



Anglican Church of Australia  
General Synod

2020

**Annual Progress Report:**

Implementation of recommendations  
from the Final Report of the Royal  
Commission into Institutional  
Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

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## Section 1: Identifying the Institution

### **The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia**

Location: 189 Kent Street, Sydney, NSW 2000  
Contact Officer: Ms Anne Hywood, General Secretary  
Organisational Category: Religious Institution

#### **Background and contextual information**

The Anglican Church of Australia (ACA) operates under a decentralised structure and its core units of organisation are 23 geographically defined dioceses. The church structure also includes Anglican schools, community service organisations, mission agencies, and parachurch organisations, operating within dioceses, with varying degrees of autonomy.

The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia was constituted in 1961. The General Synod functions as a forum for the 23 Dioceses of the Anglican Church of Australia to consider and determine matters in the affairs of the Church.

The 1961 Constitution gives the General Synod wide plenary powers and the ability to create national legislation. However, General Synod legislation declared to affect 'order and good government' in a diocese or the property of a diocese have no effect in a diocese until adopted by ordinance of that diocese. Resolutions of General Synod are not binding on a diocese.

Given this governance structure each diocese has responsibility for the development, adoption and implementation of child protection policies and procedures within their jurisdiction. Each autonomous school, agency and organisation has a similar responsibility.

Since the late 1990's the General Synod has initiated the development and promotion of national models, standards and benchmarks in the area of child protection, abuse complaints management and responding to survivors of abuse.

The lead entity with this responsibility is the General Synod's Safe Ministry Commission (SMC).

The function of the Safe Ministry Commission is:

- a) to examine questions of professional standards, safe ministry practices and training, the protection of children and adults from abuse, and care and support for ordained and authorised lay ministry, referred to it by the Primate, the Standing Committee or the General Synod, and to report thereon to the referring party and the Standing Committee;
- b) to make recommendations to the Standing Committee on matters relating to professional standards, safe ministry practices and training, the protection of children and adults from abuse, and care and support for ordained and authorised lay ministry.

The Safe Ministry Commission has guided the development of a consistent, national approach to matters relating to child safety and complaints handling through its recommendations to the General Synod and the General Synod Standing Committee and has oversight of the ACA's response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse.

In September 2017, the General Synod passed the [Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017](#) which provides national standards in areas of church worker screening, selection and training, the adoption of a consistent code of conduct and risk management strategies for persons of concern. The Canon includes provisions for an external audit of performance against the

national standards.

At November 2020, 21 of 23 dioceses of the ACA had adopted the Canon. The Diocese of Rockhampton is considering adoption of the Canon in 2021. The Diocese of North West Australia is considering its own Safe Ministry Bill which will be developed in light of the Canon and the recommendations of the Royal Commission. The Diocese of Sydney has adopted the Canon but has not yet brought into effect. The Diocese of Sydney is operating within the standards and guidelines of its Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2018.

Further amendments to safe ministry legislation have been developed in response to the Royal Commission recommendations. These legislative amendments and other safe ministry resources will be considered at the Eighteenth session of the General Synod to be held in June 2021.

National policies and resources relating to child protection are publicly available on the General Synod website at [ACA Safe Ministry](#).

## 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 and Volume 7) (Recommendations 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*
- *Requirement for 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.*

#### Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020

##### **Code of Conduct:**

“*Faithfulness in Service*” - A national code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers was approved by the General Synod in 2004 and promoted to all dioceses for adoption. The current version is available on the General Synod website at [Faithfulness in Service](#).

Dioceses which have adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 are required to comply with the standards and guidelines of Faithfulness in Service so far as they relate to children (Section 5).

It is acknowledged that Anglican schools and community services agencies may require additional inclusions in their code of conduct, due to local jurisdictional regulations. The Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 confirms Faithfulness in Service as the prescribed code of conduct for a Church body subject to the Canon, unless an application is made for approval of an alternative.

In 2010 the Standing Committee approved a document describing the expectations for behaviour in our Church communities and to complement Faithfulness in Service. [Being Together](#) is a statement of expectations for members of Church communities.

##### **Training in the Code of Conduct**

The training benchmarks outlined in the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 include the requirement that the contents of a safe ministry training course should include key concepts found in Faithfulness in Service.

##### **Policies and Procedures for Child Safe Institutions:**

The Safe Ministry Commission and its predecessors, the Child Protection Committee (from 1998) and the Professional Standards Commission (from 2004), has consistently developed and promoted policies and procedures relating to child protection in the following areas:

#### Prevention of Abuse:

- Promoting Standards of Behaviour; Code of conduct
- Safe Ministry Training Benchmarks
- Screening and selection of clergy and church workers
- National Register (Record of complaints)

These are published on the General Synod Website at:

<https://anglican.org.au/our-work/professional-standards-commission/prevention/>

#### Response to Abuse:

- Pastoral Care and Assistance Principles (Redress)
- Handling Complaints
- Responding to persons of concern

These are published on the General Synod Website at:

<https://anglican.org.au/our-work/professional-standards-commission/response/>

Individual dioceses, schools and agencies have either adopted the national models or have implemented standards of their own.

### **Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure**

The GSO has developed an evaluation framework to facilitate the ongoing review and amendment of Faithfulness in Service, “Being Together”, the national standards provided in the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 and national model policies and resources.

All dioceses which have adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 will be audited to measure compliance with the adoption of the code of conduct, screening requirements, training standards and benchmarks contained in the legislation. The first group of audits were completed in December 2020. The audit reports will be published in 2021 and will be available on the General Synod website at: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/professional-standards-commission/safeministryaudits>. The second group of audits are due to commence in January 2021.

The SMC has developed a project to publish Faithfulness in Service in a more accessible and user friendly format to give effect to the National Principles for Child Safety relating to accessibility. Further, the SMC have developed a series of Being Together posters which promotes the statement of expectations for members of Church communities in a more accessible and user friendly format. The Being Together posters will be considered by the General Synod Standing Committee (the Standing Committee) at its meeting in April 2021.

## **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.*

### **Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020**

In 2004, the General Synod approved a model professional standards ordinance to cover disciplinary processes in relation to complaints of sexual misconduct and child abuse against clergy. Most dioceses have passed ordinances along these lines, some adopting the model ordinance without modification, others with varying degrees of modification.

All dioceses have appointed a Director of Professional Standards with responsibility for coordinating the response and investigation of complaints of the abuse. Information on making a complaint is made available in church operational locations and on diocesan websites.

Individual schools and agencies have either adopted the national model or have implemented standards of their own.

The Royal Commission noted that there are a range of professional standards and complaints management processes adopted across the ACA.

The General Synod in 2017 requested the Safe Ministry Commission to develop recommendations for a nationally consistent professional standards process across the ACA.

The SMC identified the mechanisms required to improve the Church's complaint handling processes and prepared draft amendments to relevant canons for consultation with dioceses. The consultation period commenced from July until September 2019. The SMC considered all feedback received and produced final recommendations for the Standing Committee.

### **Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure**

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 14 November 2020 passed a resolution referring the amended legislation, relating to complaint handling processes, for consideration at the Eighteenth Session of General Synod which will be held in June 2021.

The SMC is in the process of reviewing its complaint handling processes against the *Complaint Handling Guide* developed by the National Office for Child Safety.

In June 2020 the SMC issued a survey to members of Anglican Schools Australia (ASA) requesting details of their complaint handling policies. A corresponding survey will be sent to members of Anglicare Australia in 2021. The SMC will continue to collaborate with ASA and Anglicare Australia to determine whether any improvements can be made to our complaint handling policies.



## 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 recordkeeping that responds to child sexual abuse occurring within institutions*

### **Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020**

In 2007, the General Synod passed the National Register Canon 2007 which provided for the establishment of the National Register and four protocols for its implementation.

The National Register is an essential part of the Church's response to the prevention of child abuse and adult sexual misconduct. The Canon provides for a national, transparent and accountable process to ensure appropriate checks are made before all ordinations, licences or appointments are made.

The Directors of Professional Standards in all dioceses are required to enter relevant information into the National Register. Currently this information does not extend to persons working in affiliated institutions in all dioceses.

The National Register contains only information primarily pertaining to complaints or findings of child abuse and adult sexual misconduct as well as adverse findings against or adverse admissions made by clergy or lay people within the Church.

Details about the operation of the National Register may be found in the National Register Canon 2007. Operational instructions for handling of information on the National Register (input, inquiries, access and disclosure) are provided for in a series of protocols.

This information is provided on the [National Register](#) page on the General Synod website.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC to consult with Anglicare Australia and Anglican Schools Australia and prepare:

- a) a policy in relation to whether the scope of the National Register Canon 2007 should be extended to cover officers, employees and volunteers of all Anglican Church of Australia institutions; and if appropriate
- b) any amendments of the National Register Canon 2007 proposed to give effect to this policy.

### **Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The membership of the Anglican Registrars Network is the senior administrative managers of the 23 dioceses. The Network has nominated ten representatives to collaborate with the SMC to develop recommendations for implementing the Royal Commission's principles for records and recordkeeping. The Network will commence work to prepare final policy and legislative recommendations for the Standing Committee in 2021. Any additional standards proposed by the working group and endorsed by Standing Committee will be circulated to dioceses for consultation.

## Theme 2: Children's Voices

### Measure 2.1: Children participate in decisions that affect them (All relevant volumes and recommendations)

- *How are children able to express their views and how are their voices being incorporated into child safe practices? E.g. design of policy and decision-making.*

#### Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020

To date the ACA's experience of complaints of sexual abuse has been primarily responding to and supporting adult survivors of abuse. For that reason, policies and procedures have focussed on processes that engage adults.

The ACA has noted the recommendations of the Royal Commission in relation to engaging children and young people in policy development and decision making and has established this issue is a priority area of review going forward.

The ACA is in the process of developing measures to engage young people in the development and implementation of child protection policies and processes.

#### Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure

The SMC has consulted with academic experts and other faith-based groups with experience in this area. The SMC is working with the Australian Catholic Institute of Child Protection Studies on the use of the '*Children's Safety Survey*'. The tool provides an opportunity to hear directly from children about how safe they feel in Anglican organisations by measuring their perceptions of safety, their confidence in the organisation, and respond to their feedback or concerns. A pilot study will take place in selected parishes in 2021.

The Eighteenth Session of General Synod, which will be held in June 2021, is including a concurrent youth program. The program allows young people to be engaged in and contribute towards synod discussions.

## Section 3: Reporting for specific non-government institutions

### Volume 16 Religious Institutions – Recommendations to the Anglican Church

#### Recommendation 16.1:

**The Anglican Church of Australia should adopt a uniform episcopal standards framework that ensures that bishops and former bishops are accountable to an appropriate authority or body in relation to their response to complaints of child sexual abuse.**

#### Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020

In 2007, the General Synod passed the Episcopal Standards Canon 2007. This Canon provided for the establishment of two national bodies, the Episcopal Standards Commission and the Episcopal Standards Board, to respectively investigate and determine the fitness of members of the House of Bishops to hold office.

In 2010, the Standing Committee appointed the Episcopal Ministry Task Force (the EMTF) to review the principles behind and the operation of various matters including determining a Bishop's fitness to hold office with a view to promoting national uniformity. The appointment of the EMTF grew out of a concern that a number of dioceses had declined to adopt the Episcopal Standards Canon 2007, or having adopted it, had later excluded it in accordance with the provisions of the ACA Constitution. The Province of Victoria was proceeding to develop its own legislation.

In 2014, the General Synod passed a resolution commending for enactment by every diocese the Model Episcopal Standards Ordinance. This Ordinance provided for the establishment of three diocesan bodies, the Episcopal Standards Committee, the Episcopal Standards Board and the Episcopal Standards Review Board, to respectively investigate and determine the fitness of the diocesan bishop.

In 2016 it was identified that further work was required to implement a national episcopal standards process as only 11 of the 23 dioceses passed legislation giving effect to the Model Episcopal Standards Ordinance.

In 2017 the General Synod passed the [Episcopal Standards \(Child Protection\) Canon 2017](#) which provides for the determination of the fitness of current and former diocesan bishops to hold office or to remain in Holy Orders.

The determination is generally limited to consideration of examinable conduct which includes child abuse, and the failure without reasonable excuse to comply with a law requiring the reporting of child abuse to the police or another authority.

#### Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:

22 of the 23 dioceses of the ACA have adopted the Episcopal Standards (Child Protection) Canon 2017.

**Recommendation 16.2:**

**The Anglican Church of Australia should adopt a policy relating to the management of actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise in relation to allegations of child sexual abuse, which expressly covers: a) members of professional standards bodies; b) members of diocesan councils (otherwise known as bishop-in-council or standing committee of synod); c) members of the Standing Committee of the General Synod; d) chancellors and legal advisers for dioceses.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020**

The model Professional Standards Ordinance promoted to all dioceses in 2004 included principles addressing conflict of interest and promoting independence of investigation and decision making processes.

The ACA has noted the Royal Commission recommendations to develop a specific conflict of interest policy in addition to the existing principles in place.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC and the Church Law Commission (CLC) to collaborate and prepare a policy relating to the management of actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise in relation to allegations of child sexual abuse, and any amendments of canons and rules proposed to give effect to this policy.

The SMC and CLC identified the mechanisms required to give effect to RC 16.2 and prepared draft amendments to relevant canons for consultation with dioceses. The consultation period commenced from July until September 2019. The SMC considered all feedback received and produced final recommendations for the Standing Committee.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 14 November 2020 passed a resolution referring the amended legislation, relating to conflicts of interest, for consideration at the Eighteenth Session of General Synod which will be held in June 2021.

**Recommendation 16.3:**

**The Anglican Church of Australia should amend Being Together to expressly refer to the importance of child safety.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2004 the General Synod adopted Faithfulness in Service as a national code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and lay church workers.

In 2010 the Professional Standards Commission identified the need for a document describing the expectations for behaviour in our Church communities and to complement Faithfulness in Service. [Being Together](#) is a document which has been developed consultatively to fulfil this need.

In 2014 the General Synod adopted Being Together and recommended it to all dioceses.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC to prepare an amendment of Being Together to expressly refer to the importance of child safety

The SMC prepared draft amendments to Being Together and consulted with dioceses. The consultation period commenced from July until September 2019. The SMC considered all feedback received and produced final recommendations for the Standing Committee.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The proposed changes to Being Together will be considered at the first meeting of the Standing Committee in 2021. The SMC has developed a series of posters which seek to promote Being Together, including the amendments which give effect to RC 16.3

**Recommendation 16.4:**

**The Anglican Church of Australia should develop a national approach to the selection, screening and training of candidates for ordination in the Anglican Church (with regard to safe ministry).**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2004 the General Synod passed a resolution recommending that dioceses adopt a range of measures relating to the protection of children

These recommendations included the adoption of the Safe Ministry Check (the national applicant and referee questionnaires for the selection of ordination candidates and for the screening of clergy and church workers who have contact with children in their ministry). They also included safe ministry training for clergy and church workers. The adoption of the Safe Ministry checks are a screening requirement of the Safe to Ministry to Children Canon 2017.

These measures have been reviewed, amended and promoted since that time and widely adopted by dioceses.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC, Mission and Ministry Commission and Anglican Theological Educators Network to collaborate, consult with dioceses, where practicable participate in ecumenical discussions, and prepare a policy in relation to a national approach for the selection of candidates for ordination with regard to safe ministry, and any amendments of the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 or another canon proposed to give effect to this policy.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

All dioceses which have adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 will be audited to measure compliance with the screening requirements and training standards and benchmarks contained in the legislation, including Safe Ministry Checks for candidates for ordination. The first group of audits were completed in December 2020. The audit reports will be published in 2021 and will be available on the General Synod website at: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/professional-standards-commission/safeministryaudits>. The second group of audits are due to commence in January 2021.

Additional work has commenced and the SMC will work with the Mission and Ministry Commission and Anglican Theological Educators network to prepare final policy and legislative recommendations for the Standing Committee. Any additional standards proposed by the working group and endorsed by Standing Committee will be circulated to dioceses for consultation.

**Recommendation 16.5:**

**The Anglican Church of Australia should develop and each diocese should implement mandatory national standards to ensure that all people in religious or pastoral ministry (bishops, clergy, religious and lay personnel): a) undertake mandatory, regular professional development, compulsory components being professional responsibility and boundaries, ethics in ministry and child safety, b) undertake mandatory professional/pastoral supervision, c) undergo regular performance appraisals.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2004 the General Synod passed a resolution recommending that dioceses adopt a range of measures relating to the protection of children. These recommendations included a system of ministry support for clergy including professional supervision.

These measures have been reviewed, amended and promoted since that time. A number of metropolitan dioceses and larger regional dioceses have implemented professional development and supervision programs.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC and Mission and Ministry Commission to collaborate, consult with dioceses, where practicable participate in ecumenical discussions, and prepare a policy in relation to mandatory national standards for clergy and church workers for professional development, professional/pastoral supervision and performance appraisals, and any amendments of the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 or another canon proposed to give effect to this policy.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC and Mission and Ministry Commission to collaborate, consult with dioceses, where practicable participate in ecumenical discussions, and prepare a policy in relation to mandatory national standards for clergy and church workers for professional development, professional/pastoral supervision and performance appraisals, and any amendments of the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 or another canon proposed to give effect to this policy.

In 2019 the General Synod engaged a consultant to work with the SMC and diocesan representatives to develop a proposal for mandatory national standards for clergy and church workers for professional development, professional supervision and performance appraisals. The proposed model has been incorporated into draft legislation and an implementation guide is in development.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 14 November 2020 passed a resolution requesting the SMC to present proposed National Guidelines for Professional Supervision, Professional Development and Performance Appraisals to the first Standing Committee meeting in 2021. A draft version of the guidelines is being piloted by the Diocese of Bunbury in 2021. Findings from the pilot implementation in the Diocese of Bunbury will be used to inform the final guidelines.

## **Volume 16 Religious Institutions – Recommendations to all Religious Institutions**

### **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.**

### **Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

The Anglican Church has been working with the National Council of Churches Australia as part of a task group to review the current Safe Church Training Agreement framework and standards to reflect the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

The ACA is a member of the NSW Ombudsman's Survivor and Faith Group Child Safety Standing Committee to respond to the recommendations of the Royal Commission and in particular to the 10 National Principles.

### **Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

In 2019 the ACA joined the Child Safe Sectors Leadership Group (CSSLG) which serves as a mechanism for sectors working with children and young people to provide advice to the National Office for Child Safety. The ACA will continue to participate in the CSSLG to facilitate the sharing of best practice advice between institutions, and promote and disseminate information about child safety requirements to our affiliated institutions.

The ACA is in the process of reviewing its policies, legislation and standards against the national principles and identifying areas for improvement.



**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

Prior to the identification of the 10 Child Safe Standards, the ACA has promoted national standards, in accordance with best practice at the time, for adoption by its dioceses and affiliated institutions.

The ACA is a member of the NSW Ombudsman's Survivor and Faith Group Child Safety Standing Committee to respond to the recommendations of the Royal Commission and in particular to the 10 National Principles.

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2019 the ACA joined the Child Safe Sectors Leadership Group (CSSLG) which serves as a mechanism for sectors working with children and young people to provide advice to the National Office for Child Safety. The ACA will continue to participate in the CSSLG to facilitate the sharing of best practice advice between institutions, and promote and disseminate information about child safety requirements to our affiliated institutions.

The ACA is in the process of reviewing its policies, legislation and standards against the national principles and identifying areas for improvement. This project encompasses Anglican schools and agencies.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

Prior to the identification of the 10 Child Safe Standards, the ACA has promoted national standards, in accordance with best practice at the time, for adoption by its dioceses and affiliated institutions.

The ACA is a member of the NSW Ombudsman's Survivor and Faith Group Child Safety Standing Committee to respond to the recommendations of the Royal Commission and in particular to the 10 National Principles.

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2019 the ACA joined the Child Safe Sectors Leadership Group (CSSLG) which serves as a mechanism for sectors working with children and young people to provide advice to the National Office for Child Safety. The ACA will continue to participate in the CSSLG to facilitate the sharing of best practice advice between institutions, and promote and disseminate information about child safety requirements to our affiliated institutions.

The ACA is in the process of reviewing its policies, legislation and standards against the national principles and identifying areas for improvement. This project encompasses Anglican schools and agencies.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

A number of dioceses of the ACA have been actively engaged with relevant state and territory oversight bodies within their local jurisdiction on the introduction of new regulatory and reporting arrangements.

The ACA is a member of the NSW Ombudsman's Survivor and Faith Group Child Safety Standing Committee to respond to the recommendations of the Royal Commission and in particular to the 10 National Principles.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The dioceses of the Anglican Church are committed to engaging with relevant state and territory oversight bodies responsible for the oversight of the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

In 2019 the ACA joined the Child Safe Sectors Leadership Group (CSSLG) which serves as a mechanism for sectors working with children and young people to provide advice to the National Office for Child Safety. The ACA will continue to participate in the CSSLG to facilitate the sharing of best practice advice between institutions, and promote and disseminate information about child safety requirements to our affiliated institutions.

The ACA is in the process of reviewing its policies, legislation and standards against the national principles and identifying areas for improvement. This project encompasses Anglican schools and agencies.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

Anglicare Australia (AA), the peak body for Anglican community service agencies and Anglican Schools Australia (ASA) are monitoring the development and introduction of new regulatory and reporting arrangements by relevant state and territory oversight bodies on behalf of their members.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

Anglicare Australia and Anglican Schools Australia will engage with relevant state and territory bodies responsible for the oversight of the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and will advise the ACA on the development of a compliance reporting framework.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

The Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 applies to clergy and any lay person undertaking any ministry to children, and prescribes minimum standards and guidelines for safe ministry to children in relation to screening and training.

These minimum standards largely correspond to policies recommended by the General Synod to dioceses between 2004 and 2017.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC, Mission and Ministry Commission and Anglican Theological Educators Network to collaborate, consult with bishops and prepare:

- a) a policy for accredited leadership training for bishops including in relation to the promotion of child safety in consultation with the Viability and Structures Working Group; and
- b) any amendments of the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 proposed to give effect to this policy.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

All dioceses which have adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 will be audited to measure compliance with the training standards and benchmarks contained in the legislation. The first group of audits were completed in December 2020. The audit reports will be published in 2021 and will be available on the General Synod website at: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/professional-standards-commission/safeministryaudits>. The second group of audits are due to commence in January 2021.

Additional work has commenced and the SMC will work with the Mission and Ministry Commission and Anglican Theological Educators network to prepare final recommendations for the Standing Committee. Any additional standards proposed by the working group and endorsed by Standing Committee will be circulated to dioceses for consultation.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

The structures of the General Synod of the ACA provides for elected representation of members in three houses: the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy and the House of Laity.

Membership of the ACA's governing bodies includes representation from each of these houses. This model is duplicated in the diocesan governance structures where the Bishop of the diocese is advised by a council including both clergy and lay members.

The model Professional Standards Ordinance promoted to all ACA dioceses in 2004 identified the skills and experience required of persons appointed to roles with the professional standards process including the Professional Standards Director, Professional Standards Committee and the Professional Standards Board. The identified skills include experience in law, child protection social work or counselling. Diocesan bishops are currently advised on child safety matters from members of their Professional Standards bodies which have these identified skills.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC to consult with dioceses and develop a national repository of people with relevant professional expertise to provide advice on matters relating to child sexual abuse and child safety including advice to mandatory reporters on reporting obligations.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

Work has commenced on the identification of relevant experts and the Standing Committee will consider recommendations of the SMC in 2021.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

The ACA has noted the Royal Commission's recommendation related to accountability of religious leaders.

The Bishop of each diocese is advised by a council including both clergy and lay members on matters affecting the diocese, including child safety. Specifically in matters relating to the response to complaints of abuse the Bishop is advised by committees and boards within the Professional Standards process.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC and Episcopal Ministry Task Force (EMTF) to collaborate, consult with diocesan bishops and prepare:

- a) a policy for the accountability of diocesan bishops for the decisions they make with respect to child safety and any amendments of the Episcopal Standards Canon 2017; and
- b) any amendments of the Episcopal Standards (Child Protection) Canon 2017 or another canon proposed to give effect to this policy.

The SMC and representatives from the EMTF identified the mechanisms required to give effect to RC 16.38 and prepared draft amendments to relevant canons for consultation with dioceses. The consultation period commenced from July until September 2019. The SMC considered all feedback received and produced final recommendations for the Standing Committee.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 14 November 2020 passed a resolution referring the amended legislation, relating to accountability of leaders, to be considered at the Eighteenth Session of General Synod which will be held in June 2021.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020**

The model Professional Standards Ordinance promoted to all dioceses in 2004 included principles addressing conflict of interest and promoting independence of investigation and decision making processes.

The ACA has noted the Royal Commission recommendations to develop a specific conflict of interest policy in addition to the existing principles in place.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC and the Church Law Commission to collaborate and prepare a policy relating to the management of actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise in relation to allegations of child sexual abuse, and any amendments of canons and rules proposed to give effect to this policy.

The SMC and CLC identified the mechanisms required to give effect to RC 16.39 and prepared draft amendments to relevant canons for consultation with dioceses. The consultation period commenced from July until September 2019. The SMC considered all feedback received and produced final recommendations for the Standing Committee.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 14 November 2020 passed a resolution referring the amended legislation, relating to conflicts of interest, to be considered at the Eighteenth Session of General Synod which will be held in June 2021.



**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

The ACA has noted the Royal Commission's recommendations relating to the introduction of age-appropriate preventative education.

It is acknowledged that the development of national policies and resources has been directed at ensuring adult clergy and church workers are trained and aware of child protection strategies to ensure the safety of children in their care.

Although individual churches, schools and agencies have implemented preventative education programs for children a national project in this area is still to commence.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC to consult with dioceses, Anglicare Australia and ASA, and prepare:

- a) a policy for accredited age-appropriate prevention education for children in institutions of the Anglican Church of Australia that have children in their care other than Church bodies specified in section 9 (2) of the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017; and
- b) any amendments of the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 proposed to give effect to this policy.

The Safe Ministry Commission has established an Anglican working group including representatives from Anglicare Australia and the Anglican Schools Association to consider the implementation of the National Child Safe Principles for all Anglican entities.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

In June 2020 the SMC issued a survey to members of Anglican Schools Australia (ASA) requesting details of any policies relating to age-appropriate prevention education. A corresponding survey will be sent to members of Anglicare Australia in 2021. The SMC will continue to collaborate with ASA and Anglicare Australia to determine whether any improvements can be made to our training and accreditation policies.

**Recommendation 16.41:**

**Consistent with Child Safe Standard 3, each religious institutions 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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

National ACA legislation, policies and procedures relating to the child safety are available on the General Synod website at [Safe Churches](#).

These resources are developed through consultation across dioceses, schools and agencies and in response to academic and community feedback received.

The GSO in collaboration with the Professional Standards Directors Network has commenced community consultations on some of the resources being developed by the Safe Ministry Commission. Community consultations were conducted in September 2019 with the purpose of seeking feedback on the Persons of Concern Policy and associated resources.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The GSO is investigating the design and development of an independent website for safe ministry related policies and resources. The new website will include custom contact forms for community members to provide feedback on all policies relating to child safety.

The GSO has developed an evaluation framework for the effectiveness of its safe ministry policies and resources.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2012 the SMC developed and promoted a process for the comprehensive [psychological assessment](#) of candidates for ordination.

The Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 prescribes the standards of screening for candidates for religious ministry. The screening process for an individual approaching ordination includes a psychological assessment involving an assessment of psychosexual maturity of the person by a registered psychologist.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

All dioceses which have adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 will be audited to measure compliance with the training standards and benchmarks contained in the legislation. The first group of audits were completed in December 2020. The audit reports will be published in 2021 and will be available on the General Synod website at: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/professional-standards-commission/safeministryaudits>. The second group of audits are due to commence in January 2021.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2004 the General Synod passed a resolution recommending that dioceses adopt a range of measures relating to the protection of children.

These recommendations included the safe ministry training for clergy and church workers.

The nature and content of safe ministry training has been the topic of cross-denominational discussion in Australia since 2005. During 2006 and 2007 the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) Safe Church Training Agreement produced a set of standards for Safe Ministry Training. The General Synod promoted [Safe Ministry Training National Benchmarks](#) which built upon those standards.

The Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 defines accredited training as training that includes the course content in the National Safe Ministry Training Benchmarks.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC, Mission and Ministry Commission and Anglican Theological Educators Network to collaborate, consult with dioceses, where practicable participate in ecumenical discussions, and prepare a policy in relation to:

- a) minimum training on child safety and related matters specified in recommendation 16.43 in the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse; and
- b) the provision of opportunities for external training on best practice approaches to child safety; and any amendments of the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 proposed to give effect to this policy.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

All dioceses which have adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 will be audited to measure compliance with the training standards and benchmarks contained in the legislation. The first group of audits were completed in December 2020. The audit reports will be published in 2021 and will be available on the General Synod website at: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/professional-standards-commission/safeministryaudits>. The second group of audits are due to commence in January 2021.

Additional work has commenced and the SMC will work with the Mission and Ministry Commission and Anglican Theological Educators network to prepare final recommendations for the Standing Committee. Any additional standards proposed by the working group and endorsed by Standing Committee will be circulated to dioceses for consultation.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2004 the General Synod passed a resolution recommending that dioceses adopt a range of measures relating to the protection of children. These recommendations included a system of ministry support for clergy including professional supervision.

These measures have been reviewed, amended and promoted since that time. A number of metropolitan dioceses and larger regional dioceses have implemented professional development and supervision programs.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC and Mission and Ministry Commission to collaborate, consult with dioceses, where practicable participate in ecumenical discussions, and prepare a policy in relation to mandatory national standards for clergy and church workers for professional development, professional/pastoral supervision and performance appraisals, and any amendments of the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 or another canon proposed to give effect to this policy.

The General Synod has engaged a consultant to work with diocesan representatives and develop a proposal for mandatory national standards for clergy and church workers for professional development, professional supervision and performance appraisals. The proposed model has been incorporated into draft legislation and an implementation guide for dioceses to consider is in development.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 14 November 2020 passed a resolution requesting the SMC to present proposed National Guidelines for Professional Supervision, Professional Development and Performance Appraisals to the first Standing Committee meeting in 2021. A draft version of the guidelines is being piloted by the Diocese of Bunbury in 2021. Findings from the pilot implementation in the Diocese of Bunbury will be used to inform the final guidelines.

**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, 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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2004 the General Synod passed a resolution recommending that dioceses adopt a range of measures relating to the protection of children. These recommendations included a system of ministry support for clergy including professional supervision.

These measures have been reviewed, amended and promoted since that time. A number of metropolitan dioceses and larger regional dioceses have implemented professional development and supervision programs.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC and Mission and Ministry Commission to collaborate, consult with dioceses, where practicable participate in ecumenical discussions, and prepare a policy in relation to mandatory national standards for clergy and church workers for professional development, professional/pastoral supervision and performance appraisals, and any amendments of the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 or another canon proposed to give effect to this policy.

The General Synod has engaged a consultant to work with diocesan representatives and develop a proposal for mandatory national standards for clergy and church workers for professional development, professional supervision and performance appraisals. The proposed model has been incorporated into draft legislation and an implementation guide for dioceses to consider is in development.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 14 November 2020 passed a resolution requesting the SMC to present proposed National Guidelines for Professional Supervision, Professional Development and Performance Appraisals to the first Standing Committee meeting in 2021. A draft version of the guidelines is being piloted by the Diocese of Bunbury in 2021. Findings from the pilot implementation in the Diocese of Bunbury will be used to inform the final guidelines.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2004 the General Synod passed a resolution recommending that dioceses adopt a range of measures relating to the protection of children

These recommendations included the adoption of the Safe Ministry Check (the national applicant and referee questionnaires for the selection of ordination candidates and for the screening of clergy and church workers who have contact with children in their ministry). They also included safe ministry training for clergy and church workers.

These apply to all persons seeking to work in ministry, including those from overseas.

These measures have been reviewed, amended and promoted since that time and widely adopted by dioceses.

The ACA has contributed to the development of guidelines for sharing information on overseas based clergy within the Anglican Communion. The Protocol for disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion was passed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 2016. All dioceses have adopted the ACA Disclosure of Information Canon 2017 which implements the Anglican Communion protocol.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

Completed subject to ongoing review.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2004 the General Synod passed a resolution recommending that dioceses adopt a range of measures relating to the protection of children

These recommendations included the safe ministry training for clergy and church workers.

The nature and content of safe ministry training has been the topic of cross-denominational discussion in Australia since 2005. During 2006 and 2007 the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) Safe Church Training Agreement produced a set of standards for Safe Ministry Training. The General Synod promoted [National Safe Ministry Training Benchmarks](#) which built upon those standards.

The Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 defines accredited training as training that includes the course content in the National Safe Ministry Training Benchmarks.

In most dioceses it is necessary for all clergy and church workers to have completed initial and refresher training on child safe policies and procedures.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC, Mission and Ministry Commission and Anglican Theological Educators Network to collaborate, consult with dioceses, where practicable participate in ecumenical discussions, and prepare a policy in relation to:

- a) minimum training on child safety and related matters specified in recommendation 16.43 in the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse; and
- b) the provision of opportunities for external training on best practice approaches to child safety; and any amendments of the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 proposed to give effect to this policy.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

All dioceses which have adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 will be audited to measure compliance with the training standards and benchmarks contained in the legislation. The first group of audits were completed in December 2020. The audit reports will be published in 2021 and will be available on the General Synod website at: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/professional-standards-commission/safeministryaudits>. The second group of audits are due to commence in January 2021.

Additional work has commenced and the SMC will work with the Mission and Ministry Commission and Anglican Theological Educators network to prepare final recommendations for the Standing Committee. Any additional standards proposed by the working group and endorsed by Standing Committee will be circulated to dioceses for consultation.



**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

The Bishops of the ACA have had a protocol in place relating to the conduct of confessions related to child sexual abuse since 2006.

In March 2018 this protocol was amended to accommodate some early recommendations of the Royal Commission including the following:

*Where a person under the age of 18 years seeks to make a confession:*

- a. the minister proposing to hear the confession must do so in an open space and with a clear line of sight to another adult; but*
- b. where no other adult is available, the confession must be deferred until another adult is present.*

See the full version of Protocol 11 in the [Bishops' Protocols 2018](#).

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution noting the policy in the Bishops' Protocol in relation to private confession by children and requested the Safe Ministry Commission to prepare amendments to Faithfulness in Service and the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 to give effect to this policy.

The SMC prepared draft amendments to Faithfulness in Service to respond to RC 16.48 and consulted with dioceses. The consultation period commenced from July until September 2019. The SMC considered all feedback received and produced final recommendations for the Standing Committee.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The proposed changes to Faithfulness in Service, which has been amended to provide that confessions to children should be in an open space and in line of sight of another adult, will be considered at a meeting of Standing Committee in 2021.

**Recommendation 16.49:****Codes of conduct in religious institutions should explicitly and equally apply to people in religious ministry and to lay people.****Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

*“Faithfulness in Service”* - A national code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers was approved by the General Synod in 2004 and promoted to all dioceses for adoption. The current version is available on the General Synod website at [Faithfulness in Service](#).

Dioceses which have adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 are required to comply with the standards and guidelines of Faithfulness in Service so far as they relate to children (Section 5).

It is acknowledged that Anglican schools and community services agencies may require additional inclusions in their code of conduct, due to local jurisdictional regulations. The Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 confirms Faithfulness in Service as the prescribed code of conduct for a Church body subject to the Canon, unless an application is made for approval of an alternative.

In 2010 the Standing Committee approved a document describing the expectations for behaviour in our Church communities and to complement Faithfulness in Service. [Being Together](#) is a statement of expectations for members of Church communities.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC to prepare an amendment of Being Together to expressly refer to the importance of child safety.

The SMC prepared draft amendments to Being Together and consulted with dioceses. The consultation period commenced from July until September 2019. The SMC considered all feedback received and produced final recommendations for the Standing Committee.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The proposed changes to Being Together will be considered at a meeting of Standing Committee in 2021.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2004 the General Synod passed a resolution recommending that dioceses adopt a range of measures relating to the protection of children

These recommendations included the safe ministry training for clergy and church workers.

The nature and content of safe ministry training has been the topic of cross-denominational discussion in Australia since 2005. During 2006 and 2007 the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) Safe Church Training Agreement produced a set of standards for Safe Ministry Training. The General Synod promoted [National Safe Ministry Training Benchmarks](#) which built upon those standards.

The Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 defines accredited training as training that includes the course content in the National Safe Ministry Training Benchmarks.

The training benchmarks outlined in the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 include the requirement that the contents of a safe ministry training course should include key concepts found in Faithfulness in Service.

In most dioceses it is necessary for all clergy and church workers to have completed initial and refresher training on child safe policies and procedures.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2019 to implement this measure:**

All dioceses which have adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 will be audited to measure compliance with the training standards and benchmarks contained in the legislation. The first group of audits were completed in December 2020. The audit reports will be published in 2021 and will be available on the General Synod website at: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/professional-standards-commission/safeministryaudits>. The second group of audits are due to commence in January 2021.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020**

In 2004, the General Synod approved a model professional standards ordinance to cover disciplinary processes in relation to complaints of sexual misconduct and child abuse against clergy. Most dioceses have passed ordinances along these lines, some adopting the model ordinance without modification, others with varying degrees of modification.

All dioceses have appointed a Director of Professional Standards with responsibility for coordinating the response and investigation of complaints of the abuse. Information on making a complaint is made available in church operational locations and on diocesan websites.

Individual schools and agencies have either adopted the national model or have implemented standards of their own.

The Royal Commission noted that there are a range of professional standards and complaints management processes adopted across the ACA.

The General Synod in 2017 requested the Safe Ministry Commission to develop recommendations for a nationally consistent professional standards process across the ACA.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC to consult with dioceses, Anglicare Australia and Anglican Schools Australia and prepare a policy on whether professional standards and disciplinary ordinances and other complaint handling policies of these bodies 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.

The SMC identified the mechanisms required to give effect to RC 16.51 and prepared draft amendments to relevant canons for consultation with dioceses. The consultation period commenced from July until September 2019. The SMC considered all feedback received and produced final recommendations for the Standing Committee.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure**

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 14 November 2020 passed a resolution referring the amended legislation, relating to complaint handling policies, to be considered at the Eighteenth Session of General Synod which will be held in June 2021.

In June 2020 the SMC issued a survey to members of Anglican Schools Australia (ASA) requesting details of their complaint handling policies. A corresponding survey will be sent to members of Anglicare Australia in 2021. The SMC will continue to collaborate with ASA and Anglicare Australia to determine whether standard or template clauses would assist such institutions.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

The professional standards processed in operation in the ACA include the guidelines dealing with the suspension, prohibition or voluntary standing down of clergy and church workers during the investigation of a complaint.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC to consult with dioceses, Anglicare Australia and ASA and prepare a policy on whether professional standards and disciplinary ordinances and other complaint handling policies of these bodies should require that if a complaint of child sexual abuse against a member of the clergy or church worker 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

The SMC identified the mechanisms required to give effect to RC 16.52 and prepared draft amendments to relevant canons for consultation with dioceses. The consultation period commenced from July until September 2019. The SMC considered all feedback received and produced final recommendations for the Standing Committee.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 14 November 2020 passed a resolution referring the amended legislation, relating to complaint handling policies, to be considered at the Eighteenth Session of General Synod which will be held in June 2021.

In June 2020 the SMC issued a survey to members of Anglican Schools Australia (ASA) requesting details of their complaint handling policies. A corresponding survey will be sent to members of Anglicare Australia in 2021. The SMC will continue to collaborate with ASA and Anglicare Australia to determine whether standard or template clauses would assist such institutions.

**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*.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

The balance of probabilities is the standard of proof currently applicable under professional standards ordinances and disciplinary processes in operation in the ACA

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

No further work required.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

The same standards for investigating complaints of child sexual abuse apply to clergy and lay church workers under professional standards ordinances in operation in the ACA

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

No further work required.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

The professional standards and tribunal processes in operation in the ACA include guidelines dealing with the prohibition of ministry by clergy and church workers during the investigation of a complaint and as an outcome of disciplinary procedures.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC and CLC to collaborate, consult with diocesan bishops and prepare a policy as to the circumstances in which a member of the clergy:

- a) who is substantiated should be permanently removed from ministry; and
- b) who is convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse should be permanently removed from ministry and deposed from holy orders.

The SMC and CLC identified the mechanisms required to give effect to RC 16.55 and prepared draft amendments to relevant canons for consultation with dioceses. The consultation period commenced from July until September 2019. The SMC considered all feedback received and produced final recommendations for the Standing Committee.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 14 November 2020 passed a resolution referring the amended legislation, relating to disciplinary procedures, to be considered at the Eighteenth Session of General Synod which will be held in June 2021.



**Recommendation 16.56:**

**Any person in religious ministry who is convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse should: b) in the case of Anglican clergy, be deposed from holy orders.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

The professional standards and tribunal processes in operation in the ACA include guidelines dealing with the prohibition of ministry by clergy and church workers during the investigation of a complaint and as an outcome of disciplinary procedures.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC and CLC to collaborate, consult with diocesan bishops and prepare a policy as to the circumstances in which a member of the clergy:

- a) who is substantiated should be permanently removed from ministry; and
- b) who is convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse should be permanently removed from ministry and deposed from holy orders.

The SMC and CLC identified the mechanisms required to give effect to RC 16.56 and prepared draft amendments to relevant canons for consultation with dioceses. The consultation period commenced from July until September 2019. The SMC considered all feedback received and produced final recommendations for the Standing Committee.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 14 November 2020 passed a resolution referring the amended legislation, relating to disciplinary procedures, to be considered at the Eighteenth Session of General Synod which will be held in June 2021.

**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.**

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2009 the Standing Committee of the General Synod endorsed and promoted guidelines for parish safety where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a person of concern.

In 2017 a policy was approved by the Standing Committee and recommended to dioceses dealing with [Safe Ministry with Person of Concern](#).

The standards for safe ministry for persons of concern for clergy and lay church workers are set out in the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

Dioceses which have adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 will be audited against the adoption and implementation of the policy and guidelines. The first group of audits were completed in December 2020. The audit reports will be published in 2021 and will be available on the General Synod website at: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/professional-standards-commission/safeministryaudits>. The second group of audits are due to commence in January 2021.

The SMC have developed an audio-visual resource which seeks to assist parishes with their implementation of the standards for safe ministry for persons of concern.

**Recommendation 16.58:**

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

**Description of measures implemented prior to December 2020:**

In 2007, the General Synod passed the National Register Canon 2007 which provided for the establishment of the National Register and four protocols for its implementation.

The National Register is an essential part of the Church's response to the prevention of child abuse and adult sexual misconduct. The Canon provides for a national, transparent and accountable process to ensure appropriate checks are made before all ordinations, licences or appointments are made.

The Directors of Professional Standards in all dioceses are required to enter relevant information into the National Register. Currently this information does not extend to persons working in affiliated institutions in all dioceses.

The National Register contains only information primarily pertaining to complaints or findings of child abuse and adult sexual misconduct as well as adverse findings against or adverse admissions made by clergy or lay people within the Church.

Details about the operation of the National Register may be found in the National Register Canon 2007. Operational instructions for handling of information on the National Register (input, inquiries, access and disclosure) are provided for in a series of protocols.

This information is provided on the National Register page on the General Synod website.

The Standing Committee at its meeting held on 11-12 May 2018 passed a resolution requesting the SMC to consult with Anglicare Australia and Anglican Schools Australia and prepare:

- a) a policy in relation to whether the scope of the National Register Canon 2007 should be extended to cover officers, employees and volunteers of all Anglican Church of Australia institutions; and if appropriate,  
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- b) any amendments of the National Register Canon 2007 proposed to give effect to this policy.

**Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2020 to implement this measure:**

Work has commenced and the Standing Committee will consider recommendations of the Anglican Working Group, with representation from the Safe Ministry Commission, Anglicare Australia and Anglican Schools Australia, in 2021.

## Section 4: Further Information and Attachments

Access to legislation, policy and resources currently operating in the ACA has been provided by links to the [General Synod website](#) throughout this report.