



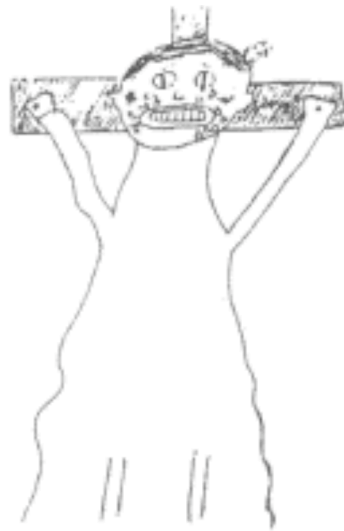
An Anglican Response to Child Abuse

“Let the Children come to me. Do not hinder them. The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”. Jesus (Mark 10:14)



**in the Anglican Church
Diocese of Sydney**

Presentation by Philip Gerber LL.M., M.Crim. Director, Professional Standards, Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney at IPSCAN 15th International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect. Brisbane, Australia. September 2004.



**This is God when he
looked like Jesus.**

(drawn and written by Jarrod, aged 8)

CHILD PROTECTION IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH DIOCESE OF SYDNEY

September 2004

The Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney is a network of 267 local parish units with approximately 700 paid clergy and children's workers and in excess of 9000 unpaid volunteer child related workers. The Diocese has been adopting a multifaceted approach to the issue of child protection and sexual misconduct since the mid-1990's. Prior to this, allegations and claims were handled by the pastoral and episcopal administration. The only formal mechanism in place was a Diocesan Tribunal to discipline clergy on five specific grounds. The structures, policies, practices and procedures now in place and being further developed are as follows:

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT

This unit consists of a full-time Director PSU, Philip Gerber, who is a solicitor, one full-time administrative officer, Carol Newton and a part-time chaplain to victims, Jenni Woodhouse, who is a social worker. The unit administers the complaints and discipline procedure in relation to clergy and church workers. A database of offenders and alleged offenders is maintained. It also has the overall responsibility throughout the Diocese to ensure that all parishes and other activities of the Diocese are child protection compliant. The unit undertakes screening of all clergy appointments on behalf of the Archbishop. It provides ongoing support and advice to parishes and organisations.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BOARD

Standing Committee of Synod has established a Professional Standards Board with the dedicated policy task of ensuring that child abuse issues are dealt with comprehensively and in an ongoing way throughout the Diocese. The Board constantly reviews all child protection policy. It is concentrating particularly on training issues in 2004.

APOLOGY

On 24th February 2002 the Archbishop Peter Jensen publicly reaffirmed the church's abhorrence of child abuse and sexual misconduct by clergy and church workers in a letter read in all

parishes. He committed himself and the diocese to giving these issues a high priority. He reaffirmed this commitment in his 2002 Synod charge, noting that such issues, unless dealt with properly, will remain a barrier to mission by alienating people from the good news of Jesus Christ.

CARE OF VICTIMS AND COMPLAINANTS

A part-time Chaplain/Counselling Co-ordinator, Jenni Woodhouse, cares for claimants and their families. This supplements counselling which is provided to victims from PSU funds. A care and assistance scheme is in place as an alternative to litigation to provide for financial assistance to victims to meet their needs which arise from the abuse or misconduct. It includes a mechanism for external assessment if necessary. When pastorally appropriate, the chaplain arranges for the Archbishop or one of his Episcopal team to see particular victims of clergy or church worker misconduct or abuse. Encouragement and support is given to Towards a More Appropriate Response (TAMAR), an Anglican victims advocacy group which, in conjunction with Anglicare, produced the child abuse information video and kit, "Behind Closed Doors".

CODE OF CONDUCT

In January 1998 Archbishop Harry Goodhew issued a Code of Conduct for clergy and church workers. This has been widely disseminated and is currently being reviewed, together with the draft national Code "Faithfulness in Service", by the Professional Standards Board with a view to adopting a revised Code of Conduct.

ABUSE AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT COMPLAINTS PROTOCOL

The Diocese, since 1996 under Archbishop Goodhew, has had in place a Protocol for receiving complaints and allegations of child abuse or sexual misconduct by clergy or church workers. Five independent contact persons, all trained counselors, are available for people to contact. Their details are advertised in the Diocesan newspaper, on the Internet website and by leaflet to all parishes and organisations. Through an abuse report line (**1800 77 49 45**), the contact persons provide information and support enquirers as they consider their options. They can then assist in the documenting and reporting of allegations or complaints of abuse.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE ORDINANCE

The handling of complaints that are received under the Protocol regarding sexual misconduct or child abuse by clergy or church workers is governed by the Church Discipline Ordinance, introduced in 1996 and substantially overhauled in 2002. Complaints are verified in writing, put to the respondent, investigated, considered at a prima facie level by an experienced lawyer, if necessary considered by a Tribunal and recommendations made to the Archbishop for action. The strongest sanction available is a Prohibition to prevent a respondent from undertaking ministry or being in a particular or any role in the church. There are also conciliation provisions in appropriate circumstances. The process is administered independently by the Director PSU with advice from Advisor panels (functionally equivalent to the Professional Standards Committees of other dioceses). The Archbishop is excluded from procedural decisions. He considers the final recommendations and implements “discipline”. He is entitled to enquire as to progress of matters and the Director is obliged to keep him informed.

TRIBUNAL, OFFENCES AND RELINQUISHMENT OF HOLY ORDERS ORDINANCES

Where clergy are involved the Tribunal Ordinance 1962 and Offences Ordinance 1962 may also be relevant. The five specific offences are: unchastity, drunkenness, neglect of ministerial duty, non-payment of just debts or disgraceful conduct. The Relinquishment of Holy Orders Ordinance 1994 was amended in 2002 to allow for relinquishment with admissions and for notification to other relevant potential employers and publicly. It is used as an alternative to Tribunals where the clergy respondent admits his misconduct and accepts that he is no longer fit for ordained ministry.

CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES AND OTHER ADVICE

In 2001 all parishes and organisations were provided with Child Protection Guidelines, First Edition 2001 which explains in detail the requirements of the NSW Child Protection Legislation. This document had been preceded by five introductory circulars and seminar training throughout the Diocese. In March 2003 all parishes were provided with a checklist entitled “Dealing with Child Abuse Allegations in the Church”. The PSU continues to provide

“help-desk” assistance to clergy and churchworkers in parishes on child protection issues.

CHILD PROTECTION LEGISLATION COMPLIANCE SURVEY

In July 2001 the PSU surveyed the 270 parishes to assess the extent of compliance with the Child Protection Legislation. The evidence from the survey is that there is widespread understanding of and compliance with the legislative requirements. Further auditing processes are being considered by the Professional Standards Board.

SCREENING OF LAY WORKERS

Parishes obtain prohibited employment declarations for all child related workers (including unpaid volunteers) and undertake working with children screening checks for those who are paid. They are advised to also always undertake reference checks. The Diocese of Sydney recently participated in a pilot screening of volunteer (unpaid) child-related workers for all CEBS/boys-only ministries and Camp Howard volunteers. It is hoped that this may result in legislative changes. In addition to secular legislative requirements, prohibited persons under the NSW State legislation (those convicted of serious sexual offences) cannot be appointed or elected as church wardens or parish councilors.

SCREENING OF MINISTRY/ORDINATION CANDIDATES AND CLERGY

Since 1996 all candidates for ordination and all clergy being authorised or licensed in Sydney for the first time had completed two screening documents which asked questions about drug use, alcohol use, occult practice, use of pornography, homosexual conduct, sexual conduct outside of marriage, police or child protection authority investigations, apprehended violence orders, and criminal charges or convictions. From 2004 the same questions have been incorporated into a comprehensive screening questionnaire based on that recommended by the General Synod Child Protection Committee. (Book 3b pp.2A.8A – 2A.93). Ordination/ministry candidates also undergo extensive assessment and screening by way of reference-checking, general psychological testing, interviews, chaplaincy supervision reports and college reports. The Church Discipline Ordinance 2002 provides a mechanism for pre-ordination disclosure and consideration of prior sexual misconduct or child abuse.

TRAINING OF LAY CHILDRENS AND YOUTH WORKERSS - CHILD PROTECTION ESSENTIALS

This training resource kit, produced by Anglican Youthworks, is used by a network of regional Youthwork advisors. They run at least 24 set courses annually throughout all regions of the Diocese to train children and youth work volunteers and trainers who in turn train others in parishes using the kit. The Professional Standards Board is surveying parishes to assess the extent and effectiveness of this training strategy.

TRAINING OF MINISTRY/ORDINATION CANDIDATES & CLERGY

The Director PSU has provided professional development to clergy through visits to local area clergy groups and annually to both deacon/diocesan lay worker and priest ordination candidates. Moore Theological College includes 2 hours of compulsory training and 2 hours of elective training in sexual abuse issues. Professional conduct issues come up in some other subjects and processes such as chaplaincy groups. A group called Ministry Training and Development includes child protection issues in the Sydney candidate training conferences/retreats and the after college training syllabus for junior ministers. All candidates are required to read the Code of Conduct. Ministry chaplains are required to discuss the Code with each candidate during their candidacy before they are ordained.

CO-OPERATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES & POLICE

The Diocese is, since July 2001, signatory to a Memorandum Of Understanding between the NSW Department of Community Services and other participating Churches in relation to a Protocol for dealing with allegations of abuse involving a child or young person by a church worker. The Director PSU is a member of the NSW Police Child Protection and Sex Crimes Squad Advisory Council. All complaints that allege criminal conduct are reported to the police.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
GENERAL (NATIONAL) SYNOD
REPORT OF THE
CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Child Protection Committee was established pursuant to a resolution of the General Synod in 2001. Our terms of reference were to consider the issue of child protection in the Anglican Church of Australia. Set out below are a summary of the conclusions and 26 recommendations in this report *Making Our Church Safe: A Programme For Action*. The full report can be found at www.anglican.org.au then go to links: General Synod 2004, delegate information, professional standards. The report and recommendations will be considered at the General (National) Synod (Conference) at Fremantle W.A. on 2nd – 8th October 2004.

The context of this report is a time of great shame in the life of the Church. The tragic betrayal of trust by some clergy and church workers, who have sexually abused children and adults for whom they have had pastoral responsibility, has been reprehensible. The denial and minimisation of this disgraceful behaviour and its consequences, and the secretiveness and pastoral insensitivity of the Church have been appalling. The impact of the initial abuse has often been compounded by the failure of the Church to effectively care for the abused.

The Church's approach to child protection and the prevention of sexual misconduct must be both *comprehensive* because no single strategy will be effective and *uniform* because it is only through a common approach that the culture of the Church will be changed. The public perceives the Church to be a single organisation and does not understand its structure of dioceses, parishes and church organisations. Abuse by clergy and church workers in one diocese or even one parish or church organisation damages the whole Church.

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Safe Ministry Policies and Structures

There needs to be integrated safe ministry policies and structures throughout the Church to ensure the safety and welfare of all people within its community.

The General Synod should adopt the *Safe Ministry Policy Statement* which expresses the commitment of the Church to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, particularly within its own community through careful recruitment and training of its clergy and church workers, adoption safe ministry practices, prompt response to each concern raised about the behaviour of its clergy and church workers, pastoral support to any person who has suffered abuse; and pastoral support to and supervision of known abusers. Each diocese, parish and church organisation should adopt the *Safe Ministry Policy Statement* and develop and implement safe ministry policies and structures.

The ongoing work of the implementation of integrated safe ministry policies and structures throughout the Church cannot be wholly undertaken at a diocesan level. Action at a national level through the establishment of a Professional Standards Commission is essential to ensure that there are safe ministry policies and structures throughout the Church that are uniform and comprehensive. The Professional Standards Commission which is to be established by an amendment to the *Strategic Issues, Commissions, Task Forces and Networks Canon 1998* should have a budget of \$48,916 for 2005. Until the Professional Standards Commission is established the Child Protection Committee should be reappointed and requested it to fulfil its functions.

Recommendation 1

The General Synod adopts as the Church's *Safe Ministry Policy Statement*:

The Anglican Church of Australia is committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, particularly within its own community. The Church will:

- carefully recruit and train its clergy and church workers;
- adopt and encourage safe ministry practices by its clergy and church workers;
- respond promptly to each concern raised about the behaviour of its clergy and church workers;
- offer pastoral support to any person who has suffered abuse; and
- provide pastoral support to and supervision of any person known to have abused a child or another vulnerable person.

Recommendation 2

The General Synod pass the bill for the *Strategic Issues, Commissions, Task Forces and Networks (Amendment) Canon 2004*.

Recommendation 3

The General Synod reappoints the Child Protection Committee and requests it to fulfil the functions of the Professional Standards Commission until its establishment.

Recommendation 4

The General Synod approves a budget of \$48,916 for 2005 for the Professional Standards Commission.

Recommendation 5

The General Synod recommends that each diocese, parish and church organisation adopts the Church's *Safe Ministry Policy Statement* and develops and implements safe ministry policies and structures.



Recruitment

The Church should take the greatest care in the selection of all its ministers, both clergy and church workers. In every case, a careful assessment should be made prior to selection that the person will not pose a risk to the safety of children and other vulnerable people. Information to enable the assessment to be undertaken should be gained through a screening system.

For ordination candidates this screening system should consist of the *Safe Ministry Check*; a medical report; a children's commission background check or a criminal history check; and a psycho-sexual assessment.

For clergy, and church workers who have contact with children in their ministry, this screening system should consist of the *Safe Ministry Check*; and a children's commission check or a criminal history check which should be carried out at the expiry of a children's commission check or every three years, whichever first occurs.

The General Synod should adopt the *Safe Ministry Check* as the national applicant and referee questionnaires for the selection of

ordination candidates and for the screening of clergy and church workers.

The proposed National Register of clergy and lay persons should include ordination candidates and unlicensed clergy. The information recorded in the National Register should include the date of each children's commission check or criminal history check; the date of any completed disciplinary proceedings except where the allegations were found to be false, vexatious or misconceived; the date of any refusal by a bishop to ordain a person as a deacon or priest or to issue a licence or authority or any refusal to consecrate a person as a bishop because of an adverse risk assessment; and the date of any refusal by a church organisation to employ or appoint a person because of an adverse risk assessment.

Recommendation 6

The General Synod:

- (a) adopts the *Safe Ministry Check* as 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; and
- (b) authorises the revision of the *Safe Ministry Check* by the Standing Committee.

Recommendation 7

The General Synod recommends that each diocese adopts a system for the selection of ordination candidates that includes:

- (a) the *Safe Ministry Check*;
- (b) a medical report;
- (c) a children's commission check or a criminal history check; and
- (d) a psycho-sexual assessment.

Recommendation 8

The General Synod recommends that each diocese adopts a system for the screening of clergy that includes:

- (a) the *Safe Ministry Check*; and
- (b) a children's commission check or a criminal history check and that screening is to be carried out immediately prior to:
 - (c) their ordination as a deacon and as a priest;
 - (d) the issuing of a licence or authorisation; and
 - (e) their consecration as a bishop

or at the expiry of a children's commission check or every three years, whichever first occurs.

Recommendation 9

The General Synod recommends:

- (a) that the proposed National Register include ordination candidates and unlicensed clergy; and
- (b) that each diocese is to provide to the General Secretary for inclusion in the National Register with respect to each listed person:
 - (i) the date of each children's commission check or criminal history check;
 - (ii) the date of any completed disciplinary proceedings except where the allegations were found to be false, vexatious or misconceived;
 - (iii) the date of any refusal by a bishop to ordain the person as a deacon or priest or to issue a licence or authority to the person or any refusal to consecrate the person as a bishop because of an adverse risk assessment; and
 - (iv) the date of any refusal by a church organisation to employ or appoint the person because of an adverse risk assessment

and that access to this information be restricted to the categories of persons determined by the Standing Committee after consultation with the Professional Standards Commission.

Recommendation 10

The General Synod recommends that each diocese adopts a system for the screening of all paid and voluntary church workers:

- (a) who have direct and regular or unsupervised contact with children in their ministry; or
 - (b) who supervise any such church workers that includes:
 - (c) the *Safe Ministry Check*; and
 - (d) a children's commission check or a criminal history check
- and that screening is to be carried out immediately prior to their appointment or at the expiry of a children's commission check or every three years, whichever first occurs.

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Standards of Behaviour

The Church should adopt a national code for the personal behaviour and practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers. A national code will help to create and maintain an

environment for the practice of pastoral ministry where both clergy and church workers and those whom they serve are safe.

The General Synod should adopt *Faithfulness in Service* as the national code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers. Each diocese should adopt a code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by its clergy and church workers that includes *Faithfulness in Service*.

Recommendation 11

The General Synod:

- (a) adopts *Faithfulness in Service* as the national code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers;
- (b) authorises the revision of *Faithfulness in Service* by the Standing Committee;
- (c) recommends that each diocese adopts a code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by its clergy and church workers that includes *Faithfulness in Service*; and
- (d) recommends that each diocese regularly provide training in *Faithfulness in Service* to its clergy and church workers.

The difficult issues raised by the hearing of private confessions in cases of child sexual abuse have not yet been addressed by the House of Bishops as requested by the General Synod in 2001. To expedite the matter the General Synod should request the Professional Standards Commission to liaise with the House of Bishops to identify appropriate teaching resources, develop pastoral guidelines for the hearing of private confessions; and address the particular issues raised by confessions of child sexual abuse by a member of the clergy or a church worker.

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Formation for Pastoral Ministry

Training in professional ethics in ministry and in human sexuality should be a specific and compulsory part of the formation of clergy and church workers who undertake individual pastoral ministry. A curriculum for professional ethics in ministry and in human sexuality should cover the material in *Faithfulness in Service*.

Training in professional ethics and human sexuality is an important step in helping clergy and church workers to understand and

maintain physical, sexual and emotional boundaries that are appropriate to the pastoral relationship. The damage that can be caused by unethical conduct by clergy and church workers to a person with whom they are in a pastoral relationship is just as great, if not greater, than unethical conduct by other professionals as their responsibility includes the spiritual well-being of the person.

A bishop should not ordain a person as a deacon or licence a church worker to undertake individual pastoral ministry, and a parish or church organisation should not employ or appoint a church worker to undertake individual pastoral ministry, unless the person has satisfactorily completed a course in professional ethics in ministry and in human sexuality.

Recommendation 12

The General Synod recommends:

- (a) that each diocese ensures that training in professional ethics in ministry and in human sexuality is included in the formation of clergy and church workers undertaking individual pastoral ministry; and
- (b) that the bishop of each diocese not ordain a person as a deacon or license or authorise a church worker to undertake individual pastoral ministry, and each parish or church organisation not employ or appoint a church worker to undertake individual pastoral ministry, unless the person has satisfactorily completed training in professional ethics in ministry and in human sexuality.

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Safe Ministry Training

Clergy and church workers who are involved with children should be required to complete safe ministry training before their ordination or appointment. The training should be repeated at regular intervals of not less than three years. Safe ministry training should focus on child protection and the prevention of sexual misconduct.

Recommendation 13

The General Synod recommends that each diocese ensures that all clergy and church workers:

- (a) who have direct and regular contact with children in their ministry; or
- (b) who supervise any such church workers

satisfactorily complete safe ministry training prior to their ordination as a deacon, employment or appointment and thereafter at regular intervals.

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Pastoral Support for the Abused

Each diocese should have in place both a strategy for the pastoral support of victims and personnel who are available to implement that strategy as soon as a disclosure of abuse (whether past or present) is made. Provision of effective pastoral support for the abused is not only an important step in their healing, but will help prevent their retraumatisation.

The effects of abuse extend beyond primary victims. Secondary victims of abuse can include members of the family and friends of the abused and abusers; the parish or church organisation of the abused and abusers; parishes or church organisations where abusers have ministered; clergy and church workers who have been colleagues of abusers; and clergy and church workers responsible for responding to abuse. Each diocese should adopt a system of pastoral support for all people in the diocese affected by abuse by clergy and church workers.

Recommendation 14

The General Synod recommends that each diocese adopt a system of pastoral support for all people in the diocese affected by abuse by clergy and church workers including:

- (a) those who have directly suffered abuse and their families and friends;
- (b) the families and friends of abusers;
- (c) the parish or church organisation of the abused and abusers; and
- (d) the Church leaders responsible for responding to the abuse.

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Pastoral Support and Supervision of Abusers

The pastoral support and supervision of known abusers who join a parish or church organisation raises the difficult question of how to balance the welfare of the abuser with the needs of the wider church community, especially the welfare of children and primary and secondary victims of abuse.

Each diocese should adopt a system of pastoral support and supervision of known abusers of children or other vulnerable people within a parish or church organisation. It should include

entry into an agreement between the abuser and church leaders for the involvement of the abuser in the parish or church organisation; and the establishment of an accountability and support group for the abuser.

Recommendation 15

The General Synod recommends that each diocese adopts a system of pastoral support and supervision of known abusers of children or other vulnerable people within a parish or church organisation that includes:

- (a) the entry into an agreement between the abuser and church leaders for the involvement of the abuser in the parish or church organisation; and
- (b) the establishment of an accountability and support group for the abuser.

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Ministry Support for Clergy

There is a direct relationship between unhealthy ministry practices and the abuse of others by clergy. A diocesan system of ministry support is a practical method of pastoral care for its clergy. Each diocese should include within the system of ministry support for its clergy mentoring; professional supervision / consultation; peer support; and ministry review.

Clergy should regularly seek out and utilise opportunities to maintain and enhance their ministry skills.

Recommendation 16

The General Synod recommends that each diocese includes within the system of ministry support for its clergy:

- (a) peer support;
- (b) mentoring;
- (c) professional supervision / consultation; and
- (d) ministry review

and that clergy regularly seek out and utilise opportunities to maintain and enhance their ministry skills.

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General Synod Action

Reference of important issues should be made to each of the Professional Standards Commission, the Liturgy Commission, the Ministry Commission and the Doctrine Commission to ensure that there will be integrated safe ministry policies and structures throughout the Church.

Recommendation 17

The General Synod refers to the Professional Standards Commission:

- (a) the preparation of an inventory of the nature and scope of reported abuse within the Church by clergy and church workers;
- (b) the preparation of model guidelines for psycho-sexual assessments of ordination candidates;
- (c) the preparation of guidelines for access to information recorded in the National Directory;
- (d) the consideration of a model system for the selection of all church workers;
- (e) the preparation of a model curriculum for training in professional ethics in ministry and human sexuality;
- (f) the preparation of a model curriculum for safe ministry training;
- (g) the preparation of model guidelines for a diocesan system of pastoral support for all people in the diocese affected by abuse by clergy and church workers;
- (h) the preparation of a model diocesan scheme of individual care and assistance for all who have directly suffered abuse by its clergy and church workers;
- (i) the preparation of a model agreement between a known abuser of children or other vulnerable people and church leaders for the involvement of the abuser in the parish or church organisation;
- (j) the preparation of model guidelines and resources for the training, functioning and support of accountability and support groups for known abusers within a parish or church organisation; and
- (k) the establishment of a network of those involved in achieving safe ministry practices within the Church

and requests the Professional Standards Commission:

- (l) to liaise with the House of Bishops:
 - (i) to identify appropriate teaching resources and develop pastoral guidelines for the hearing of private confessions; and
 - (ii) to address the particular issues raised by confessions of child sexual abuse by a member of the clergy or a church worker; and

- (m) to report to the next session of the General Synod as to the progress of the Church in the development and implementation of safe ministry policies and structures.

Recommendation 18

The General Synod notes the work of the Liturgy Commission in preparing a liturgical resource following sexual misconduct or abuse by a church worker and refers to the Liturgy Commission the preparation of liturgical resources for the pastoral support of those affected by abuse in consultation with the Professional Standards Commission.

Recommendation 19

The General Synod refers to the Ministry Commission:

- (a) the preparation of resources for the provision of pastoral support of those affected by abuse in consultation with the Professional Standards Commission; and
- (b) consideration of the introduction, and if appropriate, the preparation of:
 - (i) a model statement for clergy of the expectations and responsibilities of their roles and their legitimate entitlements at the time of their appointment; and
 - (ii) a model review of the performance of clergy and their ministry support within a parish or church organisation.

Recommendation 20

The General Synod refers to the Doctrine Commission the preparation in consultation with the Professional Standards Commission of a report dealing with the Church's responsibility for the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people within its own community including:

- (a) children and other vulnerable people;
 - (b) the abused;
 - (c) known abusers of children or other vulnerable people
- in consultation with the Professional Standards Commission.

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Joint Church Action

The public reputation of all Australian churches has been damaged by the recent revelations of sexual abuse by clergy and church workers. Ecumenical cooperation the Australian churches can more effectively promote the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people within their communities and thereby regain public trust.

Where feasible the National Council of Churches in Australia should facilitate joint action by member churches and other Australian churches. Particular issues that should be considered are the preparation of a safe ministry charter for adoption by member churches and other Australian churches; the sharing of resources between churches; and the reciprocal disclosure between churches of the names of, and other relevant information about, clergy and church workers who are known to have abused children or other vulnerable people.

Recommendation 21

The General Synod commends the National Council of Churches in Australia for organising *Safe as Churches?*, a national ecumenical consultation on sexual misconduct and abuse in the Australian churches and recommends that the National Council of Churches in Australia facilitate where feasible joint action by member churches and other Australian churches to promote the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people within their communities that includes:

- (a) the preparation of a safe ministry charter for adoption by member churches and other Australian churches;
- (b) the sharing of resources between churches; and
- (c) the reciprocal disclosure between churches of the names of, and other relevant information about, clergy and church workers who are known to have abused children or other vulnerable people

and that the General Secretary conveys this resolution to the National Council of Churches in Australia.



Government Action

Mandatory and voluntary reporting of child abuse differs significantly between the States and Territories. Similarly, the statutory regime for the screening of all people seeking to work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity differs significantly between the States and Territories. Similar protection for those who mandatorily and voluntarily report child abuse to the appropriate civil authorities should be available to those who report abuse to the Church.

Recommendation 22

The General Synod recommends that State and Territory Governments enact uniform laws that provide for:

- (a) the reporting of child abuse to the police and the government child protection authorities;
- (b) the screening of all persons seeking to work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity; and
- (c) the protection from liability of persons who report misconduct by a member of the clergy or a church worker to a church authority in good faith

and that the General Secretary conveys this resolution to each such Government.

The task of the Australian churches in implementing effective national policies and structures to prevent child abuse is made more difficult by the differing child protection regimes in the States and Territories. The Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should initiate policies and structures to protect children. They should each establish a children's commission or equivalent office to promote the protection of children and provide funding and training for programmes for the reintegration of sex offenders within the community on their release from prison. The Commonwealth Government convene a national summit on child protection to which representatives of Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, child protection authorities and organisations working with children are invited as the first step in establishing a national strategy for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Recommendation 23

The General Synod recommends that the Commonwealth Government, the State Governments of South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia and the Territory Governments each establish a children's commission or an equivalent office to promote the protection of children similar to that in the States of New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania and that the General Secretary conveys this resolution to each such Government.

Recommendation 24

The General Synod recommends that the State and Territory Governments each provide funding and training for a programme for the reintegration of sex offenders within the community on their release from prison (similar to Circles of Support and Accountability operating in Canada, the United States of America

and the United Kingdom) and that the General Secretary conveys this resolution to each such Government.

Recommendation 25

The General Synod recommends that the Commonwealth Government convene a national summit on child protection to which representatives of Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, child protection authorities and organisations working with children are invited as the first step in establishing a national strategy for the prevention of child abuse and neglect and that the General Secretary conveys this resolution to the Commonwealth Government.

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Anglican Communion Action

Many of the challenges confronting the Church in developing and implementing safe ministry policies and structures have been, and continue to be, faced by other member churches of the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion should promote the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, particularly within its member churches.

Recommendation 26

The General Synod recommends that the Anglican Consultative Council establish a Safe Ministry Task Force to promote the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, particularly within member churches of the Anglican Communion by action that includes:

- (a) the preparation of a safe ministry charter for adoption by member churches;
- (b) the sharing of resources between member churches;
- (c) the reciprocal disclosure between member churches of the names of, and other relevant information about, clergy and church workers who are known to have abused children or other vulnerable people;
- (d) the establishment of a network of interested people; and
- (e) the preparation of resources for the Anglican Gathering and the Bishops' Conference to be held in Cape Town in 2008

and that the General Secretary conveys this resolution to the Anglican Consultative Council and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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The Hollingworth Controversy – An Immediate Response

The Anglican Church of Australia is made up of 23 regions, each called a diocese. Each diocese independently administers its own affairs. As an immediate response to the Hollingworth controversy in 2002, a working group drafted and the Standing Committee of the General (National) Synod recommended a uniform diocesan response to child abuse which embodied the following principles:

- (i) A national uniform code of professional ethics for clergy and church workers;
- (ii) Model draft legislation/rules and procedures for receiving and dealing with allegations relating to members of the clergy and church workers;
- (iii) An independent Professional Standards Committee to implement procedures for receiving and dealing with allegations;
- (iv) Appointment of a paid Director of Professional Standards;
- (v) An independent Professional Standards Board to determine fitness for office of members of the clergy or church workers against whom allegations are made;
- (vi) The removal the diocesan bishop from direct involvement in the process of receiving and considering allegations;
- (vii) The recording and sharing of information nationally.

The documents reflecting these principles can be found at www.anglican.org.au then go to links: General Synod 2004, delegate information, professional standards.

All of the 23 dioceses are well on the way to implementing this recommended uniform national response.

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