

Anglican Diocese of Sydney

Responding to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Good Practice Guidelines

A Word from the Archbishop

God is love. The Bible reveals that God exists as a fellowship of love among the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and that he is a God who shares his love with all people. As the recipients of his love, he has called us to love him in return, with all our heart, soul and mind, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. God has also designed marriage as an expression of the covenant love between one man and one woman, and the proper sphere for the expression of love in sexual intimacy, and so that children might be born and brought up in the fear and knowledge of the Lord. Moreover, as the Scriptures remind us, marriage signifies and represents the union of Christ and his Church.

Such a holy union is worthy of great honour and respect, especially by the husband and the wife, but also by society as a whole. As the love of God has joined us to himself, so the Bible instructs husbands to love their wives and wives to love their husbands. God's word condemns unloving behaviour, and especially the misuse of power to control or exploit others. Abuse in all its forms is explicitly forbidden, as it is contrary to the nature of God and the love that he demands of us all. Yet sadly, not all husbands love their wives as Christ loved the Church, nor do all wives love their husbands as they should.

For these reasons, we are concerned for relationships where domestic abuse or family violence is present. As Sydney Anglican Churches, we wish to address this issue honestly and transparently and we wish to extend our compassion, care and assistance to those whose safety is at risk because of domestic abuse. This document provides a framework and practical encouragement in primary prevention of such abuse. I am especially grateful to the many women and men, especially survivors, who have generously assisted in the formulation of these guidelines. Their contribution has been invaluable. We are committed to continuing to listen and learn from their experience.

The recommendations made in this document include a framework for providing specialist support services which can be points of referral to ensure safety and protection for all. It also suggests how we might be better equipped and resourced in identifying and supporting victims of abuse in order to provide the pastoral care that is both appropriate and necessary.

This is a personally and spiritually demanding area with which to engage. Nevertheless, we are committed to doing so, so that we are equipped to respond to people in need of informed care and assistance, and so that we might live as children of light, seeking to honour Christ as Lord and Saviour in every community, especially the family.

KANISHKA RAFFEL
Archbishop of Sydney

Aim

This document sets out the Domestic Abuse Policy and Good Practice Guidelines of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, as evidence and expression of the Church's commitment to address and respond effectively to domestic abuse both within its own community and in the wider society.

The aim of this policy and these guidelines is to inform, direct and equip people working at a local level so that they can offer the most appropriate care in circumstances of domestic abuse.

This includes not only those who are called upon by victims or alleged or known perpetrators to hear their story, but also those in pastoral ministries who have a responsibility (alongside all church members) to build communities that prevent domestic abuse and actively seek to respond when they identify concerns.

Scope

This policy applies to all parishes of the Diocese of Sydney, their clergy and church workers. It is also commended to all Anglican organisations associated with the Diocese of Sydney for their adoption as far as is applicable in their contexts.

It should be read in conjunction with Faithfulness in Service, our national Anglican code of conduct for clergy and church workers, as adopted by the Diocese of Sydney.

Outline

- Section 1 outlines the Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse (the policy).
- Section 2 outlines the Good Practice Guidelines (guidelines) for responding to domestic abuse.

This is supported by 11 Appendices that provide reference material and templates on Good Practice. It is intended that links to additional resources that cover this subject from other perspectives will be published at a later date.

Where to find the Policy and Guidelines (with Appendices)

The Policy and Guidelines (with appendices) will be distributed via email:

- to all parish councils and organisations in the Diocese of Sydney, and
- to all licensed clergy and authorised lay ministers licensed in the Diocese of Sydney.

The most up-to-date version of the Policy and Guidelines will be available on the Safe Ministry website of the Office of the Director of Safe Ministry (**ODSM**). Hard copies of the policy and associated documents can be supplied via the ODSM, on request.

On Terminology

We have chosen to use the expression **domestic abuse** rather than domestic violence in order to avoid the common misapprehension that only physical violence counts as domestic abuse. We make exceptions when quoting other literature, and when referring to official titles and terminology in common use in other professional circles, e.g., we sometimes refer to "domestic violence services".

We have also chosen to refer to **victims** of domestic abuse, especially in the immediate context of responding to concerns, and the ongoing impact of pain and trauma. But we acknowledge that 'survivor' is also common terminology, preferred by many, since those experiencing domestic abuse show great resilience even just to stay alive in seeking to protect themselves and their loved ones. Therefore, where appropriate to the context, we will sometimes also refer to survivors.

POLICY DATE

This policy was first passed by the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney in October 2018, and was last revised by the Synod in September 2023.

Section 1

Sydney Anglican Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse Flowchart

At any time in this process you can seek advice from a domestic violence professional. Within 48 hours of a disclosure you should debrief with such a professional.

A person discloses domestic abuse:

RESPECT & LISTEN

- Listen with acceptance
- Don't ask for proof
- Assure the victim it's not their fault
- Be honest about your ability to help
- Reassure normal confidentiality will be maintained, but explain its limits

Is there an immediate risk of harm?

Yes

SAFETY FIRST

- Discuss with the victim, but call the Police **000**
- Seek advice from the NSW Domestic Violence Line **1800 656 463**

No

Are there children involved?

Yes

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

- Call the Child Protection Helpline **132 111**
- Remember that witnessing domestic abuse harms children & may be reportable

No

Is the victim or accused in a ministry family?

Yes

KEEP THE SAFE MINISTRY OFFICE INFORMED

Call the Office of the Director of Safe Ministry **9265 1604**

No

Has further help been requested?

Yes

No

ACTION

- Advise that any intervention needs care and can heighten risk.
- Be guided by what the victim wants
- Outline realistic options: Police, AVDOs, DV services, safety planning, GP, counsellor, refuge; explore other supports like friends.
- Supply appropriate information, phone numbers, websites, Daisy app (be careful of storage).
- Encourage the victim to consult a service, or make a referral on their behalf.
- Don't contact perpetrator without proper advice
- Record what was disclosed and safety concerns, note your actions, and from whom you received advice. Date the record and keep it confidential.

NO FORMAL ACTION

- Your time was well spent. A victim knows they have been believed, is not in the wrong, and can return to you for further help.
- You can't make a victim of domestic abuse take any action. The most you may be able to do is listen and provide information (note earlier obligations regarding immediate danger or if children are involved).
- You may be able to offer other chances to meet and talk.
- You may be able to suggest referring more generally to a GP, psychologist or counsellor.
- You could supply appropriate information, phone numbers such as 1800 RESPECT, websites, Daisy app (be careful of storage).
- Record what was disclosed and your safety concerns, note your actions and/or advice. Date the record and keep it confidential.

Domestic Abuse – key telephone numbers and websites for help

AGENCY	CONTACT DETAILS
<p>1800 Respect national helpline 24 hour national number for sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling and advice.</p>	<p>1800 737 732 1800respect.org.au</p>
<p>Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser Advice to clergy and lay ministers in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney especially for domestic abuse in a church-related setting.</p>	<p>0438 826 556 (business hours)</p>
<p>Daisy App The Daisy App connects people who may experience violence or abuse to support services in their local area. It was developed by 1800RESPECT and is free to use and download. It includes some safety features to help protect the privacy of people using it.</p>	<p>Free to download from iPhone App Store & Android Google Play</p>
<p>Child Protection Helpline Contact this helpline if you think a child or young person is at risk of harm from abuse.</p>	<p>132 111 reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg</p>
<p>Lifeline 24 hour telephone crisis line.</p>	<p>131 114 www.lifeline.org.au/get-help</p>
<p>NSW Domestic Violence Line 24 hour number for comprehensive information and referrals to nearby support services, for all categories of domestic violence.</p>	<p>1800 65 64 63 domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au/get-help</p>
<p>NSW Rape Crisis Centre Counselling service for anyone in NSW – men and women – who has experienced or is at risk of sexual assault.</p>	<p>1800 424 017 www.nswrapecrisis.com.au</p>
<p>Law Access NSW Free government telephone service that provides legal information, referral and advice for people who have a legal problem in NSW.</p>	<p>1300 888 529 lawaccess.nsw.gov.au</p>
<p>Legal Aid NSW Legal Aid's Domestic Violence Unit provides legal advice, referral and representation, as well as social support, to eligible persons,</p>	<p>02 9219 5000 legalaid.nsw.gov.au</p>
<p>No To Violence: Men's Referral Service Telephone counselling, information and referral service for men using violence in families, male victims, and for their friends or relatives.</p>	<p>1300 766 491 ntv.org.au</p>
<p>Office of the Director of Safe Ministry (ODSM) Advice about abuse involving clergy or church workers in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney.</p>	<p>9265 1604 safeministry.org.au</p>

SECTION 1:

Sydney Anglican Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse

1.1 We acknowledge domestic abuse exists and is wrong

- 1.1.1 We acknowledge, with grief, that domestic abuse is a significant problem, not only within the community, but also inside the Church.
- 1.1.2 All forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the victim and are wrong. Perpetrators must stop.
- 1.1.3 **Domestic abuse** involves a pattern of behaviour that seeks to coerce, control, intimidate, hurt or frighten a person in an intimate or family relationship. Domestic abuse may include, but is not limited to emotional, verbal, financial, psychological, spiritual, cultural, physical and sexual abuse. It can also include social isolation, stalking, image-based or technology facilitated abuse, and threats to harm other people including children, property or pets.
- 1.1.4 The primary focus of this Policy is abusive or intimidating behaviour inflicted by an adult against a current or former spouse or partner. However, domestic abuse can occur between siblings, towards older people, and between other people sharing a home.
- 1.1.5 Domestic abuse has many negative impacts on any children in the family – whether or not a child sees or hears the abuse. Such impacts may include physical and emotional harm, ongoing trauma, educational and social disruption, and compromised relationships with both parents. As such it should be seen as a parenting choice by the perpetrator. Responding to any abuse involving children should follow child protection procedures.
- 1.1.6 Sometimes both spouses can be victims of abuse and perpetrate abuse. Typically one spouse is the primary perpetrator of a pattern of abusive behaviour and it is likely that abuse perpetrated by the other spouse is violent resistance in order to protect oneself or others.

1.2 We are committed to safe places

The Anglican Diocese of Sydney is committed to promoting and supporting safer environments that:

- 1.2.1 Recognise equality between all people, including husbands and wives.
- 1.2.2 Promote a culture of healthy relationships of mutual responsibility and respect in marriages, families and congregations.
- 1.2.3 Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse.
- 1.2.4 Strive to follow good practice in protecting those experiencing domestic abuse.
- 1.2.5 Refuse to condone any form of abuse.
- 1.2.6 Enable concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

1.3 We uphold Faithfulness in Service

We uphold *Faithfulness in Service* as our diocesan code of conduct for clergy and church workers, specifically its affirmations in section 6:

- 1.3.1 Abuse of power is at the heart of many relationship problems in the Church and in the community. In essence, abuse is one person's misuse of power over another. Sometimes abuse will be a one-off event and at other times it will be a pattern of behaviour (6.2).
- 1.3.2 It is important for clergy and church workers to be good citizens and to obey the laws of the community, except where those laws conflict with Christian convictions (6.4).
- 1.3.3 You are not to abuse your spouse, children or other members of your family (6.6).

1.4 Domestic abuse requires a serious and realistic response

- 1.4.1 Working in partnership with vulnerable adults and children, statutory authorities and specialist agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.
- 1.4.2 Clergy and lay ministers do not typically have professional expertise in the area of domestic abuse. They need to obtain advice from those with professional expertise when faced with situations of domestic abuse, as advised by *Faithfulness in Service* (4.12).
- 1.4.3 Clergy should ensure the provision of training about domestic abuse, by appropriately qualified professionals or programs, for those in leadership positions, safe ministry roles and other pastoral roles. This should include periodic 'refresher' training.
- 1.4.4 Our response should include attention to primary prevention. This may address a range of factors, such as rigid gender stereotypes, attitudes of male entitlement, general disrespect for women, and other social or cultural factors, which may allow individual misconduct to flourish.
- 1.4.5 Where mistakes in caring for people in difficult situations are made, an apology should be offered and advice sought on how to address any harm caused.

1.5 We respect people who come to us for help

Our churches are to be places of safety. We shall respond to domestic abuse by:

- 1.5.1 Valuing, respecting and listening to victims of domestic abuse.
- 1.5.2 Valuing, respecting and listening to alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- 1.5.3 Appreciating the need to ensure a distance is kept between the two.
- 1.5.4 Refusing to condone the perpetration or continuation of any form of abuse.

1.6 We uphold Scripture and its abhorrence of abuse in our words and public statements

In our words and public statements, we ought to:

- 1.6.1 **Clearly teach that domestic abuse is wrong** and that the Bible should never be interpreted to justify or excuse any form of abuse. Rather a relationship between a husband and wife is to be characterised by love, care and kindness.
- 1.6.2 Clearly teach that the Bible does not condone abuse and should not be interpreted to demand a spouse tolerate or submit to domestic abuse.
- 1.6.3 Clearly teach that the Bible encourages victims to seek safety, that separation for such reason is an appropriate step to take, that divorce may properly be a way of protecting victims

in such tragic situations.

- 1.6.4 Oppose false teaching about these matters.
- 1.6.5 Raise awareness of domestic violence agencies, support services, crisis accommodation, resources and expertise.

1.7 We ensure safety first

- 1.7.1 **Safety First** – Ensure that those who are experiencing domestic abuse can find safety and informed help as a first priority and can continue to stay safe.
- 1.7.2 **Take it Seriously** – Ensure that any disclosures of abuse are taken seriously and not dismissed; also noting that a perpetrator may deliberately undermine a victim about to disclose abuse, by making their own allegation first.
- 1.7.3 **Get help from outside authorities** – Work with the appropriate statutory authorities during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.
- 1.7.4 **Keep it confidential** – Respect the need for confidentiality within the bounds of good Safe Ministry practice, noting that reporting requirements exist where there is an immediate danger, where a child is at risk of serious harm or where the matter involves a clergy person or church worker as an alleged offender. Where a report is required, this should first be discussed with the victim wherever possible.
- 1.7.5 **Challenge with Care** – Carefully challenge inappropriate behaviour, but only after receiving professional advice, and only in a way that does not place any individual, especially a victim, at increased risk.

1.8 We offer pastoral support to those in our care

- 1.8.1 **Offer informed care** – Ensure that informed and appropriate pastoral care and professional help is offered to any adult, child or young person who has suffered domestic abuse.
- 1.8.2 **Be guided by the victim** – It is never appropriate to pressure any victim of domestic abuse to forgive, submit to, or restore a relationship with an offender. Allow victims to set the pace.
- 1.8.3 **Understand that reconciliation comes with conditions** – Any possibility of reconciliation between victim and offender is dependent principally upon the genuine repentance and reformation of the offender. A victim may choose not to reconcile where they do not feel safe.
- 1.8.4 **Coordinate the care** – Be familiar with appropriate pastoral care relationships for both victims and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse; identify the need for any specialist support and help coordinate its provision; any children involved should be offered separate and independent support.
- 1.8.5 **Recognise cultural differences** – Respond in a culturally sensitive way and understand how cultural norms and values may affect victims or can contribute to abuse being perpetuated.
- 1.8.6 **Ensure equal access to care** – Work to ensure that clergy, clergy spouses, lay ministers and their spouses all have the same access to support and resources as others who experience domestic abuse.

1.9 Thinking Theologically – 10 Statements about Domestic Abuse

- 1.9.1 All human beings, both male and female, are created equal in the image of God, and are precious to him. As such their value and dignity rightly commands our respect and protection and should be upheld by all (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 82:3-4; Matthew 22:37-40).
- 1.9.2 Marriage is given by God as a good part of his creation for human wellbeing and should be honoured by all. It is intended as a lifelong union of a man and a woman. Healthy Christian relationships are characterised by servanthood and sacrifice, supremely modeled by Jesus Christ. Within a marriage relationship both husband and wife are to respond to one another by building each other up, which includes mutual love, nurture and respect. Any attempt to justify abusive behaviour by the use of passages in the Bible which speak of headship and submission is intolerable (Mark 10:42-45; Ephesians 5:21-33; Hebrews 13:4).
- 1.9.3 The Bible rejects all abuse, whether physical, verbal, or otherwise expressed from one person towards another and always condemns the misuse of power to control or exploit others. Therefore domestic abuse is evil. Such sin is deceptive in its power and damaging in its effects (Psalm 7; Galatians 5:19-26; 2 Timothy 3:2-3).
- 1.9.4 When domestic abuse in marriage is reported, then separation of the spouses for the sake of the safety of a victim and any children is an appropriate step to be taken and should never be discouraged (Proverbs 27:12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11).
- 1.9.5 Victims of domestic abuse should be encouraged to seek help from the Police, from child protection authorities and other relevant domestic violence services. Church leaders who become aware of situations of domestic abuse should always ensure they meet their mandatory reporting obligations, and obtain professional advice (Romans 13:1-5).
- 1.9.6 When a wife or husband separates for the sake of their safety (or that of their children), such action should not mean the person is deemed to have deserted the marriage or have abandoned their responsibilities as a parent even though they may have physically left the common home. Church leaders should welcome and offer ongoing support to those who have separated for such reasons (Psalm 82:3-4).
- 1.9.7 The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ flows from both justice and love. It calls for repentance and offers forgiveness. When domestic abuse has been indicated as a factor in separation, the perpetrator must be called upon to repent and take full responsibility for their actions. Genuine repentance is demonstrated over time and includes the person gaining an understanding of what led them to behave in an abusive manner, what was wrong with their behaviour, and how it has impacted the victim. (Luke 3:8-14; Romans 12:9; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11). True reformation in such cases takes considerable effort on the part of the perpetrator, may take many years, and, for some, may never be achieved.
- 1.9.8 Forgiveness is often an important part of a victim's healing journey. However any attempts made at reconciliation should only proceed slowly and cautiously, and after consultation with experienced domestic violence services. Care should be taken to manage the risks of further traumatising the victim. The caution of a victim in regard to being reconciled to an offender is appropriate and should not be mistaken for 'unwillingness' to forgive or be reconciled.
- 1.9.9 The grace of the gospel extends to all sinners. Church leaders have an obligation to provide support, pastoral accountability and supervision to any person who remains within their church communities known to have been a perpetrator of domestic abuse. However such support should only be given in a manner that does not condone the abuse nor compromise the safety or pastoral care of victims of domestic abuse.
- 1.9.10 Christians with a genuine desire to be faithful to Scripture hold different views on the question of when divorce is appropriate or remarriage may be possible. However such differences should not impact a Christian's support for a victim of domestic abuse separating from their spouse for the sake of safety. For a discussion of when divorce, and remarriage, might be appropriate actions in the circumstances of domestic abuse please see Appendix 10, which references the 2019 Doctrine Commission report entitled, "The Implications of Domestic

Abuse for Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage 18/18 The nature of marriage” and a “Letter to Members of Synod Regarding Domestic Abuse and Remarriage” from the Archbishop at the time, the Most Reverend Glenn Davies.

1.10 What do you need to do in your church?

When a case of domestic abuse is reported in a parish or organisation of the Diocese of Sydney, it is right to act in accordance with the following priorities:

Safety first – for the victim(s)

Support and Empowerment – for the victim(s)

Healing – for the victim(s)

Accountability – for the abuser

Repentance, reformation and healing – for the abuser

Define and clarify the state of the relationship

- 1.10.1 A victim’s physical, emotional and spiritual safety must be our primary and ongoing concern. Other matters above may be considered according to the priorities suggested, although inevitably some stages may overlap or need to be revisited.
- 1.10.2 Further advice is available in our detailed **Good Practice Guidelines**, along with extensive information in the series of attached **Appendices**. All clergy and church workers should familiarise themselves with these guidelines.
- 1.10.3 We have also prepared a **Domestic Abuse Response Flow Chart** with the appropriate processes to follow when you become aware of an incident of domestic abuse. On the page following the flow chart we also list a number of key telephone numbers and websites, along with an app for smart phones and tablets.

1.11 Key steps for prevention and care

- 1.11.1 Clergy and church workers should cooperate with statutory authorities such as the Police, child protection services and domestic violence services.
- 1.11.2 Parish Councils should consider adopting and publishing a local domestic abuse policy (see Appendix 7 for the recommended parish version of the above policy).
- 1.11.3 Consider displaying the church’s domestic abuse policy statement in an appropriate place alongside information about how to access advice and support from the Police, domestic violence helplines and diocesan services.
- 1.11.4 Clergy and Parish Councils should consider appointing specified domestic abuse contact person(s) within the local church, especially where the church only has male clergy or church workers.
- 1.11.5 Parish Councils should consider developing their own support towards local services for victims, such as budgeting funds for victims fleeing abuse or towards support of a local women’s refuge (keeping the location secret), or by facilitating a local victims/survivors’ support group.
- 1.11.6 Clergy and church workers should follow diocesan procedures for responding to concerns about domestic abuse (see Flowchart and Good Practice Guidelines – if there is any doubt as to what action to take, refer to the Office of the Director of Safe Ministry or the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser (see ‘Domestic Abuse – key telephone numbers and websites for help’).

- 1.11.7 Clergy should ensure the training, by appropriately qualified professionals or programs, of those in leadership positions, safe ministry roles and other pastoral roles about domestic abuse; such training should address primary prevention as well as pastoral responses.
- 1.11.8 Clergy should ensure domestic abuse is addressed in appropriate contexts such as preaching, Bible studies, prayers and church publications, as well as in marriage preparation, youth groups and ministry training activities.
- 1.11.9 In such teaching, clergy should consider how to prevent convictions regarding biblical teachings, on matters like the marriage covenant, gender relationships, forgiveness and sacrificial love, being distorted or used to justify domestic abuse.

Section 2:
Addressing Domestic Abuse:
Good Practice Guidelines

SECTION 2:

Addressing Domestic Abuse: Good Practice Guidelines

Preamble

For the purposes of these Guidelines, **domestic abuse** is defined as a pattern of behaviour that seeks to coerce, control, intimidate, hurt or frighten a person in an intimate or family relationship. Domestic abuse may include, but is not limited to emotional, verbal, financial, psychological, spiritual, cultural, physical and sexual abuse. It can also include social isolation, stalking, image-based or technology facilitated abuse, and threats to harm other people including children, property or pets.

A more extensive definition of the various forms which abuse can take is found in Appendix 1.

Anglicare's Family and Domestic Violence Advisor for Sydney Anglicans comments:

The primary focus in responding to those experiencing domestic abuse typically involves care, crisis intervention, safety planning for the victim, and empowering a survivor to make the best choices for ongoing personal safety and for any children. In addition, ongoing support and pastoral care is likely to be needed over an extended period to support healing and recovery.

At all times our responses should clearly state that victims and survivors are not the cause of the abuse they are suffering, that they are not to blame for a perpetrator's behaviour, that God sees them and knows their suffering, and wants them to find safety and healing.

In such cases, teaching and pastoral care should recognise that separation from the spouse may well be the survivor's best choice and will be supported.

Ministry staff need to be equipped to provide this ongoing support. They should be aware when teaching on topics such as marriage, forgiveness, suffering or reconciliation, that the needs of domestic abuse survivors and their trauma should be addressed.

2.1 How to respond to victims

When you haven't personally experienced abuse, it's easy to listen with an attitude of assessing whether what is being reported is really abuse. 'Would I find that abusive? Doesn't everyone argue sometimes?' However, when a person has repeatedly been victimised and feels powerless, our response always needs to be to offer support, to listen and give those people the respect of being believed.

- Clinical psychologist and clergy wife

The guidance below aims to assist you in responding to people who disclose domestic abuse.

2.1.1 Acknowledge your limitations – Those who respond to news of domestic abuse often feel ill-equipped. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between other types of marital dysfunction and domestic abuse, or it may be that concerns about abuse only emerge gradually. Added complicating factors may include health issues or cultural and social background. Clergy and church workers should acknowledge their professional limitations, and should consult the ODSM, the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser or experienced domestic violence services for advice.

2.1.2 Safety first – The safety of victims and any children is paramount. All actions should carefully consider the risk to their, and your, safety. Making telephone calls, possessing information about support services for domestic abuse, the use of texts and emails, and accessing relevant websites all create potential risks for those experiencing abuse.

- 2.1.3 **Be informed** – For information on domestic abuse, its prevalence and effects, and how to recognise both victims and alleged perpetrators, please see Appendix 3. This also briefly notes other particular categories of domestic abuse.

2.2 Initial Disclosure

If a victim discloses or otherwise hints at abuse, the following factors are important.

- 2.2.1 **Ask after them** – If a victim hints at abuse, they may want you to ask how they are doing. Your offer of help could be the first step in enabling them to seek help, e.g. 'How are things at home?' and if it becomes appropriate, 'Is anyone hurting you?' or 'Do you ever feel afraid?'.
2.2.2 **Take time to listen** – Take plenty of time to listen with acceptance to what they say. Proof of abuse is not required in an initial disclosure and the matter does not need to be clarified completely in one sitting. If they sense disbelief, they may be discouraged from speaking again.
2.2.3 **Choose the place wisely** – If it is at all possible, speak with the victim in a safe, private place where you will not be interrupted, or arrange to talk again, keeping in mind that someone in distress may start talking anywhere. As is the case in other ministry situations, when speaking with a woman, male clergy should consider inviting her to bring a support person, or should conduct the discussion where there are others in the general vicinity.
2.2.4 **The limits of confidentiality** – Make it clear that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, depending on the nature of what is disclosed. For example, further disclosure may be needed when someone is being hurt or in serious danger, a serious criminal offence has been committed, or when children are involved (see below).

2.3 Immediate action

- 2.3.1 **Dial 000** if you are witnessing a violent incident or if the person needs medical care.
2.3.2 **Call the Police** if the victim is in immediate danger. Also seek advice from the NSW Domestic Violence Line **1800 656 463**. Be aware that intervention may heighten risk, but it is important to explore how to ensure that people are safe. The Police and staff of the NSW Domestic Violence Line are trained to be careful and sensitive in such situations.
2.3.3 **Are children involved?** If children are involved and there is a risk of significant harm, a referral to the child protection authorities needs to be made, in addition to calling the Police, and if possible, encourage the victim to make the referral themselves, perhaps supporting them through the process. The victim can be reassured that a referral does not automatically mean that children will be removed from the situation.
2.3.4 **Is a clergy person or church worker involved?** If the matter involves a clergy person or church worker as an alleged offender, the ODSM will also need to be informed.
2.3.5 **Is there a threat of self harm?** Any threat to self-harm must be taken seriously as threats of self-harm made by a perpetrator of domestic abuse to their victim are usually part of their controlling and manipulative behaviour. If the victim reports this to you, and you believe there is a risk of serious harm, you should attempt, if possible, to get medical help for the alleged perpetrator or contact the police to request a welfare check for the person.
2.3.6 **Keep their confidence** – Remember that the confidentiality of the victim must be maintained. Do not contact the alleged perpetrator at this stage without seeking professional advice.

2.4 Your response to the disclosure

- 2.4.1 **You are brave** – Acknowledge the victim’s strength, and the courage it takes both to have endured abuse and now to talk about it.
- 2.4.2 **Here are some options** – Ensure the victim is aware of the choices available to them and support them in deciding on the next steps, unless there is imminent risk of physical harm or mandatory reporting obligations.
- 2.4.3 **Here is where to find help** – Encourage them to seek professional help from a local domestic violence service who will be able to offer practical safety planning advice, even if they do not want to leave their home. In addition, give information about specialist helplines and websites, as required. (See Flow Chart and the page that follows it.)
- 2.4.4 **Are you in danger?** – Express concern for their safety and immediate welfare. Do they have somewhere to stay?
- 2.4.5 **Are children in danger?** – Ask about the children and their safety and welfare. You may need to persuade them to report any concerns to the child protection authorities. You have no option but to do so if you have received information that a child is at serious risk of harm.
- 2.4.6 **Do you have support?** – Be sensitive to people’s backgrounds and cultures (including Indigeneity). Ask how social and cultural issues may affect them. Be aware that disability, mental illness, or other health conditions can create extra vulnerability. Ask them about what support is safely available to them from friends and family. Be ready to point to external sources of assistance. For example, where a victim has English as a Second Language, generally use trained interpreters, rather than relatives.
- 2.4.7 **Take care of yourself** – Encourage them to focus on their own needs, something they may not have been able to do since the abuse began but which is critical in helping them to change their situation.
- 2.4.8 **It’s not your fault** – Reassure them that whatever the circumstances, abuse is not justified and not their fault.
- 2.4.9 **How can our church best help you?** – Ask them what they want from you and the parish. Offer help which is in response to their needs and preferences and which lets them keep in control, as much as possible. This is important for those experiencing trauma.
- 2.4.10 **Let’s talk again** – There is a lot to take in an initial conversation, so encourage them that they can come back and ask more questions and can take time to consider the offers of help that have been made. Reassure them that the help will be provided with their permission and at their preferred speed.

2.5 Record keeping and follow up re. victims

Please also see the guidance from *Faithfulness in Service* paragraphs 4.36 and 4.37 (noted in Appendix 6) which address the need to keep notes of individual pastoral activity, and also to be aware of relevant privacy legislation.

- 2.5.1 **What’s the best way to contact you?** – Check if it is all right to contact the victim at home before doing so. Establish their preferred means of contact, and make sure that this is safe.
- 2.5.2 **Keep it confidential** – Keep information confidential and, as a general rule, only share it where appropriate and with informed consent of the victim.
- 2.5.3 **Tell authorities when appropriate and keep a record** – In some circumstances you will be required to share information with statutory authorities, for example, where the victim or

others may be at risk. Always keep a record of your decision and the reasons why you decided to share (or not). If in doubt, contact the ODSM, the Police or the child protection authorities.

- 2.5.4 **Take notes** – It is recommended that you make a brief objective note of dates, facts and context of what you have been told, but keep your opinions separate. This should be kept in strict confidence but could be useful in any future prosecution.
- 2.5.5 **First 48 hours – Within 48 hours of the disclosure you ought to share the incident with someone who is qualified** in the area of domestic abuse, who can support you and help you to think through the issues. This may be a Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officer, the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser or via the 1800 RESPECT national domestic violence helpline.
- 2.5.6 **Review church safety** – If the alleged perpetrator is in the same church as the victim, you will need to review the safety issues. There may need to be a risk assessment and memorandum of understanding (MOU) put in place. For example, either an ADVO or a pastoral assessment may require that an alleged perpetrator should neither physically attend the same congregation nor digitally belong to the same church Facebook group as the victim. Clergy and church workers should take the initiative in monitoring any MOU and/or ADVO that they are aware of and not leave reports about possible breaches solely for the victim. You are advised to consult with the ODSM.
- 2.5.7 **Safety plan with a professional** – Victim safety planning should be conducted by a professional, ideally from a domestic violence service or the Police. But there may be an occasion when a victim wishes to discuss their safety with you. You should seek advice before entering into detailed safety planning discussions with the victim. However, Appendix 7 gives an example of a safety planning format that normally guides such planning. Careful consideration should be given to where and how such information is provided and kept by the victim, to avoid the alleged perpetrator learning the details of the plan.
- 2.5.8 **When to go to the ODSM** – If the alleged perpetrator is a clergy person or church worker you must report this to the ODSM. There are a range of options available to people who contact the ODSM - not only pursuing a formal complaint about misconduct. Victims experiencing abuse can be afraid to approach the ODSM because they are frightened of having matters taken out of their hands. This is rarely the case, and the ODSM places a high priority on victim safety and choice, and collaborates with victims to work out what is the best way forward for them (and any children).
- 2.5.9 **Extreme discretion needed – Do not give information about the victim’s whereabouts, contact details or personal circumstances to the alleged perpetrator or to others who might pass information on to the alleged perpetrator.** Do not discuss with the parish council or any other members of a congregation or anyone who might inadvertently pass information on to the perpetrator. However, in a larger church setting with a larger pastoral staff team, some discussion and documentation may be required about whom else is brought into the confidentiality circle of the victim and their disclosure. It may be necessary to inform other staff in the safety planning around church practices if the perpetrator is also part of the church but sensitivity and great care needs to be had in this area. Advice from the ODSM will be beneficial in this context.
- 2.5.10 **Offer practical help** – When victims are leaving a controlling perpetrator, they often have to leave with nothing and have access to very limited financial support. Consider how your church can provide practical support for victims. Provide information about the assistance that agencies like Anglicare can supply.

2.6 Responding to alleged or known perpetrators

Every church has an important role to play in challenging inappropriate behaviour among its members. This can, however, lead to increased risks for both the victim and the person who

challenges an alleged or known perpetrator. This needs to be done in an extremely careful way that does not place a victim at increased risk.

Anglicare's Family and Domestic Violence Advisor for Sydney Anglicans comments:

It is crucial to understand that a perpetrator's abusive behaviour is sinful, and that true repentance and behaviour change will likely involve long-term and challenging work. Clergy, church workers and church members ought not be persuaded by a perpetrator that 'everything is OK' because there is an apology or expression of regret. Being alert to perpetrators' attempts to persuade others, particularly those in ministry or positions of influence, to collude with their perspective is a vital part of keeping survivors safe. Even the most experienced Men's Behaviour Change Program workers find managing the issue of collusion to be a challenge.

Consider the following factors when responding to perpetrators.

- 2.6.1 **The victim comes first** – Ensure that the victim is at the highest priority in terms of safety and wellbeing, and that any action is centred on the victim. Action here includes giving the victim choice in what the next steps are and the timing of those steps unless there is imminent risk of physical harm or mandatory reporting obligations.
- 2.6.2 **Be alert** – Understand the possibility that you are being or may have been groomed or enlisted by a perpetrator towards their point of view.
- 2.6.3 **Strength in numbers** – If meeting an alleged perpetrator, ensure that it is in a public place, and that there are others in the meeting.
- 2.6.4 **Be safe** – Maintain an awareness of the danger that the alleged perpetrator may pose to you, and ensuring that you and others are safe.
- 2.6.5 **First 48 hours – Within 48 hours of the disclosure you ought to share the incident with someone who is qualified** in the area of domestic abuse, who can support you and help you to think through the issues. This may be a Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officer, the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser or via the 1800 RESPECT national domestic violence helpline.
- 2.6.6 **Get help** – If the alleged perpetrator threatens self-harm while talking with you, then they may require urgent support. Dial 000 if you are witnessing a violent incident or if the person needs urgent medical care. Otherwise you could refer them to their GP, or Mental Health Community Access Team.
- 2.6.7 If the alleged perpetrator is in the same church as the victim, you will need to review the safety issues. There may need to be a risk assessment and 'memorandum of understanding' (MOU) put in place. You are advised to consult the ODSM.
- 2.6.8 **When to contact the ODSM** – If the **alleged perpetrator is a clergy person or church worker** you must report this to the ODSM.
- 2.6.9 **Extreme discretion needed** – Ensure that information concerning the victim is only given to statutory authorities and not to the alleged perpetrator. This includes keeping all contact details and personal circumstances confidential.
- 2.6.10 **Where to get help** – Share information about helplines and accountability programs.

2.7 Record keeping and follow up re. perpetrators

Please see the previous section on 'record keeping and follow up' in regard to a victim. What follows is additional guidance in relation to responding to alleged or known perpetrators. Any conversation or intervention with a perpetrator of abuse will impact the safety of the victim. It is advisable to always ask the victim first whether or not it is safe to speak with the perpetrator and to plan for and check on

their safety after any interventions. Also recall that it is generally inadvisable for the same person to provide support or pastoral care to both a victim and alleged perpetrator.

- 2.7.1 **You can't promise confidentiality** – While you might respect an individual's right to confidentiality, this cannot be guaranteed. In some circumstances you will be required to share information with statutory authorities, for example, when someone is being hurt, a serious criminal offence has been committed, or a child or adult is at risk.
- 2.7.2 **Keep a record** – Always keep a record of your decision and the reasons why you decided to share or withhold information. If in doubt, contact the ODSM, the Police or the child protection authorities.
- 2.7.3 In following up alleged or known perpetrators:
- Do not collude with, excuse or minimise their behaviour;
 - Do not meet with them alone and in private. Meet in a public place or in the church with several other people around; and
 - Do not try to offer/provide treatment. Only those with professional training should discuss such issues formally with them.
- 2.7.4 In relation to any investigations or legal proceedings for domestic violence:
- Cooperate fully with requests from the police;
 - In the event that the alleged perpetrator requests you to produce documents or give oral evidence in any proceedings, insist that a subpoena is issued;
 - A church leader should exercise extreme caution and seek advice before acting as a character witness or advocating for an alleged perpetrator; and
 - A church leader may arrange for the alleged perpetrator to be provided with pastoral care throughout the investigation or proceedings, but should contact the ODSM for further advice and not provide this care themselves.

2.8 Additional guidance for clergy and licensed lay ministers – responding to victims

- 2.8.1 **Help** – Help the victim with any spiritual concerns.
- 2.8.2 **Be patient** – Accept that victims may choose to stay in their situation for a variety of reasons.
- 2.8.3 **Abuse is always wrong** – Emphasise that violence or other domestic abuse is always unacceptable in a marriage, whether Christian or otherwise.
- 2.8.4 **Remember the Lord** – Assure them of God's love and presence and pray with them.
- 2.8.5 **Don't rush to reconcile** – Do not encourage them to forgive the alleged perpetrator or take them back in the absence of persistent evidence of repentant attitudes and behaviour, especially without obtaining professional advice.
- 2.8.6 **Do not pursue couples' counseling/mediation with them and their partner if you are aware that there is abuse in the relationship.**
- 2.8.7 **Seek advice** – Where couples' counseling has been commenced for general marital difficulties and concern about abuse emerges, seek advice about whether it should be discontinued.

2.9 Responding spiritually to perpetrators

- 2.9.1 **Be clear** – Address any spiritual rationalisations they may offer or questions they may have.
- 2.9.2 **No excuse** – Do not allow them to use theological excuses for their behaviour.
- 2.9.3 **Name the sin** – Name the abuse as *their* sin, not the victim’s sin. Tell them that only they can stop it and that they need to seek help. Advise that true repentance and behaviour change will likely involve long-term and challenging work.
- 2.9.4 **Parenting Choice** – For perpetrators who are parents, it is also considered helpful to remind them that domestic abuse is also a choice about parenting. This may provide an additional perspective for understanding the impact of their behaviour.
- 2.9.5 **Do not be easily swayed** – Do not be taken in by the perpetrator’s remorse or “conversion” experience. If it is genuine, it will be a tremendous resource as they proceed with accountability. If it is not genuine, it is only another way to groom or manipulate you, so as to maintain control of the process and to avoid accountability.
- 2.9.6 **Pray** – Pray with them.
- 2.9.7 **Remorse** – Be aware that remorse expressed may or may not be genuine. Expressions of regret are often part of the cycle of domestic abuse. Be particularly careful of an alleged perpetrator expressing remorse without any accompanying signs of real and visible repentance.
- 2.9.8 **Repentance must be real, visible and enduring** – A perpetrator may ask for forgiveness from God and seek to live a repentant life. Look for actions of repentance, not just words of repentance. What has the perpetrator done, for how long, with what kinds of accountability, to show evidence of change, such as engaging in a long-term behaviour change program?
- 2.9.9 **Care** – Assure them of your pastoral care in this endeavour.
- 2.9.10 **Do not pursue couples’ counselling/mediation with them and their partner if you are aware that there is abuse in the relationship.**

2.10 Perpetrator programs

The attitudes that underpin domestic abuse often have deep roots and are difficult to change. Some success has been achieved through Men’s Behaviour Change programs for alleged or known perpetrators. These programs are conducted over an extended period of time and include one-on-one support as well as a group work program. Participation in such programs should not be linked to suggestions of reconciliation or discussions of postponing separation or divorce.

NSW has minimum standards for accredited Men’s Behaviour Change Programs. Information on who is accredited and where programs are conducted can be found at the Men’s Behaviour Change Network website: [Men's Behaviour Change Programs \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://Men's Behaviour Change Programs (nsw.gov.au)). Accredited programs in NSW are strongly underpinned by victim support.

Anglicare is accredited to run Men’s Behaviour Change Programs in Nowra and Parramatta. Contact the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser for further information.

Participation in a Men’s Behaviour Change Program may be mandated by a court but self-referral to community-run programs is possible. Contact the Men’s Referral Service (MRS) on 1800 065 973.

Also note that Behaviour Change Programs are more appropriate than the ‘anger management’ courses sometimes suggested for domestic abusers. A perpetrator may become more dangerous

after completing an anger management course, if he is better able to control and therefore hide his anger, potentially placing his spouse and any children in greater danger.

There is currently not a female equivalent to accredited Men's Behaviour Change Programs. If a female perpetrator was willing to seek assistance, a referral to a specific domestic violence service would be an appropriate option. Be aware that female perpetration often occurs in the context of self-protection, and needs to be thoroughly assessed.

2.11 Pastoral issues

- 2.11.1 **Consult the ODSM** – There are complex issues for parishes where both parties continue to attend church. Parishes need to be aware of any legal restrictions (such as an ADVO) around those accused of perpetrating abuse and ensure that these are not undermined. As stated earlier (2.5.6), a risk assessment and MOU may also need to be put in place. You are advised to consult with the ODSM regarding any instance of a victim and a perpetrator (known or alleged) remaining in the same church (including the church's digital environment). If a MOU cannot be agreed, the ODSM can provide further advice about options.
- 2.11.2 **Perpetrators moving church** – If an alleged perpetrator moves to another church, the ODSM should again be consulted regarding any communication between churches. Recall that abusers are often adept at manipulation and at providing a convincing but false narrative to others. Remember that safety for the victim (and others at risk) is paramount.
- 2.11.3 **Is a clergy person involved?** If the victim or alleged perpetrator is a member of the clergy, please talk urgently to the ODSM to review the action required to ensure the victim's safety and the appropriate response (see section 2.12 and section 2.13 below).
- 2.11.4 **Division of care** – Congregational leaders will need to consider how to provide pastoral care to both parties safely, noting that a clergy person or church worker cannot do this for both individuals. Primary attention must always remain on the safety and support of the victim. If they need further advice in relation to providing support they should contact the ODSM or the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser.
- 2.11.5 **Long-term care for victims** – Churches and carers need to be prepared for the length and complexity of the road ahead. Few are ready for the fact that long term victims of abuse rarely walk out of an abusive situation in a linear fashion. Long-term pastoral support for victims of domestic abuse may also include support to couples when one or both parties have experienced abuse in a previous relationship.
- 2.11.6 **Caring for carers** – Long term abuse also produces secondary victims among the carers, who may not only carry some of the grief and pain of the victim but may also receive abuse themselves. Therefore, those responsible for caring for victims, or for perpetrators, also need emotional and pastoral support, along with others indirectly impacted, for example, friends or family within the parish.
- 2.11.7 **Dissatisfaction with care is possible** – There may be times that either victim or perpetrator, or both, may be dissatisfied with pastoral care provided in such difficult situations, even with significant efforts by congregational leaders to follow good practice guidelines.

2.12 Domestic Abuse involving Clergy or Lay Ministers – Victims

- 2.12.1 **Care for victims** – If a clergy person or lay minister, or the spouse of such ministry leaders, discloses abuse, they must be treated like any other victim. Clergy and lay ministers, and their spouses, must have the same access to support and resources as others who are experiencing domestic abuse. In addition, they may speak to the ODSM.

- 2.12.2 **Bishops' protocol** – Our bishops agree that the priority of safety is paramount for victims of abuse within ministry families. Clergy and lay ministers, or their spouses, should expect a bishop to listen with acceptance when disclosing abuse. Working with the ODSM, and in particular, the ODSM Chaplain, these protocols provide guidance for the support of such ministry spouses, especially should they wish to separate. Attention is also expected to be given to matters of housing, schooling, and counselling for the spouse and any children affected.
- 2.12.3 **Heightened vulnerabilities** – In addition to the seriousness of marriage vows, the significance of ordination promises, and/or issues regarding housing security may make clergy and lay ministers or their spouses particularly vulnerable to staying in abusive relationships. In such situations, our diocese should not put fear of scandal above the safety of vulnerable people.
- 2.12.4 **Ministry Support Fund** – Acknowledging that clergy and other ministry couples and families are in a unique situation (often with housing and other family arrangements attached to a parish), a Ministry Spouse Support Fund has been established to assist the spouse and family (if any) re-establish their lives when there has been domestic abuse (or other serious misconduct) by the church worker, which will leave the spouse (and family) in financial hardship. For example, this may include support for school fees, counselling or housing.

2.13 Domestic Abuse involving Clergy and Lay Ministers – Alleged perpetrator

- 2.13.1 Clergy and lay ministers who are suspected of perpetrating domestic abuse must be treated like any other alleged perpetrator (see section 2.6).
- 2.13.2 Any allegations of domestic abuse committed against a lay minister or member of the clergy should also be referred to the ODSM (see section 2.12).
- 2.13.3 Bishops may consider appointing someone to offer pastoral support to an alleged perpetrator who is a lay minister or member of the clergy. If the alleged perpetrator is a bishop, then the ODSM must be consulted about the provision of such support.
- 2.13.4 Domestic abuse may result in proceedings under our ministry standards and disciplinary ordinances (which can be found under the Ordinances on the SDS website – www.sds.asn.au) if:
- it involves sexual abuse of an adult, or
 - conviction for an offence punishable by imprisonment for 12 months or more, or
 - may otherwise call into question the fitness of the person to hold a role or position or to remain in holy orders.

2.14 Mediation

- 2.14.1 **Get professional help** – Mediation is a specialist activity that in the context of domestic abuse must be undertaken by trained professionals. In order for mediation to be effective any imbalances in power in the relationship need to be addressed.
- 2.14.2 **Safety first** – In the context of family and domestic abuse, mediation (or 'family dispute resolution' as it is known when parenting arrangements are being discussed) can be an empowering process for a victim. However, this can only occur if safety needs are managed and both parties are well-prepared for the mediation process.
- 2.14.3 **Legal advice** – Where children or property matters are concerned, it is also important that both parties have received legal advice. Government-funded Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) are a good referral option for family dispute resolution and have designated processes to ensure the safety of all concerned. Anglicare currently operates FRCs at Nowra and Parramatta.

A Case Study: Andrew and Jody

Andrew is separated from his wife, Jody. She had called the Police and Andrew was arrested after an incident of domestic abuse. Charges were pressed and he was found guilty. An Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) has been issued, with Jody and the children listed as protected parties.

Andrew is living apart from Jody. The couple have two children aged 6 and 8, both of whom live with Jody. Andrew wants to be reconciled with his wife and with the church of which they are both long-standing members. He has come to the rector's home in order to discuss with the rector how he can achieve reconciliation with Jody. He is currently not attending church. But Andrew appears to be remorseful and says how sorry he is and how desperate he is to be back in church fellowship and back with his family.

Considerations in responding

The rector needs to seek advice and support from the ODSM or Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser in how best to respond. He must also recall that pastoral support cannot normally be provided by one person (such as the rector) both to victim and perpetrator.

The conditions in the ADVO need to be understood to ensure that any contact Andrew has with Jody and the children does not breach the conditions of the ADVO.

The rector needs to be aware and cautious of Andrew's motives. The rector should ensure he is acquainted with the cycle of domestic abuse. In approaching the rector, who knows them both, Andrew might be seen as manipulating or grooming the rector to support him, with the prime motive of reconciliation with his wife. What evidence is there of his repentance, and the steps he has taken to change his behaviour? How are his spiritual needs currently being met?

Consideration of Andrew's desire for reconciliation with Jody must be made in the context of assessing risk to her and risk to their children, and can only be considered if Jody is also willing to consider a conciliation process, and the conditions of the ADVO allow for contact. Extreme caution should be taken by the rector before raising the possibility of conciliation with her, given the perceived implications of his position of authority, and the difficulties in her freedom to choose not to engage in such a process if initiated by the rector.

However, the rector should not get involved in any conciliation between them as this is specialist work and needs to be undertaken by an independent agency equipped for the purpose. The rector can signpost Andrew to such agencies.

The rector can discuss with Andrew the marks of true repentance and forgiveness by God, and arrange for him to receive pastoral care. This would be most appropriately offered by someone not known to either of them.

The rector needs to be aware of boundaries of confidentiality and should not be passing information from Andrew to Jody or vice versa. If he were to do so not only may he lose the trust of one or the other, but he may be putting Jody and her children at further risk.

In conclusion, the rector should be careful to give priority to the safety of the victim and her children who are the vulnerable people in this circumstance.

I Certify that the Policy as printed is in accordance with the Policy as reported.

R TONG
Chair of Committee

I Certify that this Policy was passed by the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney on 13 September 2023.

B BOUNDS
Secretary