



Response to the recommendations of the Wendt & Clarke Report 2024

In 2023 the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide commissioned research to update the findings of the 2005 Morrison Report *“Reporting the Abuse of Children and Young People and Responding to Adult Sexual Assault: A study into the attitudes and behaviours of clergy and church-workers in the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide when dealing with the abuse of children and sexual assault of adults”* Dr Zoe Morrison 15 February 2005. That report may be found on the Adelaide Anglicans website here [Download Reporting the Abuse of Children and Young People and Responding to Adult Sexual Assault](#)

The report *“A study into the experiences of clergy and church workers in the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide when responding to abuse of children, sexual assault of adults, and domestic and family violence”* (Wendt & Clarke Report) produced by Professor Sarah Wendt & Dr Josephine Clarke of the University of Melbourne was published in June 2024 and may be found on the Adelaide Anglicans website here [Download Wendt Clarke 2024 Final Report](#)

The Synod is grateful to the Survivor Advocate and the Survivor Advocacy Group for initiating this study and is thankful for the work of the researchers Dr Sarah Wendt and Dr Josephine Clarke of the University of Melbourne.

The Diocesan Council of the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide has reviewed the report following consultation with the Survivor Advocate, Ms Sharon Lockwood and the Survivor Advocacy Group and has resolved to adopt the recommendations and to respond to the recommendations.

Recommendations of the Report and our response:

1. The Diocese continues with Safe Ministry training: it has been well received in supporting clergy and church workers to respond to child abuse.

Agree

2. The Diocese reinforces the requirement to immediately report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse (and D&FV involving children) to the Department of Child Protection, and to the Director of Professional Standards/Kooyoora for disclosures or suspicions of child sexual abuse, sexual assault and domestic and family violence allegedly perpetrated by a member of the clergy or church worker.

Agree – a positive duty requirement has been adopted by Synod as an amendment to the Professional Standards Ordinance. We plan to reinforce this in communications and training to include reference to the requirement for prescribed persons to report to police that they know or suspect that another person (the abuser) has or is likely to sexually abuse a child within an institutional context in accordance with [the Statutes Amendment \(Child Sexual Abuse\) Act 2021](#)

3. For consistency of practice, and to increase clergy and church workers’ skills and confidence to recognise and safely respond to adult sexual assault and domestic violence, the diocese extends Safe Ministry training to include responding to disclosures of adult sexual assault and domestic violence.

Agree – however rather than being incorporated into safe ministry clearance training, an additional offering to be developed and delivered as an offering via the St Barnabas College (SBC) Community of Learning aimed at further equipping clergy and lay leaders.

4. Working towards eliminating child abuse, adult sexual assault, and domestic and family violence be of equal priority, such as defining domestic violence within the definition section of Faithfulness in Service (FIS), and FIS could benefit from making a clearer statement about domestic violence perpetrated by clergy and church workers being a misconduct issue.



Agree. Faithfulness in Service is due to be updated in any case to incorporate feedback from the Survivor Advocate endorsed by Diocesan Council in May 2022 to reflect recommendations of the Royal Commission and to reduce the possibility of re-traumatising survivors of sexual abuse and in the light of the Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence.

5. The Diocese explore how it will recognise and respond to elder abuse as well as supporting older women wanting to share historical abuse for healing.

- a. The Diocese provides training to clergy and church workers to respond well to disclosures of recent and/or historical experiences of child sexual abuse, sexual assault, domestic and family violence.

Agree - Again this goes beyond amending the online training for Safe Ministry and requires a specific live offering by SBC Community of Learning which might utilise existing service providers in this space in Adelaide.

- b. Elder abuse be defined in Faithfulness in Service.

Agree – see 4

6. The Diocese investigates the opportunity to partner with the specialist family and domestic violence and sexual assault service sector to deliver an extension to current Safe Ministry training.

- a. The training will need to be tailored to the Anglican church community setting and be able to address key ideas that research participants have identified as potential barriers to responding to violence and abuse and to perpetrators.

Agree see 5a

- b. The opportunity to partner can also support increased awareness of referral pathways in responding to victim/survivors, as well as perpetrators of violence and abuse, and reinforce clarity of roles, i.e. first good responder vs therapy.

Agree see 5a. And further information to be provided in the resources section of the Diocesan Website.

- c. A domestic and family violence policy framework be created, outlining the expectations for clergy and church workers when managing disclosures about lay persons, clergy or church workers as perpetrators of interpersonal violence.

Agree. We understand The Families and Culture Commission of the Anglican Church of Australia will also produce templates for use in this area in time to guide dioceses in their policy development.

7. The Diocese explores ways to offer clergy and church workers external professional support such as supervision, self-care strategies or debriefing when they are supporting families experiencing interpersonal violence and abuse. External professional support can be tailored to address concerns about invading privacy, balancing accountability and forgiveness, and vicarious trauma.

Agree – we currently fund Pastoral Supervision and an EAP. We hope to include a module on support, self-care and debriefing in the training envisaged in 5, and provide further references on the diocesan Website.

8. The Diocese's Safe Ministry training include increasing clergy and church workers' confidence overall in their pastoral care practice, with a particular focus on responding to perpetrators of interpersonal violence and abuse, and Diocesan processes supporting perpetrator accountability



– such as the extension of the Diocesan policy on managing persons of concern to be inclusive of perpetrators of domestic and family violence.

Agree see 4. Agree – the Persons Of Concern Policy is a General Synod Policy adopted in this diocese, which we will look to amend to be Adelaide specific to incorporate this recommendation.

9. The Diocese support and grow clergy leadership to develop pastoral care resources such as prayer, liturgy, sermon and theology resources to support victims’ healing, perpetrator accountability, gender equality and community member safety.

Agree.

10. The Diocese continues its work of ongoing culture change necessary to support gender equality and safety in its communities, by strengthening its practices through leadership to parish communities, and continually and critically examines its organisational structures and governance that impede supporting inclusiveness and gender equality.

Agree – Progress has been made in this area through the Synod’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, through appointments by the Archbishop, Secretary of Synod and Diocesan Council, our support of the Ten Commitments, public support for the 16 Days of Activism, and the work in Anglican Schools on respect, consent and the [Australian Curriculum Respect Matters](#) content.