

## **16/17 Implementation of the Domestic Abuse Response**

### **32/17 Assistance for spouses and families of clergy and lay stipendiary workers where separation has occurred due to domestic violence**

(A report from the Domestic Violence Response Task Force.)

#### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Synod about progress in the work of the Domestic Violence Response Task Force, and to recommend adoption of revisions to the Synod's provisional Domestic Abuse Policy and Good Practice Guidelines, along with agreement that the Policy is no longer provisional.

#### **Recommendations**

2. That Synod, note the report 16/17 Implementation of the Domestic Abuse Response, and confirm that Section 1 (the Policy section) of the "Responding to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Good Practice Guidelines" as revised, should no longer be considered provisional but adopted as a policy of the Synod.

3. That if the Responding to Domestic Abuse: Policy is passed as a policy of the Synod, the Synod –
- (a) request Standing Committee to ensure that the "Responding to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Good Practice Guidelines" be professionally laid out and prepared for publication and distribution to all ministers and parish councils for their attention, along with assistant ministers and lay ministers, with a request that parishioners be made aware of the policy,
  - (b) request that all parishes be encouraged to consider adopting the suggested parish policy statement (from the Resource section) as their own parish policy on domestic abuse, or to revise their existing policy in light of revisions to the Synod's "Responding to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Good Practice Guidelines",
  - (c) authorise the Standing Committee to amend the Domestic Abuse Guidelines and Resources (but not the Policy), as adopted at Synod in 2018, following consultation with the Professional Standards Unit and the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser, and to report such amendments to the next ordinary session of the Synod, and
  - (d) request the Standing Committee to review the "Responding to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Good Practice Guidelines", as adopted at Synod in 2018, after two years' further operation, and provide a report with recommendations to the 2<sup>nd</sup> ordinary session of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Synod.

#### **Action proposed to be taken by the Standing Committee**

4. The Taskforce proposes that following this year's session of Synod, the Standing Committee should consider the further following recommendations –

- (a) Standing Committee recommend that the Diocesan Secretary and Registrar consider a mechanism whereby newly appointed Ministers, Assistant Ministers and Lay Ministers in the diocese be made aware of the existence, role and contacts details for the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser. Such notification could also extend to advising the existence of the PG&R and other relevant material and points of contact and advice.
- (b) Standing Committee authorise section 1 of the Policy (as revised by Synod), including the flowchart and table of contacts to be translated into Chinese, Korean and Arabic, and any further language agreed, and be funded from the residue of funds held on the Task Force's behalf by the PSU, with the balance to come from Synod Contingencies.
- (c) Standing Committee request that the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser and the Chaplain of the PSU collaborate in developing content suitable for visual display on churches, with the Standing Committee to fund from Contingencies the graphic design and publishing of such materials.
- (d) Standing Committee monitor progress in PSU's production of the training module requested, under supervision of the SMB, in liaison with Anglicare.
- (e) Standing Committee monitor progress by Anglicare and the Anglican Schools Corporation, along with other Anglican schools within the Diocese, in responding to relevant recommendations made to them in resolution 32/17 passed at the last session of Synod, namely –
  - (i) that Anglican Schools Corporation schools have short to medium term bursaries available to assist the families of clergy and lay stipendiary workers where separation has occurred due to domestic abuse, and

- (ii) that Anglicare give priority for emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay stipendiary workers where separation has occurred due to domestic abuse.
- (f) Standing Committee recommend that the Archbishop and the Director consider –
  - (i) Ensuring any spouse of an applicant for candidacy for ordination be interviewed separately, with the interview to include some screening for domestic abuse;
  - (ii) Extending the screening process described by the Director for candidates for ordination as a Deacon to apply to all applicants for stipendiary lay ministry positions in the diocese, including, where relevant, a separate interview of a candidate’s spouse).
- (g) Standing Committee invite Moore College and other diocesan education and training institutions to consider the merits of applying similar domestic abuse screening processes to applicants for study at their institutions.

**Background**

5. Additional background to this report can be found in our report to Synod in 2017, “24/16 Domestic Violence (A report from the Domestic Violence Response Task Force)”, hereafter referred to as the “2017 Report”.

6. In 2017, the Synod, using its ordinance-like procedure for considering policies, received the “Responding to Domestic Abuse: Provisional Policy and Good Practice Guidelines”, hereafter referred to as the “PG&R”). Synod adopted Section 1 of the PG&R as the Provisional Sydney Anglican Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse.

7. For implementation, the Synod resolved as follows in resolution “16/17 Implementation of the Domestic Abuse Response” –

“Synod, noting –

- (i) the report 24/16 Domestic Violence (the “Report”), and
- (ii) the accompanying document Responding to Domestic Abuse: Provisional Policy and Good Practice Guidelines (the “Domestic Abuse Response”), and
- (iii) the Provisional Sydney Anglican Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse (set out in Section 1 of the Domestic Abuse Response) (the “Provisional Policy”) –
- (a) commends the Provisional Policy to all clergy and parish councils for use in churches,
- (b) invites clergy and church members to provide comments and feedback on the Domestic Abuse Response (including the Provisional Policy) to Standing Committee by 30 April 2018,
- (c) requests that the Standing Committee bring to the Synod session in 2018 proposed amendments to the Provisional Policy, and
- (d) requests the Standing Committee to consider and, if thought fit, act on the recommendations referred to in the Report.”

8. Notably, the same session of Synod also passed resolution “17/17 Grief and apology in regards to domestic abuse” in the following terms –

“That this Synod grieves with victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and prays for their healing and recovery. We give thanks to God for those women and men, clergy and lay people, who have faithfully supported, cared for and protected such victims in our churches and communities.

We grieve that God’s good gift of marriage can be distorted and dishonoured through the sin of perpetrators. We pray for their repentance and restoration to faithful living under Christ.

We also deeply regret that domestic abuse has occurred among those who attend our churches, and even among some in leadership. We apologise for those times our teaching and pastoral care have failed adequately to support victims and call perpetrators to account.”

9. Further, that session of Synod also passed resolution “32/17 Assistance for spouses and families of clergy and lay stipendiary workers where separation has occurred due to domestic violence” in the following terms –

“In light of its wholehearted acceptance of the Provisional Sydney Anglican Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse, and its deeply sincere expression on 10 October 2017 of grief, regret and sorrow to victims and survivors of domestic abuse, Synod –

- (i) acknowledges the responsibility of the Anglican Church of Australia to examine its ordination candidates to ensure that they are fit to enter Holy Orders,
- (ii) acknowledges the responsibility of the Anglican Church of Australia to ensure that its clergy are fit to remain in Holy Orders,
- (iii) acknowledges the responsibility of the Anglican Church of Australia to ensure that its lay stipendiary workers are fit to be licenced to work in churches and to remain in this work,
- (iv) accepts the theological statements in the Provisional Sydney Anglican Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse that speak of the circumstances when it is right for the victims of domestic abuse to separate from their spouses and not be reconciled,
- (v) acknowledges that a key reason why domestic abuse victims might find it difficult to separate from their spouses is because of potential financial hardship (especially where children are involved),
- (vi) acknowledges that the family of clergy and lay the workers live in locations where the relevant ministry worker is licenced to minister, rather than around their natural support networks (e.g. family and close friends), and that this can make it even more difficult for victims of domestic abuse to separate from their spouses,

and therefore requests –

- (a) that Standing Committee, as a matter of urgency and in consultation with the Professional Standards Unit, create a generously provisioned long-term operating fund which has the purpose of assisting spouses of clergy and lay stipendiary workers who have been or will be left in financial hardship as a result of their need to separate from their spouse due to domestic abuse,
- (b) that the policy which is created to administer the fund proposed in paragraph (a) provide a way for funds to be distributed quickly to those who are in need,
- (c) that Anglican Schools Corporation schools have short to medium term bursaries available to assist the families of clergy and lay stipendiary workers where separation has occurred due to domestic abuse, and
- (d) that Anglicare give priority for emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay stipendiary workers where separation has occurred due to domestic abuse.”

10. The main work of the Task Force has involved responding to feedback received under resolution 17/16, and assisting the Standing Committee in responding to resolution 32/17, and to other recommendations contained in the 24/16 Report received at Synod last year (the “2017 Report”).

11. After Synod in 2017, the Rev Martin Kemp and the Rev David O’Mara resigned from the Task Force, and the Task Force thanked them for their significant contributions to our work. The Standing Committee subsequently appointed Mrs Glenda Devlin of Anglicare, and the Rev Mark Tough to the Task Force.

12. The Task Force currently comprises Mrs Kate Bradford, Mrs Glenda Devlin, Canon Sandy Grant (chair), Archdeacon Kara Hartley, Mrs Nicky Lock, the Rev Rob Smith, the Rev Mark Tough, Dr Jill Wheeler and the Rev Catherine Wynn Jones.

13. Mrs Lynda Dunstan, Anglicare’s Domestic Violence Adviser, also attends our meetings and offers advice. As requested, the Diocesan Secretary has emailed all Ministers, Assistant Ministers and Lay Ministers in the Diocese, drawing their attention to the existence of, role description and contact details for, the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser. Lynda has reported that already she has run a number of education and training seminars for parishes regarding domestic abuse. The Task Force is thankful to Anglicare for her work.

14. The Task Force recommends that the Diocesan Secretary and Registrar consider a mechanism whereby newly appointed Ministers, Assistant Ministers and Lay Ministers in the diocese be made aware of the existence, role and contacts details for the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser. Such notification could also extend to advising the existence of the PG&R and other relevant material and points of contact and advice.

15. Following the Synod session in 2017, the Task Force, as at the date of this report, has met on an additional 6 occasions, taking the total meetings to 18.

16. Following Synod in 2017, the Task Force prepared a report to assist Standing Committee in its response to the resolutions of Synod and the further recommendations in our own report.

17. At its meeting in November 2017, the Standing Committee accepted our report, and its resolutions, and other further responses, are reported here.

### **Publication of Policy, Guidelines and Resources**

18. Regarding publication of Policy, Guidelines and Resources (PG&R), the Standing Committee –
- (a) requested the Diocesan Secretary to professionally print the Domestic Abuse flowchart and table of contacts for hard copy distribution to parishes and to make the current PDF document containing Policy, Guidelines and Appendices available for electronic distribution to parishes (with hard copy where needed), and
  - (b) agreed that once revisions to the Provisional Policy and attached Guidelines and Appendices are determined following the next session of Synod, further design and publication work of the wider materials should be considered, and should be funded from the balance of monies held on behalf of the DVTF by the PSU.

19. The Diocesan Secretary organised for the flowchart and table of contacts to be prepared for publication by a graphic designer, and then distributed the chart electronically to parishes via email. It was noted that the flowchart is particularly intended for the advice of ministry workers, whereas the table of contacts is intended to inform the general church-attending public.

20. The Provisional PG&R have been made available electronically for download at the Policies section of the SDS website and the Domestic Violence tab of the Resources section of the PSU's Safe Ministry website.

21. Subsequent to publication of the flowchart and table of contacts, the NSW Government withdrew (without notice) the Aurora App. So the revised table now refers solely to the national Daisy App. Errors were discovered and corrected in two phone numbers. Further minor updates and improvements to wording of the flowchart have also been approved by the Task Force, in consultation with the PSU. These documents have been republished electronically, and the attention of parish ministers drawn to these updates.

22. The Task Force also received suggestions that the Flowchart and possibly other parts of the Policy and Resources should be translated into other key languages represented in our churches. The Task Force has recommended to Standing Committee that section 1 of the Policy (as revised by Synod), including the flowchart and table of contacts be translated into Chinese, Korean and Arabic, and any further language agreed, and be funded from the residue of funds held on the Task Force's behalf by the PSU, with the balance to come from Synod Contingencies.

23. The Task Force also noted inquiries for posters regarding domestic abuse suitable for church settings. The Task Force has recommended that the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser and the Chaplain of the PSU collaborate in developing content for content suitable for visual display with the Standing Committee to fund from contingencies the graphic design and publishing of such materials.

### **Training**

24. The Standing Committee has requested that the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) and Safe Ministry Board (SMB) liaise with Anglicare in carrying out the work requested in paragraphs 56 and 57 of the 2017 Report to a develop basic training module aimed at assisting clergy and church workers to understand domestic abuse and how those serving in churches can respond well to this issue.

25. In response, the Task Force advised that the training module run for approximately 2 hours and requested Rev Cath Wynn Jones and the Director of PSU to liaise with the Chair of the SMB and Anglicare in relation to development of the training. Lynda Dunstan, Anglicare's Domestic Violence Adviser, has already prepared significant resources in this area and it is anticipated that she will continue to provide valuable advice in developing this training.

26. The Task Force has recommended that the Standing Committee should monitor progress in PSU's production of the training module requested, under supervision of the SMB, in liaison with Anglicare.

### **Ministry Standards**

27. The Standing Committee noted the request that the committee further reviewing the Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017 (the "MSO Review Committee") to consider the recommendation in paragraphs 59 and 60 of the 2017 Report.

28. Paragraph 60 recommended consideration of measures to ensure that a clergy person or church worker can be required to receive guidance and specialised help in cases of serious failure to provide appropriate pastoral care to a victim of domestic abuse. By "serious failure", we referred to provision of pastoral care in a manner that puts the safety of a victim or their family at risk and demonstrates a wilful disregard of the Synod's policy and guidelines in this area.

29. The MSO Review Committee decided against inserting a head of misconduct for serious pastoral care failures in relation to victims of domestic abuse in the new ordinance. It considered that the Synod's "Responding Well to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Good Practice Guidelines" were not sufficiently precise to ascertain what it means for a person to recklessly or wilfully disregard them. The Committee also considered that such a head of misconduct might discourage clergy from providing pastoral care to victims of domestic abuse at all.

30. The MSO Review Committee reported that a person can still make a complaint about pastoral care failures in relation to domestic abuse (or other matters) even if there is no specific head of misconduct, since the list of types of misconduct in clause 6 of the Ordinance is inclusive. However, if the pastoral care failure does not give rise to a risk of harm it is unlikely to call into question the person's fitness to hold office.

31. The Task Force has accepted the MSO Review Committee's decision.

32. Paragraph 59 of the 2017 Report recommended measures to ensure that a clergy person or church worker can be appropriately required to receive guidance and specialised help and/or disciplined in cases of domestic abuse, which do not constitute sexual abuse or serious criminal behaviour already covered by relevant discipline ordinance in effect at the time.

33. The MSO Review Committee reported that both emotional abuse and spiritual abuse are now explicitly covered in clause 6(2) of the Ministry Standards Ordinance. In addition, as already noted, the list of types of misconduct in clause 6 of the Ordinance is inclusive, so another type of abuse, such as financial abuse of a spouse, could be considered under the Ordinance if it called into question the person's fitness to hold office, or the need to subject the person to a condition in order to continue to exercise ministry or perform duties.

34. One of the objects of the MSO was to get away from needing to have a shopping list of offences/conduct and to have something more flexible, though there is value in having an inclusive list to assist the decision-maker to determine whether the conduct calls fitness into question.

35. The Task Force has accepted the MSO Review Committee's advice in this matter also.

#### **Funding and Care for Victims of Domestic Violence**

36. Standing Committee requested the PSU, in liaison with Anglicare, to prepare a report advising its response to paragraph 63 of the 2017 Report – to do with sufficient funding for staffing and training of the PSU Contact Person and Chaplain system, so that it is available to provide advice, support and resources to those in our churches who have experienced domestic abuse – and also to Synod resolution 32/17, including any recommendations for funding and other actions.

37. The Task Force realises that the PSU may report separately about how their Contact Person and Chaplain system is already able to operate to provide advice, support and resources to those in our churches affected by domestic abuse. However the Task Force affirms to the Synod that a clear and effective pathway for the reporting of domestic abuse within ministry households would be to use the PSU's existing abuse reporting process, which includes the abuse report line and the contact person system.

38. Standing Committee requested the Episcopal Team, in liaison with relevant stakeholders including the PSU, the ACPT, the Diocesan Resources Committee to prepare a report advising its response to paragraph 64 of the Report – regarding development of a protocol for providing pastoral support to clergy, lay ministers, and/or their spouses, who have experienced domestic abuse – and to Synod resolution 32/17, including any recommendations for funding and other actions.

39. The Task Force liaised with the Archdeacon for Women's Ministry, as she reported to us the Episcopal Team's initial draft response. The Task Force was pleased at the Episcopal Team's response and was glad to see the adoption of several suggestions made by the Task Force.

40. In response to the Episcopal Team's report to Standing Committee, funding was allocated from the Synod Fund Contingencies for 2018 as an interim financial support for spouses of clergy and lay ministers who have been, or will be, left in financial hardship as a result of their need to separate from their spouse due to domestic abuse. We understand that these funds will be distributed by the Archbishop in consultation with the Director of the PSU and the relevant regional bishop or the Archdeacon for Women's Ministry.

41. The Task Force is also pleased that the Standing Committee and Diocesan Resources Committee has endorsed and budgeted for the establishment of a Ministry Spouse Support Fund, via the Parish Cost Recoveries system. The Fund is to be used to provide assistance for spouse and families of clergy and lay ministers where separation has occurred due to the misconduct (such as domestic abuse) by the clergy person or lay minister. Additional information may be found in the Report accompanying the ordinance covering Parish Cost Recoveries for the next triennium to be considered at this session of Synod.

42. Standing Committee also endorsed Anglicare's proposal to develop a model of a support group for ministry spouses affected by domestic abuse and requested Anglicare provide more information around funding, and encouraged the PSU to work with Anglicare in exploring the viability and need for such a support group. The Task Force understands that this work is ongoing.

43. Standing Committee also requested that Anglicare and the Anglican Schools Corporation, along with other Anglican schools within the Diocese be asked to respond to relevant recommendations made to them in resolution 32/17 passed at the last session of Synod, namely

- (a) that Anglican Schools Corporation schools have short to medium term bursaries available to assist the families of clergy and lay stipendiary workers where separation has occurred due to domestic abuse, and
- (b) that Anglicare give priority for emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay stipendiary workers where separation has occurred due to domestic abuse.

44. The Task Force is unaware of the nature of the response of Anglicare and Anglicans Schools to these recommendations from the Synod. The Task Force recommends that the Standing Committee should monitor progress in this areas.

### **Screening of Ministry Candidates**

45. Standing Committee requested the Archbishop, in liaison with the Director of Ministry Training and Development (MT&D), to respond to our recommendation in paragraph 65 of the 2017 Report to investigate possible improvements to screening of ordination and other ministry candidates in regards to reducing the risk of domestic abuse among ministers in our diocese.

46. In response the Director of MT&D has reported that the current selection process for candidacy as a deacon includes:

- (a) Completing the Confidential Lifestyle Questionnaire (which includes the question "Have you ever engaged in bullying, verbal abuse or violence within your family or with others?") and discussing this with the Director of MT&D or Archdeacon of Women's Ministry;
- (b) Completing two online psychometric tests, which include potential risk factors associated with domestic violence, such as borderline personality features, antisocial personality features, alcohol problems, drug problems, aggression, and dominance;
- (c) A detailed interview with a clinical psychologist based on the above test results, who writes a detailed report for MT&D;
- (d) An interview of the candidate and spouse where they read the psychologist's report and discuss it with the Assistant Director or Archdeacon of Women's Ministry;
- (e) A series of references and reports from the candidate's minister and key lay-leaders through the candidacy period (usually two years);
- (f) Reports from the staff at Moore College (or other relevant education and training institution) during their candidacy;
- (g) Panel interviews where the spouse is required to be present (the spouse is required at both the initial and final panel interview);
- (h) Once accepted, a candidate meets with an ordination chaplain three or four times a year and part of the chaplain's role is to monitor the health of the candidate's marriage.

47. The Director of MT&D reports that despite best endeavours, secrecy over domestic abuse might be maintained, and that it is difficult to predict a person's likelihood of being a future perpetrator of domestic abuse. However, the existing process provides a range of opportunities to become aware of any narcissistic tendencies in a candidate or any other major personality disorders that might contribute to domestic abuse. However MT&D remains open to improving its processes.

48. The Director also reports that MT&D is having an ongoing conversation about the relative merits and logistics of whether or not to have a separate interview with the spouse of an applicant for candidacy.

49. In response the Task Force resolved to recommend that the Archbishop and the Director consider:

- (a) Ensuring any spouse of an applicant for candidacy for ordination be interviewed separately, with the interview to include some screening for domestic abuse;
- (b) Extending the screening process described by the Director to apply to all applicants for stipendiary lay ministry positions in the diocese, including, where relevant, a separate interview of a candidate's spouse).

50. The Task Force also recommends that Standing Committee invite Moore College and other diocesan education and training institutions to consider the merits of applying similar screening processes to applicants for study at their institutions.

### **Revision of the Provisional Policy, Guidelines and Resources**

51. Following the time allowed by Synod for feedback, which was extended by one additional month, the Task Force received a number of submissions from members of Synod and other interested persons, regarding the content of the Synod's Policy, Guidelines and Resources document (the "PG&R").

52. Importantly, two members of the Task Force met with a group of former spouses of clergy and ministry workers, who were victims and survivors of domestic abuse, who made many suggestions regarding the PG&R. The Task Force is grateful for all who took the time to respond, and especially for the courage of those who were victims and survivors, in offering their valuable perspectives. Many of their suggestions related to improving how the PG&R might be heard more helpfully by victims, as well as avoiding the likelihood of a shallow view of repentance.

53. The approach taken to evaluating feedback was to accept suggestions wherever possible. Where direct acceptance was not appropriate for some reason, efforts were made to adapt such suggestions into more suitable forms. Of course, some suggestions were still judged not appropriate or applicable to our PG&R.

54. Changes to SDS staffing have meant several changes to secretarial support available to the Task Force. So it has not been possible to provide a form of the revised PG&R being brought to Synod for consideration for adoption in 2018 marked up to show changes from the 2017 version. Instead this report will highlight the main changes in the PG&R, beyond such things as improvements to grammar and expression, updated statistics and other information, and correction of typographical errors etc.

55. The Policy section had items added, expanded or clarified, particularly –

- (a) 1.1.4, a new point, which states, "Sometimes both spouses can be simultaneously perpetrators and victims of abuse, although neither is the pattern of abuse nor the impact generally symmetrical."
- (b) 1.2.1, which now makes explicit that the equality recognised between all people includes husbands and wives.
- (c) 1.4.5, which now includes the additional comment that, "Clergy and lay ministers do not typically have professional expertise in the area of domestic abuse", along with a reminder that Faithfulness in Service (4.12) explicitly advises them to obtain advice from those with professional expertise.
- (d) 1.4.6, which now adds that "advice [should be] sought on how to address any harm caused" alongside an apology, where mistakes in caring for people in difficult situations are made.
- (e) 1.5, which has been broken into separate sub-points to more obviously respect the need to ensure a distance is kept between victims of domestic abuse and alleged or known perpetrators.
- (f) 1.6.1, which now has the positive statement added that, "Rather a relationship between a husband and wife is to be characterised by love, care and kindness".
- (g) 1.7.1, which now notes our first priority is that victims not only find safety but continue to stay safe.
- (h) 1.7.4, which now makes explicit the limits of confidentiality, "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".
- (i) 1.8.3, which removes a perceived pressure on victims and makes clear that any possibility of reconciliation between victim and offender is dependent principally upon the genuine repentance and reformation of the offender.
- (j) 1.9.2, which in the "Thinking Theologically" section has had its last sentence re-worded to read, "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)."
- (k) 1.9.4, which has been re-worded to remove an adverb "always" and to remove the reference to the 1984 Doctrine Commission Report.
- (l) 1.9.6, which has strengthened the obligation on church leaders to "welcome and offer ongoing support" to those who have separated for the sake of safety because of domestic abuse.
- (m) 1.9.7, where the call for repentance – with evidence – has been strengthened, so that it now reads, "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.”

- (n) 1.10, which now includes reference to the possibility of healing, as well as repentance and reformation, for an abuser,
  - (o) 1.10.1, which now notes the importance of a victim’s spiritual safety alongside physical and emotional safety.
  - (p) 1.11.7, which is an additional new point in the section of prevention and care, stating that in their teaching regarding marriage, “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.”
56. The Guidelines section had items added, expanded or clarified, particularly –
- (a) 2.3.2, which as well as referring to the Police if a victim is in immediate danger, adds “Also seek advice from the NSW Domestic Violence Line 1800 656 463.”
  - (b) 2.6.10, which comprises a new point stating, “Be alert – Understand the possibility that you are being or may have been groomed by a perpetrator.”
  - (c) 2.9, whose heading has been clarified to indicate it is about responding *spiritually* to perpetrators.
  - (d) 2.9.4, which adds a reference to a perpetrator’s possible “remorse”, and notes the possibility of grooming.
  - (e) 2.9.6, which is re-worded to focus on remorse in a clearer way, so that it reads “Be aware that remorse expressed may or may not be genuine. Be particularly careful of an alleged perpetrator expressing remorse without any accompanying signs of real and visible repentance.”
  - (f) 2.9.7, which likewise has been re-worded to strengthen the need for repentance to be enduring and evidenced, for example, by engaging in a long term behaviour change program; this point, of repentance, rather than remorse, is where reference to seeking forgiveness is now placed.
  - (g) 2.9.8, where (alongside several other places, references to “support” for perpetrators has been replaced by reference to “care” or “pastoral care” for them.
  - (h) 2.10, regarding perpetrator programs, which now notes that “Participation in such programs should not be linked to suggestions of reconciliation or discussions of postponing separation or divorce.” It also notes the caution that “female perpetration often occurs in the context of self-protection, and needs to be thoroughly assessed”.
  - (i) 2.12.4, 5 & 6, which now note the development of an episcopal protocol for supporting victims of abuse who are clergy or church workers or the spouses of clergy and church workers, along with interim financial support provisions and plans for a sustainable Ministry Spouse Support Fund.
  - (j) 2.13.4, where information has been clarified about when domestic abuse may result in proceedings under our ministry standards and disciplinary ordinances.
  - (k) 2.14.3, which now helpfully notes that Anglicare currently operates government-funded Family Relationship Centres at Nowra and Parramatta.
57. The Resources section had several Appendices expanded or clarified, particularly –
- (a) The statistics in Appendix 2 on Domestic Abuse Facts have been updated, especially with the ABS releasing a more recent “Personal Safety Survey” from 2016. In addition the following caution has been added in this section, “Note: Statistics do not tell the whole story, as they do not identify patterns of control and abuse in relationships, They do not capture level of fear, or the severity of injury or impact, for the victim.”
  - (b) The section on domestic abuse in children had a “survivor view” of a child removed as being potentially unhelpful to some.
  - (c) Appendix 4 summarising the relevant material from Faithfulness in Service has been updated to take into account changes approved at last Synod, notably the explicit definitional comment that “Abuse in a family or domestic context is commonly known as ‘family and domestic violence’.”
  - (d) Appendix 5 – the suggested parish policy on domestic abuse – has been amended to reflect changes suggested to the diocesan policy which are relevant at the parish level.
  - (e) Appendix 8 has been updated with the content of relevant resolutions on domestic abuse from the 2017 session of Synod.



58. The Resources section had two Appendices added, namely –
- (a) Inclusion of the Duluth Power and Control wheel, which meets the need identified as useful by many for a visual representation of types of domestic abuse.
  - (b) Inclusion of an article by Task Force member, chaplain Kate Bradford, entitled “A Letter Made Me Think” which reminds us how easy it is for ministers and others not to realise or see at first the presence of domestic abuse even among people we can know well.

59. The Task Force also received feedback to the effect that the PG&R should be amended to remove the language of submission and headship, given our current operating environment in the world around. Likewise feedback was given that the PG&R should indicate that divorce and remarriage after domestic abuse was always permissible for victims. On the other hand, feedback was also received indicating a perception that the PG&R had inadvertently gone too far in undermining the intended permanence of the marriage covenant.

60. The Task Force considers that it is not the appropriate body to suggest revision of doctrine and its application in this area. Further it considers that the current policy section of the PG&R, with the improvements recommended, are good attempts to address these issues pastorally, within the framework of the relevant biblical material.

61. However, the Task Force did recommend to Standing Committee that it ask the Archbishop's Doctrine Commission to further consider how the biblical material on two matters, namely (i) divorce and remarriage, and (ii) the nature of marriage, including the relevance of submission and headship, intersects with domestic abuse, its prevention, and the care of victims in our midst. Standing Committee has resolved to make this request of the Doctrine Commission and the Task Force looks forward to its report in due course.

### **Concluding Recommendations**

62. In addition to recommendations scattered throughout this report, the following recommendations particularly related to the revised “Responding to Domestic Abuse: Provisional Policy and Good Practice Guidelines” are offered with thanks to God for those who have contributed to their development.

63. The Task Force recommends that the revised version of the PG&R be adopted by Synod, effective immediately, and that the Policy section be no longer considered provisional.

64. The Task Force recommends that revised PG&R, “Responding to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Good Practice Guidelines” be professionally laid out and prepared for publication and distribution to all ministers and parish councils for their attention, along with assistant ministers and lay ministers, with a request that parishioners be made aware of the policy.

65. The Task Force recommends that all parishes be encouraged to consider adopting the policy statement as their own parish policy on domestic abuse, or to revise their existing policy in light of revisions to the Synod's PG&R.

66. The Task Force recommends that Standing Committee be authorised to amend the Domestic Abuse Guidelines and Resources (but not the Policy), as adopted at Synod in 2018, following consultation with the PSU and the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser.

67. In particular, the Task Force notes that Standing Committee will likely also authorise the inclusion among the Resources section of a short report from the Doctrine Commission, currently in production, entitled, “The Use and Misuse of Scripture with Regard to Domestic Abuse” as a further appendix. The Task Force has appreciated the Doctrine Commission's work in this area along with its invitation to offer feedback, and thoughtful responses to our suggestions.

68. The Task Force recommends that the revised PG&R, as adopted at Synod in 2018, be reviewed after two years' further operation.

69. The Task Force recommends that the Domestic Violence Response Task Force be disbanded at the end of December 2018 and that responsibility for monitoring of matters related to the PG&R and domestic abuse in our churches and organisations be given to the Safe Ministry Board in liaison with the PSU and the Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser.

For and on behalf of the Domestic Violence Response Task Force.

CANON A. R (SANDY) GRANT  
*Chairman*

3 September 2018