



# Tell Your Story

Information for survivors and reporters  
of abuse and misconduct



[safeministry.org.au](https://safeministry.org.au)

**We are committed to responding with compassion and empathy to those who have been abused. We are committed to providing practical assistance to help them rebuild their lives.**

If you are reading this brochure because you are a survivor of abuse or misconduct by an Anglican church worker or clergy person, I am so very sorry for what you have experienced. It was not your fault, and it should never have happened to you. The people who hurt you were wrong and wicked to treat you in this way.

As Archbishop, I apologise that the Diocese let you down because we failed to prevent the abuse from occurring.

This brochure is designed as an information guide for those who are survivors of abuse or other misconduct, and for those who witness it and wish to report it. I hope it is of assistance to you. As Archbishop, I am committed to ensuring that we in the Sydney Anglican Church do everything we can to listen to you and assist you in your recovery. We want to continue to learn from your experience, and to ensure that such things never happen again.

The Professional Standards Unit (PSU) has the overall responsibility throughout the Diocese to ensure that all parishes and other activities of the Diocese provide safe places for ministry. The PSU receives reports on the behaviour of clergy and church workers and responds by providing support to survivors and reporters and addressing perpetrators and their misconduct. The PSU endeavours to respond promptly to each concern raised.



We are committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, particularly within the Sydney Anglican community. This means a commitment to strengthening our culture of 'safe ministry' through education and professional development of our clergy and lay people, as we seek to maintain the standards of Christian ministry which are grounded in the teaching of the Bible.

**“I am so very sorry for what you have experienced. It was not your fault, and it should never have happened to you.”**

Abuse is always wrong and has no place in our churches.

Thank you for taking the time to read this brochure. We want to hear your story.

**Kanishka Raffel**  
**Archbishop of Sydney**

Are you the survivor of abuse or other misconduct by a minister, youth worker, lay leader or any church worker in the Anglican Church? Do you know someone else who is? Are you concerned about them?

You may be feeling ashamed, angry, hurt, uncomfortable or embarrassed. We know that it is not easy to tell someone, but we do want to hear from you.

The Anglican Diocese of Sydney has a commitment to responding to complaints about misconduct, including child abuse and sexual abuse. We will do this by listening to your story, supporting you and acting on your report.

This brochure is for survivors and reporters of abuse and misconduct. The brochure begins by explaining how reports of misconduct work. It then outlines the two main ways in which we can respond well to your report: by offering practical assistance and by addressing the perpetrator and their misconduct.

## Who can I make a report about?

You can report abuse or other misconduct by any Anglican church worker in the Diocese of Sydney.

A *church worker* is any person who holds or has held any position of leadership within the Diocese. They may be paid or unpaid. Some examples are:

- a member of the ordained clergy
- an office-holder in the Diocese
- a member of a church governing body board, council, committee, Synod, Standing Committee, regional council or parish council
- a church warden, organist, choir leader, parish council secretary or parish treasurer
- leaders of Sunday Schools, Bible classes, study groups, youth fellowships, CEBS groups or other parish organisations
- a chief executive officer of a diocesan organisation, such as Anglicare, Youthworks and principals of some diocesan schools
- a person appointed by a rector, an acting rector, church warden, parish council or by their delegate.

## What is abuse and misconduct?

Misconduct is any behavior that, if established, would call into question the fitness of a church worker to hold their position and perform its functions (temporarily or permanently). This includes:

- bullying\*
- child abuse
- emotional abuse
- harassment
- neglect
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- spiritual abuse
- domestic and family violence
- grooming
- failure to report abuse
- conviction of a serious criminal offence
- threatening or obstructing a person who intends to make or has made a complaint
- obstructing or not cooperating with the investigation of a complaint.

Please refer to the [Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017](#) and [Faithfulness in Service](#) for complete and detailed definitions of misconduct, which can be found at [www.safeministry.org.au](http://www.safeministry.org.au).

\* If you would like information on reporting instances of bullying, please go to <https://safeministry.org.au/bullying/>

## Please let us know about abuse or other misconduct

If you know of abuse or other misconduct, please speak to us because we want:

- to ensure that the person who engages in abuse or other misconduct faces the appropriate consequences and is kept accountable
- to ensure that all people who experience abuse or other misconduct receive care and support
- to care for all other people who are affected by the abuse or other misconduct
- to stop and prevent abuse so we can provide a safe environment for all those in our care
- to ensure that all clergy and church workers are above reproach.

## How do I speak to someone about abuse or other misconduct?

To contact any of our Contact Persons to discuss your concerns in confidence or to make a report, please call the **Abuse Report Line (1800 774 945)** or email [abusereport@safeministry.org.au](mailto:abusereport@safeministry.org.au).

If you would like further information about our procedures and policies regarding abuse and other misconduct, contact the Professional Standards Unit:

Phone: (02) 9265 1604

Email: [info@safeministry.org.au](mailto:info@safeministry.org.au)

Website: [www.safeministry.org.au](http://www.safeministry.org.au)

Please note that if the misconduct has occurred in another diocese, denomination, state or country, the matter will be referred to the relevant authority. If this is the case, or if you are unsure whether the person held a position of leadership as a church worker, we still want to hear from you.

## What happens when I contact a Contact Person?

Our Contact Persons are all qualified and experienced in the area of responding to abuse. They will listen to you with care, dignity and respect, give you full explanations about our procedures for dealing with abuse or other misconduct and answer any questions you might have before you decide what to do. They will provide information about support services that may be able to help you.

The Contact Person will:

- listen to you with dignity and respect
- explain and answer any questions you may have
- assist you to record in writing what happened.

You may also wish to speak to a Contact Person just to obtain information.

If you do want to make a report of abuse or other misconduct you will be asked to provide the following information:

- the name of the person who has experienced the abuse or other misconduct
- the name of the person who has engaged in the abuse or other misconduct
- the nature of the abuse or other misconduct
- the name of the parish or organisation where the alleged perpetrator worked
- when and where the abuse or other misconduct occurred
- any other supporting information, if available.

The Contact Person will send the information you provide to the Director of Professional Standards who will acknowledge that it has been received.



## Your report is confidential

All persons involved in receiving and investigating reports treat them with the strictest confidence. Reports are only seen by authorised persons who need to read them for the purposes of taking action on the report. They are aware of the sensitive nature of these matters and understand that respondents can be well-known members of church communities.

A key aspect of our Privacy Policy is that we only collect, hold and use personal and sensitive information for the purposes for which it was provided. For further information see our Privacy Policy at [www.safeministry.org.au/privacy](http://www.safeministry.org.au/privacy).

## How will we care for and support you?

We are committed to responding with compassion and empathy to those who have been abused, and to providing practical assistance to help them rebuild their lives.

Our Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme (PCAS) provides an alternative to going to court for someone who as a child or an adult has been sexually abused by a church worker. Taking a case to court is costly and stressful. Added to this is the possibility that survivors of child abuse and sexual misconduct may find it difficult to establish their claim's validity in court if too much time has passed or evidence has been lost. Our response under the PCAS incorporates pastoral care, counselling, financial assistance and an apology.

### Pastoral care

We recognise that it takes great courage and may be traumatic to report abuse or misconduct. We will provide a chaplain to support you while you receive help from the Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme. As far as possible, we want to make sure that you are properly supported while you are receiving help from us.

## **Professional counselling**

We will pay for you to see a professional counsellor with appropriate qualifications and experience. You can choose the counsellor yourself or the PSU chaplain can recommend someone. The counsellor will not be a church worker. With your permission, we may ask your counsellor to give us a progress report.

## **Financial assistance**

We may invite you to make a claim for financial assistance to help in your recovery from the harm done to you. We know that money cannot undo the experience of harm or distress. However, money can be a practical way of making sure you can afford the resources you need to seek healing. We will assess your claim for financial assistance before making an offer of payment. The maximum amount payable is \$150,000. Any complaints procedure or criminal investigation must ordinarily be resolved before you can make a claim for financial assistance (please see the Appendix for a summary diagram of this process). However, if the alleged offender cannot be held accountable (e.g. if the alleged offender has since died or cannot be located) then applications can still be made.

## **An apology**

We will provide you with an apology for what happened to you. A senior church representative will offer to meet with you to apologise for what you experienced. An apology can also be in writing if that is your preference. The representative will acknowledge that abuse and misconduct are always wrong and should never occur.

## **How will we support secondary victims?**

A 'secondary victim' is a person who has experienced hurt as a result of witnessing abuse or as a result of having abuse disclosed to them. They might be family members or friends of a survivor (the 'primary victim'). If appropriate, we will support them by offering counselling, an apology and continued pastoral care. This will be especially so in the event that there has been a premature death of a primary victim as a result of abuse, as per The Wayne Guthrie Protocol.

## Are there any other ways to access redress?

### National Redress Scheme

Redress for child sexual abuse can also be sought through the Commonwealth Government's National Redress Scheme ([www.nationalredress.gov.au](http://www.nationalredress.gov.au)). It is an alternative to seeking compensation through the courts or through the Church. It provides acknowledgement and support to people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse and was developed in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which estimated that 60,000 people experienced institutional child sexual abuse in Australia. The National Redress Scheme can provide:

- access to counselling
- a monetary payment
- a direct personal response from the institution (e.g. an apology) for people who want it.

The Anglican Diocese of Sydney has joined the Scheme. This means people who were abused in the care of Sydney Anglican churches and other associated organisations can apply to the Scheme for redress.

Free and confidential redress support services are available throughout the process, such as knowmore ([www.knowmore.org.au](http://www.knowmore.org.au)) which provides free legal advice for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. These services can help explain the Scheme and who can apply.

### National Redress Scheme

1800 737 377

### knowmore

1800 605 762

### Ministry Spouse Support Fund

If you are a church worker or the spouse of a church worker and have experienced domestic abuse, we are able to assist you through the Ministry Spouse Support Fund. The Fund and the PSU chaplain can provide you with pastoral care and financial support, as well as assist you to independence where separation occurs.

## How will we address the perpetrator and their misconduct?

### Complaint

We can address the alleged perpetrator and their misconduct using our procedures. This involves bringing a 'complaint' against the church worker against whom allegations are made. That person is also known as the 'respondent'.

A complaint is brought so that we can make a decision about the fitness of the respondent to be a church worker. The process is governed by a document called the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*. Any criminal proceedings must ordinarily be resolved before a complaint can be commenced.

If the respondent is deceased then a complaint is not able to be made. However, practical care and support options will still be available to you.

### Investigation

The allegations may be investigated further by an independent Investigator appointed by the PSU. This could occur where the respondent does not admit to the complaint. An investigation will usually not be necessary if the respondent has been convicted of a criminal offence in relation to the misconduct.

An investigation may involve obtaining a statement from the respondent. It could also include the Investigator asking you to clarify the circumstances surrounding the allegations and provide any further information which may be needed as a result of the investigation.

An investigation will generally require your name and any statements or material you provide to the Investigator to be disclosed to the respondent. The respondent will be given an opportunity to respond to the Investigator's report.

## Consideration

If the respondent is an unpaid lay church worker, an independent Adjudicator may be appointed who will review the complaint and Investigator's report if applicable. They will make recommendation(s) in relation to the respondent. The Adjudicator will be an experienced lawyer with no connection to the matter.

If the respondent is a member of the clergy or a paid lay church worker, the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) will review the complaint and make recommendation(s) in relation to the respondent.

When determining the fitness of the respondent to be a church worker, the Adjudicator or PSC will take into account the matters raised by both you and the respondent, as well as all the circumstances of the case as revealed by any investigation.

A detailed list of what they must consider is contained in the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*.

## Outcomes

The aims of this process are that:

- you have the opportunity to bring forward allegations of abuse or misconduct and you are heard
- you have assistance to deal with the issues that arise for you
- respondents have the opportunity to bring forward their response to allegations of misconduct or abuse
- respondents are kept accountable
- children and other vulnerable people are protected.

Please see the Appendix for a summary diagram of this process.

You may wish only to engage with our practical care and support options and are not interested in supporting a complaint against the perpetrator. We will not commence a complaint or contact the respondent without your prior permission.

Possible outcomes of the complaints process include the Adjudicator or PSC recommending to the Archbishop that the respondent:

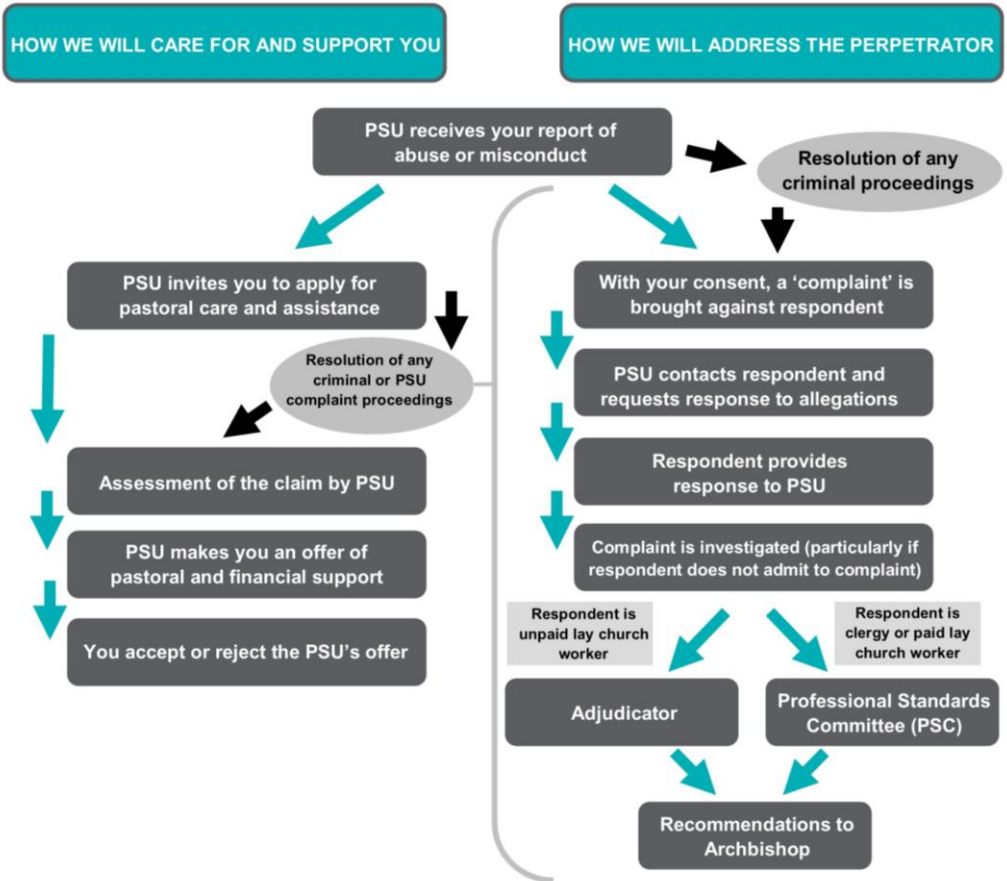
- make an apology
- undertake training and counselling
- be suspended
- have their authority revoked
- have their employment terminated
- resign from office or employment
- not accept future nominations or appointments to roles or offices
- relinquish holy orders (where the respondent is a member of the clergy)
- be subject to a prohibition order
- enter into a safety plan
- be entered onto the National Register
- be notified to the relevant authorities
- be excluded from access to Church premises or activities
- have no further action taken against them with respect to the complaint.

## When will matters be reported to the authorities?

We must report matters to the Department of Communities and Justice where there is a child currently at risk of harm. Allegations of criminal conduct are ordinarily required to be reported to the Police. Allegations of child abuse or sexual misconduct against current church workers may also need to be reported to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

## Appendix

Please note: this diagram summarises steps and actions that may be taken and is not comprehensive.



## Important sources of further information

### **Professional Standards Unit (PSU)**

[www.safeministry.org.au](http://www.safeministry.org.au)

(02) 9265 1604

[info@safeministry.org.au](mailto:info@safeministry.org.au)

Abuse Report Line: 1800 774 945 or [abusereport@safeministry.org.au](mailto:abusereport@safeministry.org.au)

### **NSW Department of Communities and Justice**

[www.dcj.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au)

Child Protection Helpline:  
132 111

Domestic Violence Line:  
1800 656 463

### **Crime Stoppers**

[www.crimestoppers.com.au](http://www.crimestoppers.com.au)

1800 333 000

### **NSW Ageing and Disability Commission**

[www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au)

Ageing and Disability Abuse  
Helpline: 1800 628 221

### **Lifeline – crisis support and suicide prevention**

[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

24-hour Helpline: 13 11 14

### **1800 Respect – sexual assault and domestic violence support**

[www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)

1800 737 732

### **Blue Knot Foundation – empowering recovery from complex trauma**

[www.blueknot.org.au](http://www.blueknot.org.au)

1300 657 380

A list of additional support  
services can be found at  
[www.safeministry.org.au/ongoing-help-and-support](http://www.safeministry.org.au/ongoing-help-and-support)



