶ Professional Counselling volunteers and Supervised Counselling Interns sourced through professional networks and reputable learning institutions deliver our free counselling services.¹⁴ We also provided paid professional counselling services in our Sydney Waterloo location and Brisbane Mount Gravatt offices

14. I.E. University of Sydney, Australian Catholic University, Excelsia College (formerly known as Wesley Institute), Morling College, Australian College of Applied Psychology (ACAP), Australian Institute Family Counselling (AIFC) and St Marks National Theological Centre.

Childcare Centres

The Hillsong Child Care Centre is just one of the many ways we get to practically outwork our vision of creating community and support for families. It represents our heart to provide a safe environment that invests into future generations, while providing high quality care based on Christian values where children can grow and flourish.

Highlights for 2017

- ▶ Research shaped by critical reflective inquiry remained a strength for us, resulting in an invitation to share our insights at the Australian Early Childhood Christian Educators (ACECEA) conference in September and, further, at the Early Childhood Business Forum in November
- ▶ Through the Commonwealth Inclusion Support program, children with additional needs were supported
- ▶ We also participated in a Yarnin Circle as part of an Indigenous Cultural Hub, aimed at supporting the provision of an inclusive setting for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- ▶ Our relationship with a range of tertiary institutions, including University of Western Sydney, provided opportunity to host community leadership students and facilitate survey development and implementation of sustainable practice resources, for both families and educators
- ▶ Brisbane implemented an approved Kindergarten program and achieved a Five Star Food Rating



WELLBEING:

Treasure Chest
Weekly Attendance
across various
locations:

39

56
additional needs kids
and 54 families were
impacted by the
Treasure Chest facilities
at the Epicentre

Treasure Chest

Treasure Chest is the additional needs ministry of Hillsong Church for children, teenagers and young adults with diagnosed disabilities or special learning needs and their families. With the number of people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) on the rise in Australia¹⁵, it is no surprise that our immediate church and broader community would have numerous families experiencing the challenges unique to raising children with ASD. We have seen a need for increased support to be provided to those families both within our weekend church services and from our local community. We believe that providing a safe and healthy space for families with ASD children to thrive and develop positive lasting relationships, increases their sense of belonging, reducing the isolation that can sometimes arise in navigating life with ASD.

The opening of our Epicentre facility created exciting opportunities for us to run better Treasure Chest programs to support families with ASD children and other disabilities. New programs such as small group connects and planned 'Date Nights' for parents have provided valuable support and respite for parents.

“Who would think going to Hillsong Church would become such a crucial part of Charlie's diagnosis, treatment and support for our family? In the time we have been here the church started connect groups for families with children on the spectrum, along with 1 on 1 care for children in an amazing purpose built centre. Every week I nearly cry with gratitude at the blessing poured out on us. Recently, Charlie broke his collarbone at home and the Treasure Chest team even created some special activities for him so that he wouldn't be too sad to miss out on sensory gym time. How amazing is that?”

Danielle, Treasure Chest Mum

15. Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia, Autism prevalence in Australia 2015. Available from: <http://aa4.org.au/prevalence2015> [Accessed January 2018]

Weekend Program

To ensure that we could provide an effective environment for our additional needs children, we consulted with occupational therapists, physiotherapists and other organisations who run similar programs on the design of our rooms and programs. Some of the volunteers who run our Treasure Chest programs are also qualified professionals including speech pathologists, special education teachers, primary and early childhood teachers and teacher aides.

During our weekend Treasure Chest programs, the children are grouped into small groups (4-6 children) based on their age and ability level. At any given time, we may have 3-4 groups running per service and aim to provide one leader per child in the program.

Our programs revolve around activity rooms. Each child spends 20-25 minutes in each activity room, before rotating to the next one. These rooms include:

1. Active Play: In consultation with professionals, we designed this room to help children with gross motor development such as climbing, jumping, building muscle strength and balance. It has a ball pit, swings, climbing equipment, soft play and gym mats.

2. Sensory Room: The sensory room is modelled after Snoezelen multisensory environments and is designed to help manage sensory processing and assist in preparation for engagement in meaningful activity by "providing direct and indirect stimulation of sensory modalities"¹⁶. It has a state-of-the-art system called Sensory Magic – a circuit of sensory tools consisting of a bubble tube, fiber optics, light projections and TV screen (video/music) connected to a computer that operates them all in unity. There are also bean bags and soft fluffy rugs and relaxing sensory activities, designed to help these children calm down and relax. There are also other tailored activities that help children focus on developing various sensory skills (e.g. materials of different textures to touch/play with).



3. Worship Room: This is the room where we have Christian worship music and Bible stories. The room is light and fitted with acoustic style instruments (i.e. guitar, drum box, singers only, no flashing lights or electric music). We intentionally use simple kids songs that are the same each week, to help these children easily learn the songs and actions. Since some children with autism have difficulty with sound sensitivity (finding loud music intolerable), we have found acoustic instruments to be the best form of music to use. Headphones are also provided for those kids who need/want it. Basing our methods on music therapy used in some special schools, we also provide music instruments to each child, so they can participate in song as well.

4. Learning Room/Young & Free Room: The learning room is designed for 4-12 year olds, and "Young & Free Room" for 13-17 year olds. Here, we help the children with their cognitive development through reading stories, doing puzzles, craft activities, colouring, writing or imaginative play.

Strengthening Family & Community

In 2017, we ran three date nights and Treasure Chest community connects, which were designed for families to spend some quality time together or as a couple, while the Treasure Chest team looked after their kids. On fortnightly Sundays, we also endeavour to create opportunity for connection by running morning teas for Treasure Chest parents between the morning services, while the team looked after their kids.

16. Snoezelen Multi-Sensory Environments, Snoezelen for people with Autism. Available from: http://www.snoezelen.info/media/free-resources/Autism_and_Snoezelen.pdf [Accessed January 2018]



Hillsong Youth Services (HYS)

Hillsong Youth Services (HYS) is a collection of services and programs provided by Hillsong CityCare across Australia for vulnerable youth who, through a combination of their circumstances, stage of development and barriers to empowerment, are at risk of not achieving positive life outcomes. We believe that there is great benefit in focusing on the developmental potential of young people and have made it our mission to empower young people to lead and impact in every sphere of life.

According to the Mission Australia Youth Survey (2017) the top three personal concerns for young people remained consistent with previous years; stress (45.3%), school (35.6%) and body image (31.1%). However the youth issues that the public considered to be most important for Australia to address were; mental health (33.7%), alcohol and drugs (32.0%), equity and discrimination (27.3%).¹⁷ These studies show that personal and community issues plague young people throughout their growth and development period.

Therefore, Hillsong Youth Services aims to provide services and programs to assist:

- ❖ Youth who are isolated or alone
- ❖ Youth who live on the street
- ❖ Youth at risk of being addicted to alcohol or other drugs
- ❖ Youth in foster care or other group homes
- ❖ Youth at risk of dropping out of school or delinquent youth
- ❖ Youth at risk of pregnancy
- ❖ Youth who are bullied or have been the cause of bullying
- ❖ Youth who lack self-esteem or confidence
- ❖ Youth who are low-income and have not yet developed the skills to secure employment

Providing appropriate service response and programs to vulnerable youth requires an ongoing continuum of services that seek to listen to the youth and meet needs on a continual basis with a foundation of positive youth development. In 2017, Hillsong Youth Services provided social development services as a first point of contact for vulnerable youth in the community. These services include: breakfast clubs, after school barbeques, food services in collaboration with local shire councils and community organisations, as well as sports services.

17. Mission Australia, Annual Youth Survey 2017, Pg. 21. Available from: <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-evaluation/youth-survey> [Accessed January 2018]



Below is snapshot of the social development services that we ran on a weekly or fortnightly basis across 2017:

Positive Youth Engagement Outreaches

The Hills Shire Council contacted us at the start of 2017 in regards to a few issues that the local police were having with youth loitering and delinquency in the North Western suburbs of Sydney. In response, we worked with other local youth organisations within these areas to create a barbeque for these young people and form of positive reinforcement in the area. This barbeque has been a great success with young people engaging every single week with positive youth role models. We also used this same model in working with local partners around the Greater Western area towards the end of 2017.



Hope Mentoring Program

HYS works in partnership with Macquarie Fields Local Area Command Police and Mission Australia H.O.P.E. (Healthy Outcomes Positive Engagement). H.O.P.E is an early intervention mentoring program for students in year 4-6 which provides opportunity for them to develop skills to make positive choices in life. Through this partnership, we facilitate our Shine and Strength programs (please refer to 'Empowerment' for more information) and we have seen 108 students positively impacted by the program in the past six years.

FairHills HYS Breakfast Club

Since July 2017 our HYS Victoria team have been working with high schools to provide social engagement activities including our first HYS Breakfast Club in Melbourne. The Breakfast Club has a weekly attendance of 100 students and we consistently hear stories of young people impacted by the food service.

The Collab, Redfern

Our team in Sydney CBD has partnered with Salvation Army Oasis and PCYC Redfern on separate occasions and they both expressed interest in wanting to collaborate to provide more comprehensive youth engagements for the community. From here the 'The Collab' was created in order to extend our reach and resources collectively to see young people positively engaged.

The Collab has held events every Wednesday afternoon called 'Park It' at Redfern Oval where sports activities and food services are provided. The Collab offers multiple events a year including activities for National Youth Week and '3-on-3' Basketball Tournaments where 40.3% identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander at one of the tournaments.





EMPOWER

A Marriage On The Rocks

"My husband and I were only just newly married when I was first made aware of his struggle with pornography. As time went on, his addiction grew, feeding into my own insecurities and causing a great rift to form within our marriage. We were on the brink of divorce when he finally decided to see a counsellor who recommended the Valiant Man course offered by Hillsong Church. With my husband enrolled in the Valiant Man course, I eventually decided to enrol into two courses myself – one to help restore my own identity as a woman and the other to help me better understand the issue my husband was facing.

The courses were life-changing for both of us. My husband became a whole different person – full of a freedom and confidence – learning to deal with the shame and guilt of being a pornography addict, developing practical tools to safe-guard himself and restore healthy intimacy in his relationships. For me, the Woman to Woman course helped me rediscover a healthier self-image and self-esteem, while the Understanding Your Valiant Man course gave a healthy perspective on men and a grace to walk with my husband through his journey of healing. Today, we have a strong marriage built on transparency, something we would never have been able to do without the tools these courses have given us."

Samantha, NSW

Evening College

"People who attend our Evening College come for a variety of reasons but all with a desire to explore biblical truths for life and living. We're seeing men and women of all ages, backgrounds, walks of life and levels of spirituality who may not be able to take on studies full time due to work, study or parenting commitments join our Evening College courses. People like Samantha and her husband for example, come seeking to find tools to unlock seemingly impossible situations, and our heart is to help them in real and practical ways to get to that place of freedom.

Evening College offers three streams of courses – Bible, Leadership and Life – within which are a variety of different topics. These courses are designed to provide a space where both knowledge and practice can be workshopped, enabling students to develop perspectives and skills to help in everyday living."

Steve, Evening College Oversight

See page 49 for further information

18. PwC Australia, Education will be the engine room of Australia's future prosperity. Pg. 4. Available from: <https://www.pwc.com.au/education/education-reform-mar17.pdf> [Accessed March 2018]



“ I see a church...
graced with layers of ‘once-in-a-
generation’ type leaders – who are
naturally gifted, spiritually potent and
genuinely humble.”

Brian Houston, The Church I Now See

EMPOWERMENT

EQUIPPING & RELEASING

We believe in empowering people to become all that they were designed to be; to be educated not just in increasing their own wellbeing, but to effectively contribute to society through their unique set of gifts and talents. Research shows that education fundamentally impacts an individual's belief systems, creating positive physical and mental health, increasing social cohesion and ultimately leading to stronger and healthier societies through the contribution of skills and attributes such as confidence, teamwork problem-solving, aspiration and a love of learning.¹⁸

EMPOWERMENT:

Hillsong College

Hillsong College exists to train, teach and equip its students to lead in their respective fields of choice. We believe in a holistic approach to training, combining our academic components with strong emphasis on the practical outworking of learnt knowledge in a local church environment. As such, an integral feature of our programs include mentoring, coaching and internships.

Regulated by ASQA and TEQSA, our Vocational and Higher Education courses provide options for leaders to enhance both knowledge and experience to support the outworking of building 'dynamic ministries and churches throughout the continents of the world.' Our other accredited courses help to ensure that our students gain a qualification in their area of chosen study.

Vocational Ministry Training

Hillsong College is a registered training organisation (RTO), which trains Christian leaders in vocational courses in Christian ministry such as:

- ▼ Certificate IV in Ministry
- ▼ Diploma of Ministry
- ▼ Advanced Diploma in Ministry

Higher Education

In 2017, we continued to offer a range of courses in partnership with Alphacrucis College including:

- ▼ Bachelor of Theology (BTh)
- ▼ Bachelor of Ministry (BMin)
- ▼ Master of Arts (MA)
- ▼ Master of Leadership (MLead)
- ▼ Master of Theology (MTh)

“

I attended Hillsong College in 2007-2008 as an 18 year old, and felt that it helped me see the potential of my own life, and the lives of those around me. It trained me to see the big picture vision when leading, and enabled me to develop confidence to step into greater responsibility within the various spheres of life I was involved in. Currently, my wife and I are youth and young adults pastors in our local church, own an incredible growing business, and mentor a group of young pastors in the Tweed-Byron-Coffs region for Youth Alive. Our leadership capacity to accomplish all this has largely been due to the foundations laid in those years I've had with Hillsong College.”

Matthew, Australia

2,040

full-time and part-time
students enrolled in
Hillsong College
(2016: 1,931)

Hillsong
College added
**online
courses**
to the Higher
Education stream





Evening College

Hillsong Evening College exists to see people empowered to live with a greater sense of purpose, freedom and skill. We desire to see every student leave healthier individuals, having the confidence and know-how to tackle their area of interest or challenge. Our courses are available at many of our locations across Australia and in 2017, we had 1,843 students enrolled.

Hillsong Evening College offers over 20 courses across three streams; Bible, Leadership and Life within which are a broad range of courses. These include:

- ▼ Bible: Ministry School, Faithworx, Advanced Ministry School
- ▼ Leadership: Developing Leaders, Leadership Depends
- ▼ Life: Sports Chaplaincy, Social Media Accelerator, Pre-Marriage, Marriage, Parenting, Search For Life, Mastering Your Money, Grief Share, Valiant Man, Man To Man, Woman To Woman, Divorce Recovery, Mastering Your English and Facilitators Training

Alpha

Alpha is a free course for anyone who might have questions about life, death, meaning and Christianity in relation to it all. It is a non-pressured environment designed to encourage open conversation.

"I first joined the ESL class held at Hillsong Church two weeks after my sons and I arrived in Brisbane. At the time, Brisbane was very new and unfamiliar place and I felt very insecure – I had no acquaintances, let alone any friends. Through ESL classes, I met a lot of people who migrated here from so many different countries, which helped me feel like I didn't have to struggle to be accustomed to a new country and life alone. I met really dedicated teachers who have now become incredible friends. These days, I feel very secure and at home here, and have much more confidence when communicating with people in English. Two years ago, I didn't expect I could enjoy life in another country like I do now, and I would attribute this change mostly to the time I spent at the ESL classes at Hillsong Church."

Mrs Kim, 2015 ESL Student

CityCare English as a Second Language (ESL)

We provide English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at no cost to the community in a welcoming environment in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Newcastle. We provide classes from Elementary to Upper Intermediate as well as conversational classes.

A majority of our students are new migrants or refugees and come from many different nations and are looking to be part of a healthy community of people who make them feel at home. Students who attend want to learn English so they can gain employment, attend university and make new friends to help them socially integrate into their new home country. 9,056 participants attended our ESL courses in 2017.

EMPOWERMENT:

CityCare Shine & Strength

The Shine and Strength personal development programs aim to equip participants with the knowledge and skills needed to develop greater self-awareness and personal growth.

Our programs are currently being facilitated in a variety of settings including schools, community centres, juvenile detention centres and correctional facilities. The programs are being utilised across Australia, Europe, South East Asia, South America, Africa and North America including Canada and the USA. Our Shine program has recently been translated into seven languages.

Our Shine and Strength programs have been endorsed by the Institute of Group Leaders (IGL).

Shine's 20th Anniversary

At our Sydney Colour Conferences, 273 women joined us for our 20th Anniversary High Teas. Additionally, we connected with 322 individuals in the Colour Expo. We also celebrated Shine's 20th Anniversary by honouring noteworthy Shine Facilitators at each of our Sydney, Cape Town, London, Kiev, New York and Los Angeles Colour Conferences.

Facilitator Training

In 2017 we trained 200 facilitators across several of our locations in NSW, QLD and the NT. We also offered training to Hillsong Network churches and external community organisations, including hosting our first training at Life Church in New Zealand.

9,725

connections made through
Shine and Strength

5,444

HYS ShineGIRL and
Strength Program
Participants

3,386

ShineWOMEN Program
Participants

200

Shine and Strength
Facilitators Trained

Funding of Shine programs in local schools by Northern Territory government

In 2017 The Northern Territory Department of Housing and Community Development approved funding that allowed Shine and Strength to be rolled out across identified schools and juvenile detention centres in Darwin. 10 Shine and 10 Strength Programs were delivered across Primary and Middle Schools in Darwin including the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in Darwin (Tivendale).

A total of 240 adolescent individuals participated in the programs from various cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. The majority of the youth were at-risk and disengaged from education. As a result of the program in partnership with Mission Australia, Mission Australia Youth Services saw a significant improvement in the participants' engagement with schooling, an improvement in their overall performance and a reduction in anti-social behaviour.



Conferences

Hillsong Conference

Hillsong Conference is not about a single local church, or a specific denomination or demographic of person, rather it continues existing to champion the cause of local churches globally. It is an interdenominational Christian leadership conference that invests into leaders through teaching biblical principles of leadership and providing practical tools.

Colour Conference

Colour Conference is a global movement of everyday women, with hope in their heart and change in their step. It continues to influence women of all ages,

backgrounds and cultures, uniting them under one cause and encouraging them to contribute in bringing a solution to the needs they see within their local and global communities. In 2017, our flagship Colour Conference was held twice in the heart of Darling Harbour, Sydney at the International Convention Centre (ICC) with over 17,000 in attendance.

Colour Conference Local Impact

Delegates of Colour Conference are invited to be involved in local impact initiatives, which focus on helping to meet the needs of people in the communities where the conference is held. In 2017, vouchers to the value of \$33,300 were distributed to the following organisations who support refugees and asylum seekers settling in Australia:

- ▼ AMES – Victoria
- ▼ Multicultural Development Australia (MDA) – Queensland
- ▼ Settlement Services International (SSI) – New South Wales

Colour Conference Global Impact

The Colour Sisterhood Refugee Response was launched, highlighting the needs surrounding the conflict and resulting displacement crisis in the Middle East. The Colour Sisterhood also continued to raise awareness and funds for existing 500Project partners.

- ▼ Preemptive Love Coalition
- ▼ World Vision
- ▼ A21
- ▼ Compassion
- ▼ Bible Society
- ▼ Open Doors
- ▼ Mother's Heart
- ▼ Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation
- ▼ Watoto
- ▼ Vision Rescue
- ▼ She Rescue
- ▼ Hillsong CityCare

See 'Justice' for more information

48,800

in attendance at Hillsong Conference and Colour Conference in Australia

2016: 48,571

21

denominations represented at Hillsong Conference

62

countries represented at Hillsong Conference

Through our Australian Conferences and the annual Compassion Sunday

3,256

children were sponsored through Compassion in 2017

EMPOWERMENT:

Spheres

Spheres is all about creating a conversation from a biblical perspective in the seven pillars of society:



It looks at the world and the church not just in terms of geographic locations, but in terms of relationship connections, influence and impact. The local church is a meeting place and a melting pot of many different sectors of society, carrying with it an immense capacity to outreach and influence in diverse ways into everyone's respective sphere. Spheres is designed to develop, support and launch an individual into their distinctive calling, to shine their unique 'light' in their sphere of influence.

Online Initiatives

In 2017, we partnered with Hillsong Channel and pioneered a live Spheres television show. We have also been in the process of developing spheres.tech, an online community connecting like-minded innovators across the globe, giving them a space to join their talents to create world-class solutions in response to today's challenges. We've been supporting our global Hillsong Church leaders with the introduction of Spheres at their locations and partnering with other churches to empower their communities through Spheres.

Spheres Events

We hosted a total of nine events across 2017, with 1,947 people in attendance. These events strive to equip, empower, encourage and challenge those living and working in a particular sphere of influence to live Christ-centred values well; with integrity, purpose and value. At Hillsong Conference, we also hosted a range of established professionals who spoke powerfully into each of their respective spheres of influence.

Spheres.Life

Spheres.Life was formed from the belief that the best people to reach and influence our sphere is those of us already in that sphere. It is a blog platform, dedicated to the voices of our community, encouraging one another to be positive influences within our worlds and to outwork biblical values into our everyday, ordinary worlds.

During 2017, we received

20,339 visitors

to our website, there were

85 new articles posted

we received

441 new subscribers,

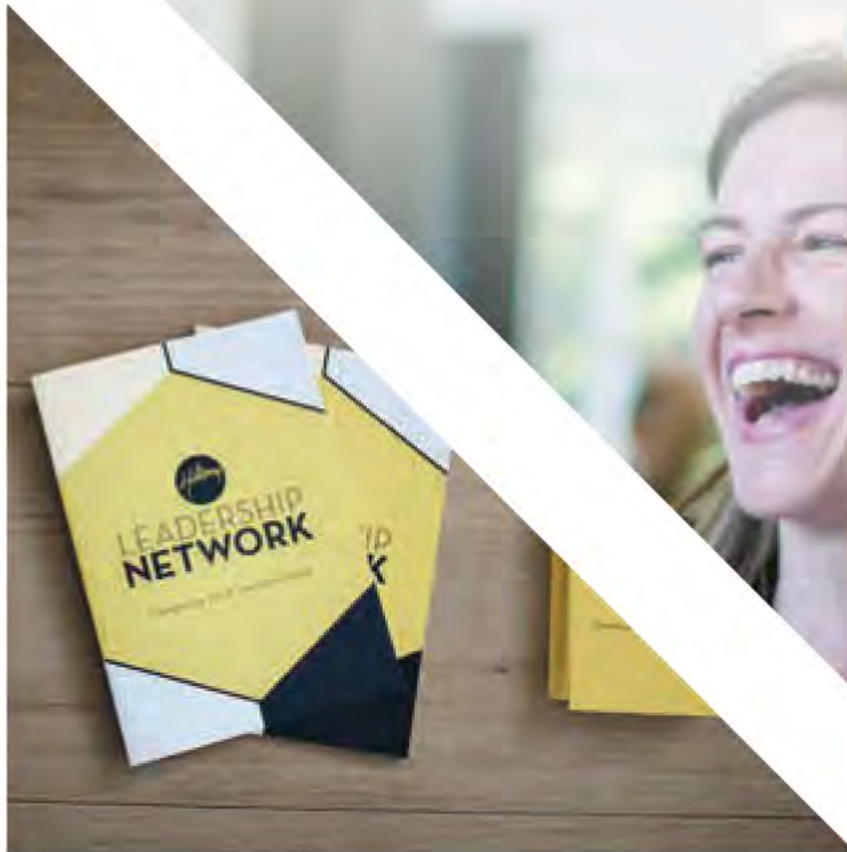
increasing the total subscriber base to

1,327

We now have a total of

71 contributors

who write content for the website.



Hillsong Leadership Network

The Hillsong Leadership Network is committed to championing the potential within pastors and the local churches they lead. In 2017 the Hillsong Leadership Network partnered with 266 individual churches across Australia and New Zealand. Through the Network, we are able to connect like-minded leaders with the Hillsong team and form relationships that make a tangible difference to their ministry. Our resources and events equip leaders with tried and tested models they can follow, supported by 34 years of effective ministry insights. By focusing on the indicators of church health we can equip churches with the tools necessary to activate future church growth.

Throughout the year we engaged with pastors at regional 'Long Lunches', gatherings during major conferences and live online webinars. More than 6,700 church leaders subscribed to receive online teaching materials and other practical resources from the Hillsong Leadership Network in 2017.

The Hillsong Leadership Network also sent a team to Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Bali, Singapore, Hong Kong, Manila, Taipei and Seoul. This training equipped 644 pastors from 122 churches with the principles and practises to create a life-giving atmosphere within their weekend services and teams.

“

When we joined the Network we had seen limited church growth for 18 months and we were trying different strategies but weren't really sure if what we were doing was useful. Being part of the Network has helped us to evaluate that in a more purposeful way and given us practical strategies to help us grow our attendance grow by 30%. We are a small church in a country town of 5,000 people but the principles have been totally transferable. We have felt so cheered on and encouraged by the Hillsong team and the other pastors within the Network. We love the culture that is carried by everyone at Hillsong, it's a culture that we want our leaders and church to catch. I really feel what the Network offers has helped me grow in confidence and I feel so blessed to have the opportunity to be part of it.”

Tracy, Naracoorte

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, smiling and looking down at a baby she is holding. The baby is looking directly at the camera. The word 'HOPE' is written in large, bold, pink letters across the right side of the image.

HOPE

Settling in a Foreign Country

Firuz* grew up in Iran and arrived in Australia as a refugee in 2012 until in 2015, where he was placed in Villawood Detention Centre for an alleged compromise of his visa working conditions. At the time he had already been battling physical and mental trauma, and being detained brought Firuz to one of his lowest points. Upon invitation from his roommate to join him at a Villawood Sunday Chapel Service, Firuz - a self-avowed atheist - agreed. Being a musician, Firuz thoroughly enjoyed the worship portion of the service and kept coming back each week.

In the Autumn of 2016 Firuz decided Jesus was the source of his new-found hope and peace and committed to becoming a Christian. He then became involved in the worship band at the Villawood centre. The team welcomed him in and cultivated friendships with him that cemented the sense of community and family.

After he was released from detention, the team also helped him look for employment and provided him with food packages when he was in need.

**Name has been changed to protect the privacy of this individual.*

CityCare Prison and Detention Centre Services


"The CityCare Prison and Detention programs work in two distinct spaces - Prisons (Criminal Justice System) and onshore Immigration Detention Centres: supporting Asylum Seekers, 'in breach' visa holders, over-stayers and 'non-citizens' with a criminal history/association.

Our programs embed the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ to people who often see their future as bleak. Our mission is to outwork this 'hope' through our humanitarian support to individuals and families impacted by the criminal justice and immigration systems.

Whatever the hardship faced by an individual, our team recognise the fundamental worth and value of the human person and believe that human struggle and suffering is a community concern. This implies a collective responsibility towards one another regardless of one's criminal history and identity. It involves building pragmatic, safe and restorative structures to enable strategic, transformative solutions, justice and healing."

Alosio - CityCare Prison and Detention Centre Services Oversight

See page 56 for further information



“ I see a church...
bringing the love and hope of Christ
to impossible situations through
the preaching of the gospel”

Brian Houston, The Church I Now See



CONNECTING & TRANSFORMING

Our belief in the message of Jesus Christ continues to call us to action. It is a message of hope, not for those who are worthy or have earned any right to access it, but for anyone without exception. It is a message that encourages values such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control; values that promote healthy individuals and societies. It is this understanding that drives us to continue presenting this message both in word and in practical action.

HOPE:



CityCare Prison and Detention Centre Services

CityCare Prison and Detention programs work in both the Criminal Justice System and onshore Immigration Detention Centres. They aim to bring hope to these groups of people by supporting both men and women who are currently incarcerated or detained. In many cases men and women can be detained for long periods of time while awaiting visa/tribunal outcomes. Separation from families, social connections and loss of employment coupled with a sense of uncertainty is a cause for anxiety and distress for many.

We offer a variety of services such as: chaplaincy visits; cultural mediation and advocacy; community and welfare support; Sunday chapel services; mid-week Bible studies; mentoring programs; pastoral care; employment coordination; enterprise and therapeutic pathways; court support and advocacy and family support groups. This is done in collaboration with community and government organisations to enable seamless services.



The generosity and commitment of our church volunteers and Hillsong College students enables us to provide these services. The teams undertake significant community engagement and pro-social support, week in and week out.

Some of our teams are part of the JIGSAW community network supporting post-release programs and affiliated with Australian Prison Fellowship for volunteer 'prison visitation' induction and training. We also work alongside custodial staff, community groups and police. All volunteers for the correctional and immigration centres must undertake State and/or Federal police checks and relevant training. In addition all volunteers must comply with code of conduct practices and regulations.



Hillsong Church volunteers' willingness to give selflessly and help detainees is a testimony to both their strength and the quality of volunteering. The gift of time is priceless in volunteering. It's important for volunteers to know that their volunteering does make a difference."

Serco Immigration Services



Missions

Through Nation Builders - the missions giving of Hillsong Church - support is provided to a range of initiatives that are reaching and impacting lives with the Good News of Jesus Christ around the world.

In 2017 our missions giving through Nation Builders was \$1,539,308 supporting a range of missions endeavours including:

- ▼ Church planting and support in Moscow, Lyon, Barcelona, South America and Zurich
- ▼ Supporting the production of Hillsong Channel
- ▼ Supporting the operations of ACC international Missions, equipping and supporting over 158 individuals serving overseas across Africa, North and East Asia, South East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia and Europe
- ▼ Providing direct support for missionaries living in East Asia, South East Asia and Eastern Europe
- ▼ Enabling Hillsong Leadership Network training for churches in Asia
- ▼ Supporting sports chaplaincy in sporting clubs and teams in communities across Australia

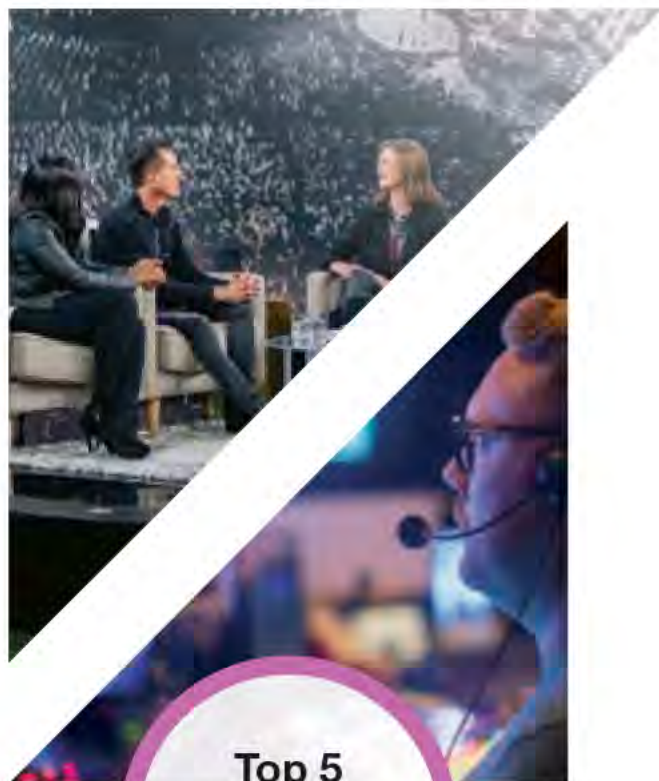
HOPE:

Hillsong Channel

Even with the rise of new formats of online streaming entertainment options, television remains one of the preferred ways Australians consume content. Recent surveys show that 62% of consumers view television including on a range of mobile devices, making it a major influencer of culture and identity.¹⁹ Our desire is to use this incredible tool, to bring a message of hope; reach people in homes and facilities that may never be able to hear that they have worth, that they matter, that there is a God who loves them and a people who believe in them.

Since its inception, we have heard numerous stories of how the programs offered on the Hillsong Channel have been a beacon of hope - a light to someone in a correctional facility, to someone on the brink of suicide, to someone whose daughter was healed as the Pastor prayed over the television broadcast.

The Hillsong Channel has a global reach with teams that work both locally and internationally to produce contemporary programs made available 24-7. Here in Australia, Hillsong Channel is aired on Foxtel, Fetch TV, and we have 39 staff working in various capacities. Various programs are also recorded locally such as our weekend services, Hillsong Sisterhood, Spheres, Hillsong College Chapel, Creative Team Nights, and annual Conferences. These recordings utilise our Epicentre TV Studio and edit suites, Epicentre Theatre and Hills Convention Centre locations, as well as other 'on location' sites across Australia.



Top 5

countries that watch
the live stream:
US, Australia, UK,
Canada and Brazil

2017 Highlights

- Our TV partnerships expanded from Australia, Africa, USA and UK into the Caribbean and Canada
- The live stream option has expanded our reach to 183 out of 195 countries globally
- Our new Epicentre TV Studio and edit suites has meant we have been able to record a number of programs from Australia
- We launched 'Hillsong Channel Now' which is an on-demand option allowing content to be streamed in any country online via a smartphone or computer

Our on-demand option
**'Hillsong
Channel Now'**
launched
now.hillsongchannel.com

19. Deloitte, Media Consumer Survey 2016 Australian media and digital. Available from: http://landing.deloitte.com.au/rs/761-IBL-328/Images/Media_Consumer_Survey_Report.pdf. [Accessed February 2018]





CREATIVITY

Young Dreams

"My daughter Harriet did a few classes with the Amplified Arts Academy (AMP) this year, participating in Ballet, Jazz and Acro at senior level and loving all her classes. She has learned so much and has really progressed not just in her dance skills, but also her personal and spiritual growth. As a quieter girl she has struggled in the area of self confidence. The Acro class has been such a growing experience for her; her passion for this discipline has caused her to step out of her comfort zone in order to keep progressing to the next skill level. It has been so great to see her learn to confront her fears in a safe and encouraging environment.

Fellow students in all classes are so encouraging and supportive of one another, rather than trying to beat each other to the top. I love hearing stories about the class watching and cheering each other on when they achieve something new! Her dream now is to become a dance teacher and continue to volunteer at church in the area of dance. I don't believe she would have progressed to this point if it wasn't for the wonderful nurturing teachers and environment provided at AMP, and for that I am incredibly grateful."

Annette, mother, AMP

Amplified Arts Academy

"Amplified (AMP) is the performing arts academy of Hillsong Church located in the Hills District of Sydney, offering training in Dance, Drama, Music and Vocals for children ages 2-18. It is a platform that gives students the opportunity to technically train and creatively develop their performing arts skills in dance, drama, music or vocals.

Young people like Harriet need a safe, integral and inspiring community to discover their artistic expression, and develop the confidence and discipline to realise their creative potential. We believe every young person should have the opportunity to explore their passion for the arts and our hope is to raise up a new generation of creative talent. Regardless of their level of entry, our training classes are designed to be a professional, secure and nurturing environment for all types of learners, where every individual matters."

Dominique, Manager at Amplified Arts Academy

See page 63 for further information

20. ArtsHub Australia, *Measuring social impact in the arts*. April 2017. Available from: <http://www.artsHub.com.au/news-article/opinions-and-analysis/trends-and-analysis/ellse-harper/measuring-social-impact-in-the-arts-253536>. [Accessed February 2018]

21. *The Age*, *Research shows cutting arts education a loss to all*. March 2015. Available from: <https://www.theage.com.au/education/research-shows-cutting-arts-education-a-loss-to-all-20150302-13sszl.html> [Accessed March 2018]



“ I see a church...
that is constantly innovative:
A church that leads the
communication of a timeless
message through media,
film, and technology.”

Brian Houston, The Church I Now See

TY

INNOVATING & INSPIRING

The Creative Arts often elicits a reflective posture in us, calling us to take stock of thoughts and emotions and creating space for purposeful expression.²⁰ It is a powerful tool that fosters innovation, critical-thinking and imagination, all of which are vital within a thriving church and society.²¹

As a church, we are passionate about the crafting and development of Creative Arts both in Christian worship, and within our broader community. We believe that a creatively expressive person, is not only a healthy and resilient person, but one who reflects the very image of the Creator God.

CREATIVITY:

Creativity in Society

We believe that a creative society fosters healthy individuals and relationships. A recent survey released in June 2017 found that the Creative Arts has an increasingly powerful role to play in promoting social cohesion within the nation.²² 98% of Australians currently engage in some form of the arts, with an increase in the number of people recognising its positive impacts²³, as such it comes as no surprise that within our church and the broader community lies a growing focus on the development of one's creative potential.

Christmas Spectacular

Hillsong Creative produces a community Christmas Spectacular each year, a production that takes over 2,000 organisation hours, 1,000 hours of rehearsals with a cast and crew of close to 1,000 people. For many people in our community this has become an important part of their Christmas tradition. In 2017, we were excited to be able to expand our repertoire from 28 to an incredible 43 performances across Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Darwin, Hobart, Noosa, Newcastle, Gold Coast, and launching for the first time in Perth and Bali.

92,999

people attended our
Christmas Spectacular
and Christmas services
(2016: 79,913)

22. Australia Council for the Arts, *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey, June 2017*. Available from: <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/connecting-australians/> [Accessed March 2018]

23. *Ibid*



4,000+

creative volunteer roles
were rostered on any given
week in 2017

30

weekly classes ranging
from drama, ballet, tap,
jazz, acrobatics, hip-hop,
contemporary and
tiny tots

181

Average enrolments
across 4 terms

Amplified Arts Academy

Amplified Arts Academy is the performing arts academy of Hillsong Church that offers training in Dance, Drama, Music and Vocals for children ages 2-18. It speaks to the growing need within our wider community for the development of artistic skills. Our academy gives students the opportunity to technically train and creatively develop their performing arts skills in dance, drama, music or vocals. We are committed to equipping our young people with the skills and technical ability to make an impact in their chosen field, ensuring that each student has the self worth and belief to step out in confidence while carving their path in the creative industry.

Our training classes offer a professional, safe and nurturing environment for all types of learners, where every individual matters. Our tailored programs ensure that every student's potential is maximised, regardless of their level of entry.

Our teachers often act as positive role models to all they teach. They strive to ensure every student leaves the class better than when they walked in.

Visit our website for more info: hillsong.com/amp

CREATIVITY:



Creativity in Worship

Creative arts is a central tool used in Christian spiritual practice, particularly in the expression of our faith and devotion. A song, production, film or design piece can be at times a mirror that exposes the contents of our soul, and at others a vehicle that leads us to faith, hope and love we believe is found in Jesus Christ.

Hillsong Creative

Our Hillsong Creative teams are committed to taking someone on the journey of discovering the character and person of Jesus Christ through any creative medium we can, within every creative discipline and sphere of life. We believe that the Creator God has created you in His image; a creative being. We desire to reflect who He is, be it in writing music and songs that people resonate with both in the depths of their valleys and the height of their mountaintop experiences, or through creating film and art that inspires and impacts people's everyday lives beyond their Sunday church attendance.

We believe we have a responsibility to be excellent, both in what we present on the platform and how we live our lives off the platform, and we hold to our conviction that whatever influence we are given is in service of the church and God, and not for personal gain or status.

Our creative teams use their gifts and talents week in and week out to help create expressions of faith throughout church life. From musicians and singers, to producers, television, filmmakers, artists, writers, costume designers, youth and children's creative teams, stage managers and designers. Each week over 1,200 people involved in our creative community gather mid-week at our 'Team Night' across Australia, where they come together to equip, prepare, inspire and encourage each other.

Hillsong Music & Resources

Worship music written by Hillsong songwriters continues to be sung widely, translated in over 100 languages and in 56 denominations. Whilst this has been a great resource for local churches around the world, it has also become a financial resource for our church and assists to fund ministry outreach such as the Hillsong Channel and church planting.

Billboard Music Awards

Hillsong Worship was number 1 on Billboard's Year End Charts for Top Christian Artist of 2017

Dove Awards

Hillsong Worship won Dove Award for Song of the Year: What A Beautiful Name

Grammy Awards Nomination

Hillsong Young & Free: Youth Revival was nominated for Best Contemporary Music Album



Hillsong Music Australia is the music distribution arm of Hillsong Church. There are four distinct sounds Hillsong Music represents:

Hillsong Worship exists to champion passionate and genuine worship of our Lord Jesus Christ in local churches right across the globe and to do our part in resourcing local church worship teams across the many denominational faces of The Church, as we all learn from each other.

Hillsong UNITED was formed in 1998 as part of our youth ministry. UNITED is committed to creating a musical expression that is almost uncomfortable in its uniqueness; its mission is to write songs that awaken churches and individuals to the fact that we are redeemed and called into the story of God.

Hillsong Young & Free was birthed out of our youth ministry based in Sydney, Australia. It seeks to create a sound that both reflects the health and vibrancy of our youth ministry and connect the hope and truth of the Bible in ways that speak to the younger generations.

Hillsong KIDS believes that teaching children to love God and others takes place in both the home and in the church. For this reason it seeks to partner with parents and with church pastors and leaders, equipping them with great music resource.

Albums released in 2017:

- Hillsong Worship 'The Peace Project'
- Hillsong UNITED 'Wonder'
- Hillsong Young & Free 'Youth Revival Acoustic'

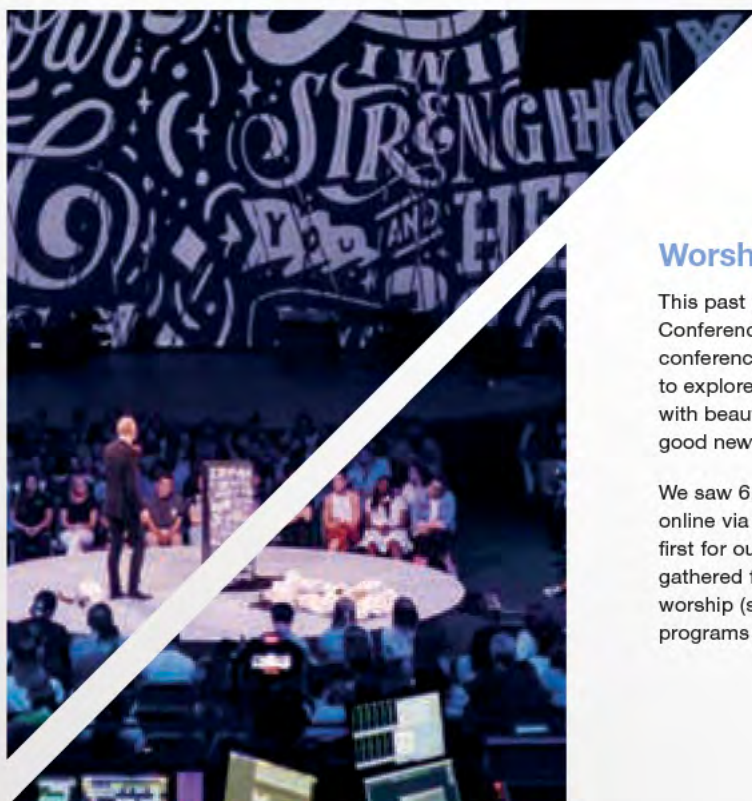
148

million minutes of Hillsong content was viewed on Youtube in Australia in 2017. (7.73 billion minutes globally)

The channels of Hillsong Worship & UNITED on Youtube both have more than 1 million subscribers each, globally

6,437

people joined us at our Worship & Creative Conference on site and via our live stream



Worship & Creative Conference

This past year marked our very first Worship & Creative Conference, held at our Hills campus location. The conference was birthed out of a desire to gather artisans to explore their calling, respond in worship and create with beauty to fulfill Jesus' great commission: bring the good news of the gospel to a hurting world.

We saw 6,437 delegates joining us both live on site and online via our 'full conference experience' live stream - a first for our church. Creatives from all around the world gathered for practical hands-on training, heaven-breathed worship (some long into the midnight hours), and programs filled with fun, inspiring and spirit-led moments.



FUTURE

Freedom From Addiction

"I had a few step-fathers in and out of my life, but they didn't really accept me and I eventually got kicked out at 15, living on the street. Most of my life from then on was involved with drugs. When I was about 18, I moved back with my biological dad, but 2 years after that he died from cancer, and that sent me downhill into a deep spiral - in and out of jail twice for domestic violence, before being sent to One80TC.

Through One80TC, I felt loved for the first time in my life and don't feel alone anymore. The support you get in this place is unexplainable. You get a case worker, and a postgraduate to help you 24-7. They don't just teach you theory, rather everything is made personal and that really helps. As part of the process of learning to move through and understand your addictions, you potentially have the opportunity to become part of the postgraduate program. Right now that's where I see myself- a postgraduate, giving back into the place that has given me so much."

Matt, Postgraduate program at One80TC

The Hillsong Foundation

"It is the generosity of ordinary, everyday people within our church that enables us and our partners to bring solution to the needs of those not just within our own church, but our local and global communities. To this end Hillsong Foundation was birthed - out of a desire to raise financial leaders from within our church; whose generosity would enable our church to acquire facilities that could house our programs and help us be more effective in meeting needs within three areas: Our Home (church), Our Backyard (local community) and Our World (global initiatives).

As part of the contributions to our annual Heart for the House Offering, Hillsong Foundation also supports local not-for-profit organisations such as One80TC, a long-term residential rehabilitation centre for those wanting to overcome addiction and other life-controlling issues. Our heart is that partnerships like these would extend our ability to see those without hope, empowered to envision and build a better future for themselves, their families and their communities."

Lisa, Hillsong Foundation Staff

See page 68 for further information



“ I see... churches with supernatural provision of buildings and properties standing as beacons of light that bring glory to God and hope to humanity.”

Brian Houston, The Church I Now See

RE BUILDING & RESOURCING

The actions we take now, have the power to shape the kind of future we desire to see in our world. We believe that as a church, we have a responsibility to not just invest our resources into immediate needs, but also towards things that will have an impact in the future of our younger generations. We invest into facilities so that our church can continue to have the capacity to bring hope and solution to its communities in the days ahead. We desire to partner with and resource organisations that give practical aid to those destitute and in need, because we know that together we can work toward healthier individuals, healthier communities and healthier societies.

FUTURE:

Hillsong Foundation

Hillsong Foundation exists to champion the vision of this church to help those in need, by committing their hearts and finance to the establishing of facilities that can house the church and its mission to love people, as well as fund Hillsong CityCare and all the projects and programs associated with assisting our local community. Hillsong Foundation also resources projects and programs that reach the poor and destitute around the world.

The Foundation has three focuses:

- ▾ Our Home
- ▾ Our Backyard
- ▾ Our World

Our Home

Across Australia, we will continue to strategically invest into opening new locations and facilities. In 2017, we supported the launch of our Hillsong Perth location, as well as Hillsong Bali. In Sydney, we invested in our Epicentre at the Hills Campus; an innovative space for our Children's, Youth, Worship and TV Ministries and Hillsong College.

Our Backyard

Hillsong Foundation is committed to playing an active part in shaping our community. Our heart is to see transformation by strengthening families, empowering young people and fostering a sense of belonging for vulnerable groups in need of connection.

The Hillsong Foundation distributed \$3,060,220 from funds raised to support the benevolent activities of

- ▾ Hillsong CityCare
- ▾ One80TC Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation

“

It has been a blessing to be involved with like-minded people making a difference as over the years we have seen new Hillsong campuses, Hillsong Channel and many other great initiatives start up and expand. The opportunity to be involved in both Hillsong Foundation and One80TC has been a blessing for us. It certainly warms our hearts to know that part of the Hillsong Foundation contributions goes on to support One80TC.”

- Ross and Patricia,
Hillsong Foundation and One80TC Volunteers





Our World

The generosity of Hillsong Foundation has continued to support various needs around the world, funding effective initiatives that have made significant impact and sustainable change to the lives of individuals, families and communities.

In 2017, The Hillsong Foundation distributed \$714,065.86 from funds raised to support the benevolent activities of:

- ▼ Vision Rescue
- ▼ Hillsong Africa Foundation
- ▼ A21 Thailand
- ▼ Preemptive Love Coalition

Hillsong Foundation Income Allocation



FUTURE:

Solar Installation

As a church, we believe in safeguarding our planet for future generations. As a tangible way of doing this, in 2017 we implemented an energy-efficient program consisting of solar installation and LED lighting upgrades in four buildings on three Campuses:

- ▼ Hills Convention Centre
- ▼ Hills HUB
- ▼ Waterloo Campus
- ▼ Mt Gravatt Campus

“ With this program, Hillsong is leading the way for large churches and not-for-profits not only in Australia but globally”

- Paul Peters, CEO of Verdia

Greenhouse gas emissions estimated to be reduced by
1,347t CO_{2-e}
per annum



According to Verdia, the company responsible for the solar installation, our rooftop solar plus lighting upgrade program is the largest rooftop solar program of any single church or not-for-profit in Australia, reducing our energy consumption by more than 30 per cent, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 1,347t CO_{2-e} per annum (the equivalent of carbon dioxide absorbed by 8.3 hectares of mature forest each year or 316 cars taken off the road), all whilst also decreasing our energy costs.²⁴

24. Verdia, Verdia helped Hillsong realise the largest individual church solar program in Australia, December 2017. Available from: <http://verdia.com.au/verdia-helped-hillsong-realise-the-largest-individual-church-solar-program-in-australia/> [Accessed March 2018]

Safe Church

The purpose of Hillsong Church's Safe Church Framework is to enable the provision of safe and secure environments for all people who are a part of Hillsong Church and its community services, in compliance with relevant legislation. Through the outworking of the Safe Church Framework, Hillsong aims to reduce the risk of harm occurring to Hillsong related people. It is committed to a caring and appropriate response, should any suspicion, allegation, disclosure, or complaint of misconduct or abuse occur.

2017 was a year of consolidation and expansion for the Safe Church Department. In 2016, a new Safe Church Framework, Safe Church Policy and many procedures were developed. In 2017, there was a steady process of applying and implementing these procedures.

Key activities for Safe Church include:

Child Safety

- Working closely with Youth and Hillsong Kids to ensure safety in camps, conferences and other activities
- Ensuring that those who work with our children and young people are properly approved
- Continuing to provide Safe Church Training for all pastors, staff and volunteers with children and young people
- Dealing with concerns that arise in relation to risk of harm



For further information visit:
hillsong.com/australia/safechurch/

Work Health and Safety

- Regular Health and Safety Meetings have been held
- Incident reports are investigated as required
- A program has been instituted to facilitate 'Risk assessments' being prepared for church activities, including conferences, camps and regular youth and children's activities
- Electrical testing and tagging of equipment has been accelerated



Food Safety

- In 2017, we employed a Food Safety Officer who has rewritten our Food Safety Policy and procedures to comply with National Standards
- We have worked with our staff and volunteers to ensure that our many food activities comply with the appropriate regulations
- Our food supervisors and food volunteers are being trained at a level appropriate to their responsibilities



Transport Safety

- Across 2017 a number of initiatives were implemented to enhance many aspects of transport safety
- With the continued work of Transport Safety Officers we have seen further streamlining of the management of incidents reporting, investigations, logistics and maintenance

Hillsong Global

- The Hillsong Australia Safe Church Department has provided advice to Global Campuses, at their request. It also provided Safe Church Training in Europe, North America, South America and South Africa for over 800 people during 2017



Our Board

Our Hillsong Australia Board of Directors provide guidance for good governance, effective stewardship of our finances, and the outworking of our vision as a church. The Board comprises of both church leaders and business people.

Peter Toganivalu

Board Member since 2017

Peter and his wife Laura are the Hillsong Young & Free Youth Pastors. They're passionate about seeing a 'young and free' movement rise up across the earth, finding joy, their God-given identity and calling in knowing Jesus Christ. Peter is a visionary, dynamic communicator and a creative leader. Peter and Laura have two beautiful kids, Willow and Jack.

Meeting attendance:
Board ●●

Joel A'Bell

Board Member since 2007

Joel is a credentialed Minister of Religion. Together with his wife Julia, Joel is the Lead Pastor of Hillsong Church Australia and is an innovative thinker, leader and communicator. He is also on the Australian Christian Churches (ACC) National Executive Board.

Meeting attendance:
Board ●●●●●



George Aghajanian

Joel A'Bell

Brian Houston



Peter Toganivalu

Nabi Saleh

Leigh Howard-Smith

George Aghajanian

Company Secretary
Board Member since 1996

George is the General Manager of Hillsong Church and is responsible for corporate governance, legal, financial stewardship, human resources and church facilities development. He possesses a wealth of senior management experience working with both Australian and international organisations prior to joining the staff at Hillsong and brings a strong balance of faith and practical business application to his role.

Meeting attendance:
Board ●●●●●
Audit Committee ●●●●

Brian Houston

Chairperson
Board Member since 1988

Brian is a credentialed Minister of Religion. Together with his wife Bobbie, he is the founding Senior Pastor of Hillsong Church Australia and Global Senior Pastor of Hillsong Churches across the world (See 'Our History' for more details).

Meeting attendance:
Board ●●●●●

Nabi Saleh

Board Member since 1990

Nabi is the former Executive Chairman of Gloria Jean's Coffees worldwide and Executive Chairman of Praise International USA which operates It's A Grind coffee houses. He offers strong business acumen gained from a number of business interests and sits on several boards for large, non-profit organisations.

Meeting attendance:
Board ●●●●●
Audit Committee ●●●

Leigh Howard-Smith

Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee - Chairperson
Board Member since 1993

Leigh is a Director/Owner of Freight Specialists, a national logistics and transport business. He is a long-standing board member of Hillsong Church and brings experience in managing business growth, corporate governance as well as risk and compliance management.

Meeting attendance:
Board ●●
Audit Committee ●●●●

Phillip Denton

Board Member since 2010

Phillip is an Executive Director of Hillscorp, a property development company. In his past 27 years in the industry he offers business acumen and facilities development expertise to the Board.

Meeting attendance:

Board ●●●●●

Audit Committee ●●●●

Don Cooper-Williams

Board Member since 1993

Don is the founder of AltoPoint consulting. With over 40 years of experience in executive management in the IT industry, Don offers a wealth of experience in business leadership, church leadership, corporate governance and growth strategy to corporations.

Meeting attendance:

Board ●●●●●

Audit Committee ●●●●

Dane Gambrill

Board Member since 2009

Dane is employed by IBM and is responsible for the Enterprise and Media Video division in Asia Pacific, also serving as a member of IBM's Global Media and Entertainment leadership team. He is a trusted advisor regarding business transformation in the Digital era for the Media and Entertainment Industry.

Meeting attendance:

Board ●●●●●

Ben Houston

Board Member since 2012

Ben is a credentialed Minister of Religion and with his wife Lucille, the Lead Pastor at Hillsong Church Los Angeles. He is passionate about building the Church and has a real heart to see people find hope, life and answers in Jesus Christ. Ben offers extensive church leadership and management experience, having spent a significant number of years prior to LA overseeing our extension services across New South Wales and Queensland.

Meeting attendance:

Board ●●●



Phillip Denton

Dane Gambrill

Ben Houston

Lalita Stables

Don Cooper-Williams

Melinda Dwight

Grant Thomson

Lalita Stables

Board Member since 2011

Lalita has over 20 years experience in the IT industry and is currently Head of Sales for UK and Ireland with Google UK, following a successful corporate career with IBM for 11 years. She offers executive business experience, a knowledge of media and technology and church leadership experience to the Board.

Meeting attendance:

Board ●●●●●

Melinda Dwight

Board Member since 2016

Melinda is the National Director of Alpha Australia, Previous Chair of The William Wilberforce Foundation and the Previous Chair of Harvest Bible College. Melinda has been an ordained minister with the ACC for 25 years and previously served as the Senior Pastor of a thriving church for 15 years, as well as serving on the Victorian ACC State Executive and was previously on the board of ACCI and Youth Alive Victoria.

Meeting attendance:

Board ●●●●●

Grant Thomson

Board Member since 2008

Grant is the Global Marketing Director for Hillsong. Along with a brilliant international team he is responsible for the communication and reach of the brands that operate in the commercial sphere and emanate from Hillsong. Grant holds masters degrees and certificates in management, marketing and theology from several Universities including Harvard, Deakin, Alphacrucis and Western Sydney.

Meeting attendance:

Board ●●●●

Thank You

Our ability to serve our church and community in delivering effective programs and services would not be made possible without the collective sacrifice of many. We are thankful for the unwavering commitment of our Board and Elders, over 933 staff, and the thousands of volunteers who serve week in and week out across every area of church life. We are also grateful for the dedicated involvement of our Hillsong College students who join in a wide range of church operations to develop and outwork the knowledge they have acquired in class.

In 2017, Hillsong Church is grateful to have partnered with numerous organisations both within Australia and internationally, to ensure a better future for our local Australian communities and beyond.







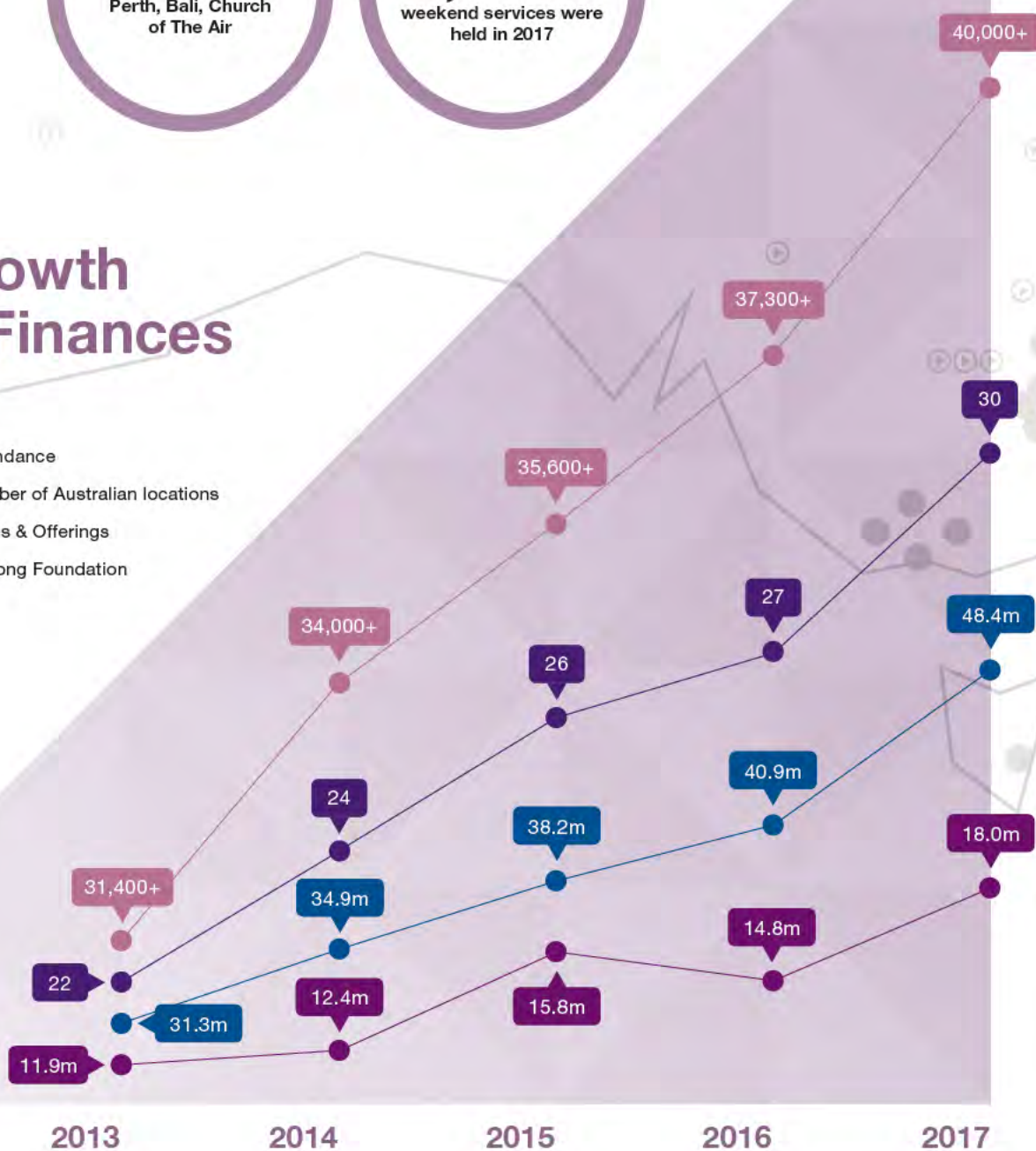
- Church location
- Church Of The Air locations

Locations launched in 2017 Wollongong, Perth, Bali, Church of The Air

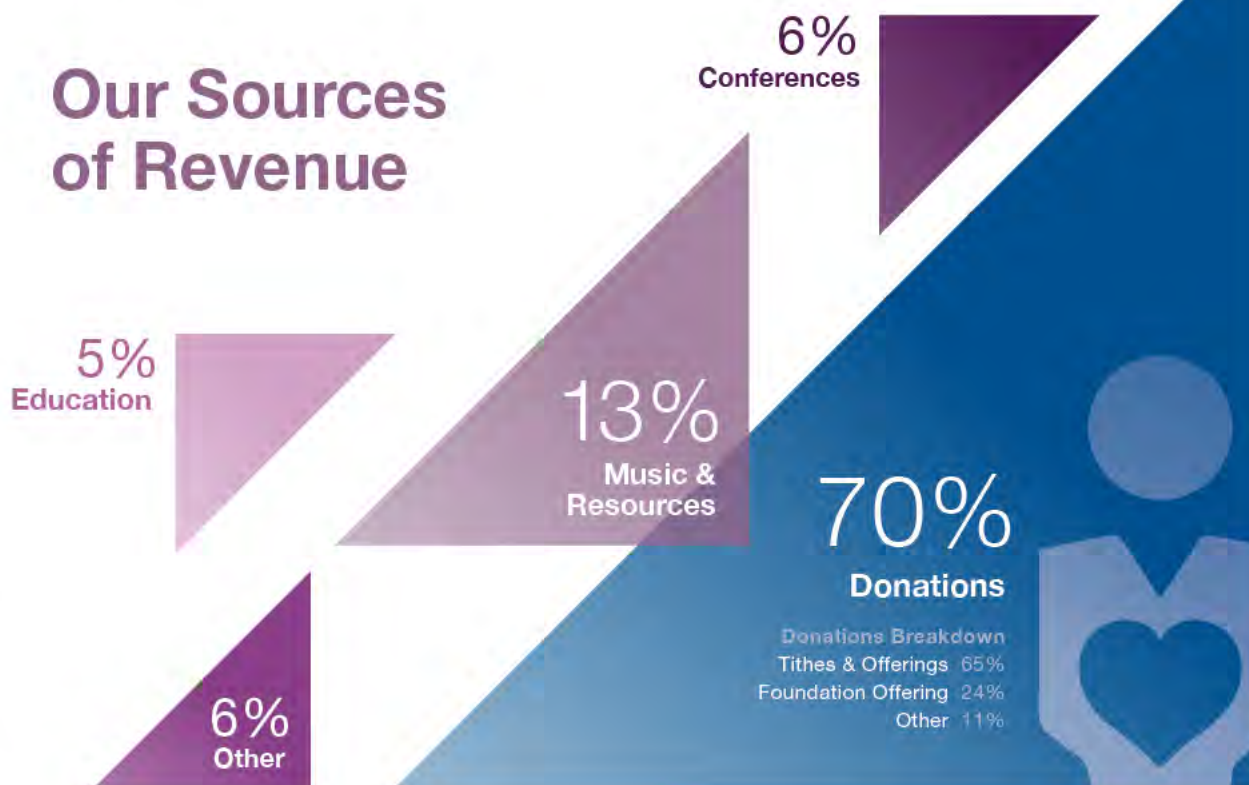
4,100+ weekend services were held in 2017

Growth & Finances

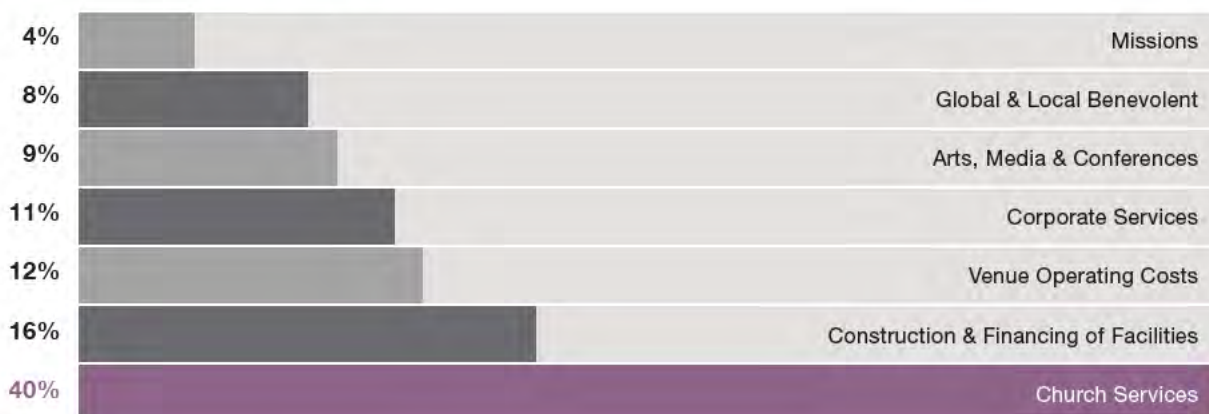
- Attendance
- Number of Australian locations
- Tithes & Offerings
- Hillsong Foundation



Our Sources of Revenue



How Proceeds Are Spent



What's In Church Services



Our financial statements are audited by Ernst and Young: Audited Financial Statements will be added to the Annual Report online by 30 June 2018. Visit hillsong.com/policies/annual-report-australia/

Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Report

Opinion

The summary financial report, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2017, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited financial report of The Activities of Hillsong Church Australia (Hillsong Church Australia) for the year ended 31 December 2017.

In our opinion, the information reported in the summarised financial report is consistent, in all material respects, with the combined financial report from which it was derived.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Summary Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of Hillsong Church Australia in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the concise financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by Australian Accounting Standards. Reading the summary financial report and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited combined financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

The Financial Report and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial report in our report dated 28 June 2018

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting

Our auditor's report on Hillsong Church Australia's audited Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2017 draws attention to Note 2 of the Financial Report which describes the basis of accounting. That financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the directors' financial reporting responsibilities to the members. As a result the audited financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibility of the Directors for the Summary Financial Report

The directors of each of the related entities comprising Hillsong Church Australia (the 'common directors') are responsible for the preparation and presentation of the summarised financial report in accordance with accounting policies described in Note 1 to the summarised financial report.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Summary Financial Report

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial report is consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.



Ernst & Young

Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 31 December 2017

	2017 (\$)	2016 (\$)
Total revenue	109,599,691	130,978,056
Church and other benevolent activities	(71,506,625)	(72,693,132)
Resources	(4,056,980)	(8,070,046)
Bible college	(6,400,264)	(10,884,722)
Conferences	(9,107,662)	(12,749,223)
Campuses facilities and maintenance	(7,944,064)	(9,442,669)
Other expenses	(8,632,179)	(11,214,049)
Surplus from operations	1,951,917	5,924,215
Financial income, net	(61,841)	69,301
Net surplus available for church and ministry projects	1,890,076	5,993,516
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the period	1,890,076	5,993,516

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 31 December 2017

	Settled sum (\$)	Common control reserve (\$)	Retained surplus (\$)	Total (\$)
Balance at 1 January 2017	50	(6,608,107)	34,935,354	28,327,297
Transfer of net assets	-	(4,932,448)	-	(4,932,448)
Total comprehensive income for the period	-	-	1,890,076	1,890,076
Balance at 31 December 2017	50	(11,540,555)	36,825,430	25,284,925
Balance at 1 January 2016	50	-	28,941,838	28,941,888
Related party debt forgiveness	-	(6,608,107)	-	(6,608,107)
Total comprehensive income for the period	-	-	5,993,516	5,993,516
Balance at 31 December 2016	50	(6,608,107)	34,935,354	28,327,297

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2017

Current assets	2017 (\$)	2016 (\$)
Cash and cash equivalents	11,240,549	15,020,491
Trade and other receivables	765,027	7,098,099
Inventories	49,134	1,467,897
Other assets	712,859	1,633,866
Other financial assets	-	1,097,454
Total current assets	12,767,569	26,317,807
Non-current assets		
Other receivables	22,169,509	17,426,057
Property, plant and equipment	14,703,792	16,370,146
Total non-current assets	36,873,301	33,796,203
TOTAL ASSETS	49,640,870	60,114,010
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	3,297,191	10,947,886
Interest bearing liabilities	1,411,685	1,083,354
Employee benefits	4,037,747	5,031,421
Other payables	5,198,816	7,671,960
Total current liabilities	13,945,439	24,734,621
Non-current liabilities		
Other payables	2,372,650	1,254,383
Interest bearing liabilities	7,416,588	4,965,357
Employee benefits	621,268	832,352
Total non-current liabilities	10,410,506	7,052,092
TOTAL LIABILITIES	24,355,945	31,786,713
NET ASSETS	25,284,925	28,327,297
Accumulated funds		
Settled sum	50	50
Common control reserve	(11,540,555)	(6,608,107)
Retained surplus	34,935,354	34,935,354
TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS	25,284,925	28,327,297

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 December 2017

Cash flow from operating activities	2017 (\$)	2016 (\$)
Cash receipts in the course of operations	111,429,086	132,866,229
Cash payments to suppliers and employees	(108,045,665)	(123,425,182)
Interest received	178,536	251,934
Interest paid	(240,377)	(182,633)
Net cash provided by operating activities	3,321,580	9,510,348
Cash flow from investing activities		
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(2,354,479)	(6,080,252)
Proceeds/(Purchases) of other financial assets	1,108,840	(431,230)
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,245,639)	(6,511,482)
Cash flow from financing activities		
Loans to related parties	(7,183,647)	(5,841,842)
Repayments from related parties	-	418,002
Loans from related parties	2,362,655	405,942
Repayments to related parties	(1,014,964)	(3,340,795)
Proceeds from interest bearing liabilities	2,851,195	1,481,920
Net cash (used in)/provided by financing activities	(2,984,761)	(6,876,773)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(908,820)	(3,877,907)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of year	14,948,858	18,826,765
Decrease in cash due to restructure during the year	(2,799,489)	
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of year	11,240,549	14,948,858

Governance

While Hillsong Church is one church, there are many legal entities that operate the various programs offered. These individual entities have been established for various reasons, which include legislative requirement, tax status distinction and resource allocation. Each of these legal entities have their own unique purpose and requirements. These requirements include such things as who they are accountable to and how they are governed.

Directorship

The primary responsibility of the Board of Directors is governance. The governance regime is outworked within three principle activities, which are: compliance, assurance and risk management.

Compliance

The Board is responsible for adherence to all compliance requirements of the church. The scope of this compliance goes beyond financial reporting. The breadth of compliance ranges from matters relating to employment, WH&S, commercial contracts, funding covenants, medical, child protection and building regulations.

Assurance

The responsibility of the Board is to seek assurance from the organisation and its management that the organisation is complying and managing its risks effectively. An effective assurance tool is audit. This is annually conducted on the financial statements of the church by a top tier audit firm.

Risk Management

Effective risk management is the responsibility of the Board. Members of the Board require that risks facing the church have been identified and assessed and that the risks are being properly managed. The Board of Hillsong Church Australia is committed to the practice of risk management to assist with strategic decision-making and operational oversight.

Sub-Committees

The Constitution provides the Board with the power to establish one or more sub-committees. To ensure governance effectiveness, the Board has determined standing sub-committees will be formed in the key areas of audit, risk, compliance and remuneration.

Global Senior Pastor

The Global Senior Pastor, in the context of Hillsong Church, is the ordained Minister of Religion that has been commissioned with the ultimate responsibility of the spiritual oversight of the church. The fulfilment of this role includes leadership of the Executive Management, Chairperson of the Board and an Elder.



Board Composition

To maintain Board independence, the majority of Directors are non-executive members who are independent of the management team.

Board Remuneration

As outlined in the church constitution, 'no director shall receive remuneration in respect to his duties as a director of the church'. Remuneration received by Executive Directors is in respect of their executive duties. There is no relationship between the packages received by Executive Directors and the church's financial performance and no equity-based remuneration packages are entered into.

Material Personal Interests

When conflict arises, each Director acknowledges their duty to notify other Board members of a material personal interest, which relates to the church. Furthermore, the Board Member who has a material personal interest in a manner that is being considered at a Board Meeting must not be present while the matter is being considered at the meeting, or vote on the matter.

Ethical Standards and Values

Hillsong Church is a Christ-centred ministry and therefore the Directors, Management and Employees are expected to conduct themselves with the highest of ethical and biblical standards. The expectations of Directors is outlined in each respective constitution and the ACNC governance standards. Employees are bound by the code of conduct and the terms and conditions within their employment contract. Pastoral staff are accountable to the Australian Christian Churches as per the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

Safety and Child Protection

The Board is responsible for monitoring the performance of safety measures being implemented within the church. The Board is committed to the safety of all those who participate, in particular those who are vulnerable.



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TO
SERVE**

VOLUNTEER



For details of our church locations and services visit:

hillsong.com/australia

For what we believe:

hillsong.com/what-we-believe

For details of recent media releases:

hillsong.com/media

Watch Hillsong Channel at:

hillsongchannel.com

foxtel.com.au

fetchtv.com.au

now.hillsongchannel.com

Can we help you?

1300 53 53 53

Postal Address: PO Box 1195, Castle Hill NSW 1765, Australia

General Enquiries: hillsong@hillsong.com