

# Tell Your Story

Information for survivors and reporters  
of bullying and misconduct

**sydney**  
**anglicans<sup>+</sup>**  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
OF SAFE MINISTRY

 **safe**ministry  
PROTECTION AND CARE  
FOR EVERYONE

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

**We are committed to responding with **compassion** and **empathy** to those who have been bullied.**  
**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 bullying or other misconduct by an Anglican church worker or clergy person, I am so very sorry for what you have experienced. It should never have happened to you. The people who treated you in this way were wrong to do so.

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

This brochure is designed as an information guide for those who are victims of bullying or other misconduct, and 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 do not take place.

The Office of the Director of Safe Ministry (ODSM) has the overall responsibility throughout the Diocese to ensure that all parishes and other activities of the Diocese provide safe places for ministry. The ODSM 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 ODSM 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.

**“It should never have happened to you. The people who treated you in this way were wrong to do so.”**

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

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

This brochure is for survivors and reporters of bullying. 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.

## Who can I make a report about?

You can report bullying or 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 (non-exhaustive) 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, musician, choir leader, parish council secretary or parish treasurer
- leaders of Sunday Schools, Bible classes, study groups, youth fellowships 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 bullying and misconduct?

Misconduct is any behaviour 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 – repeated unreasonable behaviour that creates a risk to the health and safety of a person. It can involve:
  - making derogatory, demeaning or belittling comments or jokes
  - spreading rumours or innuendo or undermining performance or reputation
  - dismissing or minimising legitimate concerns or needs
  - inappropriate ignoring, or excluding someone from information or activities
  - touching someone threateningly or inappropriately
- emotional abuse
- harassment
- spiritual abuse
- failing to report abuse
- 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 bullying and other misconduct, which can be found at [www.safeministry.org.au](http://www.safeministry.org.au).

If you would like information on reporting instances of other types of misconduct, such as sexual abuse, you will find more information at [Brochure for Survivors and Reporters of Abuse](#).

## Please let us know about bullying or other misconduct

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

- to ensure that the person who engages in bullying or other misconduct faces the appropriate consequences and is kept accountable
- to ensure that all people who experience bullying or other misconduct receive care and support
- to care for all other people who are affected by the bullying or other misconduct
- to stop and prevent bullying 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 bullying 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 what happens when you report bullying or misconduct, contact the Office of the Director of Safe Ministry (ODSM):

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 bullying and other misconduct. They will listen to you with care, dignity, and respect, give you full explanations about our procedures for dealing with bullying and answer any questions you might have before you decide what to do. They will provide information about support services which 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 wish to speak to a Contact Person just to obtain information.

If you do want to make a report of bullying you will be asked to provide the following information:

- the name of the person who has experienced the bullying or other misconduct
- the name of the person who has engaged in the bullying or other misconduct (the respondent)
- the nature of the bullying or other misconduct
- the parish or organisation for which the person who has engaged in bullying or other misconduct was working
- when and where the bullying or other misconduct occurred
- any other supporting information, if available.

The Contact Person will send the information you provide to the Director of Safe Ministry 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 well aware of the sensitive nature of these matters and understand that perpetrators 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 mistreated, and to providing practical assistance to help them. Our response will incorporate pastoral care, professional counselling, and an apology.

### Pastoral care

We recognise that it takes great courage and may be traumatic to report bullying or misconduct. We will provide a chaplain to support you while you receive help from the ODSM. 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 chaplain can recommend someone. The counsellor will not be a church worker. With your permission, we may ask for your counsellor to give us a progress report.

## **An apology**

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

## **Are there any other ways to access help?**

### **Government organisations**

Help for bullying can also be sought through the Australian Government's Fair Work Commission, SafeWork NSW, or the Australian Human Rights Commission. These organisations, depending upon the circumstances, can offer alternatives to contacting the ODSM. For more information see:

#### **Fair Work Commission**

[www.fwc.gov.au](http://www.fwc.gov.au)

1300 799 675

#### **SafeWork NSW**

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

13 10 50

#### **Australian Human Rights Commission**

[www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

1300 656 419

### **Diocesan Grievance Policy**

We also have a [Policy for dealing with allegations of unacceptable behaviour by clergy and church workers in parishes](#). The Policy outlines how a matter might be resolved by mutual agreement without the involvement of the ODSM and you should consider whether it would be preferable to do so. For example, it may be appropriate for the rector of the parish or Regional Bishop to seek to resolve the matter through conciliation. Any issue being addressed under the Policy can be referred to the ODSM at any time to be dealt with under the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*.

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

### Complaint

You will have the support of the ODSM to work towards finding the best way forward. This may involve addressing 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*.

At an appropriate time a response will be obtained from the person against whom allegations are made. This will usually require the disclosure of your name to the respondent. Your name will not be disclosed without your permission.

### Facilitated Conversations and Conciliation

You may wish to have the assistance of the ODSM chaplain or a facilitator to help to resolve your issues with the respondent. The chaplain or facilitator can meet with you to discuss a way forward and they may also wish to speak with the respondent and then make recommendations on next steps. Next steps may involve facilitated conversations between you and the respondent, if the chaplain or facilitator and you agree it is appropriate given the circumstances.

### Mentoring

You may choose to have ongoing support from a chaplain or facilitator who can act as a mentor as you move forward.

### Counselling

You may choose to have the support of a counsellor to process what has happened and to help bring healing through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **Investigation**

If all of the matters raised in your report cannot be resolved by other means, and your report proceeds under the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017* as a formal complaint, then the allegations may be independently investigated.

This will include obtaining a formal response from the respondent to the complaint.

The investigation may 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. It will 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. While you will not have access to the investigator's report or other documents, you will have an opportunity to respond to anything the respondent and the Investigator say about you and your statement as part of the investigative procedure.

## **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 Ministry Standards Committee (MSC) will review the complaint and make recommendation(s) in relation to the respondent.

When determining the fitness of the respondent for ministry, the Adjudicator or MSC 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*.

Depending upon the complexity of the matter, there can be a significant period of time between the receipt of your report by the Contact Person and consideration of your formal complaint by the MSC or Adjudicator.

For your protection and peace of mind you are not a party to the proceedings under the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*. This makes the process very different from adversarial court proceedings. Instead, you are more like a witness who reports misconduct. A chaplain and your Contact Person are available to help and provide support for you during this time.

## Outcomes

The aims of the process are that:

- you have the opportunity to bring forward allegations of bullying or misconduct and you are heard
- you have assistance in dealing with the issues that arise for them, including any need for affirmation and support
- you have a chance, where appropriate, to consider whether forgiveness of the respondent is possible, while never overlooking or forgetting the consequences of the bullying or other misconduct
- respondents have every opportunity to bring forward their response to allegations of bullying or other misconduct
- respondents are brought to account where appropriate, given an opportunity to apologise, and encouraged to seek to make amends and to face up to the consequences of their behaviour
- vulnerable people are protected.

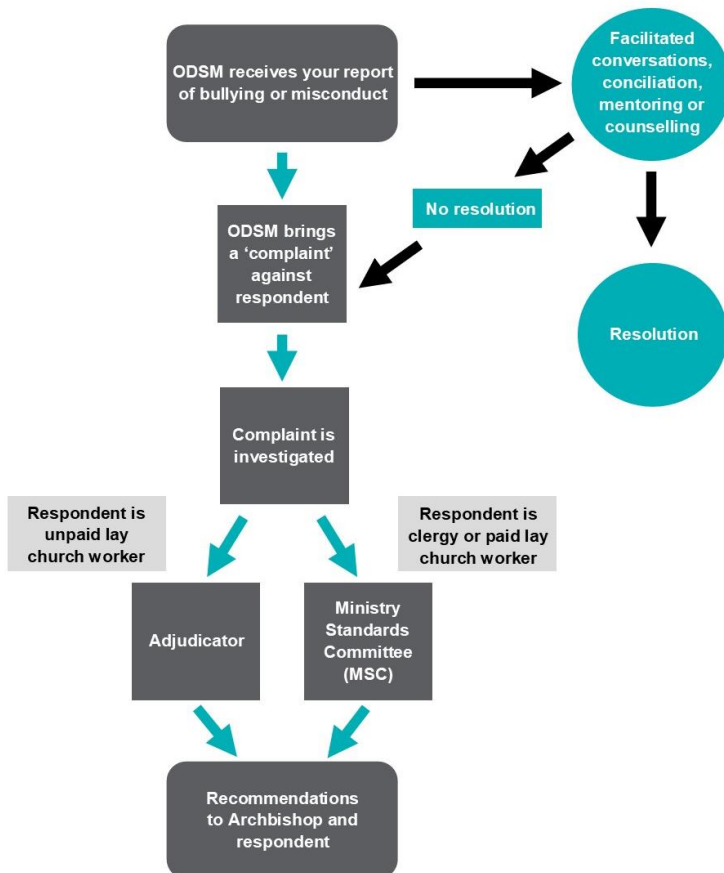
Possible outcomes of the complaints process include the Adjudicator or MSC recommending to the Archbishop that the respondent:

- make an apology
- make reparation
- undertake training
- undertake counselling
- participate in facilitated conversations with the complainant
- participate in a 360 Review Survey
- work with a qualified professional to grow in insight and empathy
- undertake group therapy
- undertake professional supervision
- engage an approved mentor for spiritual growth and discernment
- 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
- have no further action taken against them with respect to the complaint.

## Appendix

Please note: this diagram summarises steps and actions that may be taken under and outside of the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017* and is not comprehensive.

Complaints regarding clergy or paid lay church workers that are not resolved at the Ministry Standards Committee stage may be referred to the Ministry Standards Board for final determination.



## Important sources of further information

### **Office of the Director of Safe Ministry (ODSM)**

[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)

### **Lifeline**

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

24-hour Helpline: 13 11 14

### **Suicide Call Back Service**

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

24-hour Helpline: 1300 659 467

### **MensLine – counselling for men**

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

1300 78 99 78

### **Anglicare Counselling**

[www.anglicare.org.au/what-we-offer/counselling](http://www.anglicare.org.au/what-we-offer/counselling)

1300 651 728

### **Clergy Assistance Program – support for clergy and spouses**

[www.anglicare.org.au/what-we-offer/counselling/clergy-assistance-program](http://www.anglicare.org.au/what-we-offer/counselling/clergy-assistance-program)

1300 094 587

### **Relationships Australia NSW & ACT – individual and family counselling**

[www.nsw.relationships.com.au](http://www.nsw.relationships.com.au)

1800 025 441

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)



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