



**Anglican Church of Australia**

**General Synod Family Violence Working Group**

**Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response  
to Domestic and Family Violence in the  
Anglican Church of Australia**

This work was developed by the Family Violence Working Group established by the General Synod Standing Committee of the Anglican Church of Australia in response to a brief to develop a best practice model framework for responding well to situations involving family violence within our parishes and organisations.

The project was led by the Reverend Tracy Lauersen, with contributions from the Right Reverend Genieve Blackwell, Dr Karin Sowada, the Reverend Scott Holmes, the Reverend Canon Sandy Grant and Ms Ruth Holt.

**Acknowledgement of Country:**

The Anglican Church of Australia (ACA) acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our churches are located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. ACA is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

**Warning:** This document references intimate partner violence (domestic abuse).

# Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church of Australia.

Violence in our communities is unacceptable, whether that violence occurs in the street, in our home, in our workplaces or in our churches, and whether it is perpetrated by men or women. Our Christian scriptures proclaim the equality of every human being and demand that our behaviour towards others is characterised by the behaviour of God towards us – of justice, love and mercy, compassion, patience and a mission to heal the sick and mend the broken hearted. The Anglican Church of Australia (ACA) wants to prevent and to help address the terrible injustice of domestic and family violence, responding with care and compassion towards those affected. These Commitments for the prevention of and response to domestic and family violence in the ACA are a tool to help resource and empower our Anglican provinces, dioceses and parish churches to bring about change and to continuously improve our preventative work.

These Ten Commitments for Australian Anglicans recognise the policy context of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (Canberra, Australian Government, 2010) which is being implemented in four stages through the development of rolling three-year action plans. A key outcome has been the national Primary Prevention framework – Change the story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia (Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia, 2015). It identifies faith-based contexts as one of eleven priority settings where social norms, attitudes and practices are formed and reinforced and so is a key context for primary prevention work.

Abuse of power is at the heart of many relationship problems in the community and the church. In essence, abuse is one person's misuse of power over another. This can occur as a one-off event or be a chronic pattern of behaviour. Research has found that women are far more often the victims of abuse than men. Abuse is not just about being physically violent. Abuse can include emotional abuse, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour, physical or sexual abuse, and also spiritual abuse. Research by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Personal Safety Survey, 2016) found

1 in 2 women (53% or 5 million) and 1 in 4 men (25% or 2.2 million) had experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime.

1 in 4 women (23% or 2.2 million) and 1 in 6 men (16% or 1.4 million) experienced emotional abuse by a partner since the age of 15.

17% of women (1.6 million) and 6% of men (547,000) had experienced violence including physical and/or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15

2 in 5 people (39% or 7.2 million) aged 18 years and over had experienced violence, including physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15.

Domestic and Family Violence doesn't just happen in other communities – it happens within the families and relationships of people of our churches. In the 2019 National Anglican Family Violence Research Project conducted by NCLS Research, when asked the direct question “Have you ever been in a violent relationship with any partner?” approximately 23% of Anglicans who had ever been in an adult intimate relationship said “yes”. (This compared to 15% for the equivalent group of the general Australian public in the same study.)

The Ten Commitments outlined in this document provide us with a foundation to guide our work in making the church a place where women, men and children are safe; where violence is prevented, where the wounded are healed and justice prevails, so that God's grace can flow into the lives of all, insofar as we can achieve such outcomes.

The commitments focus on preventative actions in addition to training our ministers and improving care for those who have experienced abuse. In the long term, preventing abuse is better than only reacting once abuse has happened and people are suffering.

The commitments are drawn from research into best -practice models and discussion, having had input from our Dioceses, clergy, lay people and victim/survivors. They also draw on the findings of the National Anglican Family Violence Research Project conducted by NCLS Research.

The Commitments outline our approach at a national, diocesan and local level.

This document provides:

- Statements and explanations of each commitment.
- Strategies to enable each commitment.
- Ideas and ways in which we can build on our strengths as a church and work together to achieve positive outcomes.

Note: A number of different terms are used to describe domestic and family violence. By domestic and family violence we mean any violent, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour that occurs in current or past family, domestic or intimate relationships. This includes not only physical injury, but direct or indirect threats, sexual assault, emotional and psychological torment, spiritual abuse, economic control, damage to property, social isolation, and any behaviour which causes a person to live in fear. Some practitioners prefer the word 'abuse', however we have chosen to use the term 'violence' to highlight the harm associated with each of these behaviours.

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# 10 COMMITMENTS FOR PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

1

Our Church acknowledges and laments the violence which has been suffered by some of our members and repents of the part we have played in allowing an environment where violence went unaddressed.

2

Our Church leaders commit to ensure conditions that support the prevention of violence, a church culture that promotes equality, and support for those who experience violence.

3

Our Church consistently teaches about equality, freedom from violence, respectful relationships and the honour/value of every person.

4

Our Church affirms that human relationships are to be based on respect and mutuality.

5

Our Church acknowledges the different experiences of all people and that these have played a part in whether they have been treated with respect and equality.

6

Our Church actions are directed by the gospel of love, peace and justice, and are informed and engaged with local, state and national government initiatives as appropriate.

7

Our church supports cultural change in our communities by communicating effectively to our members.

8

Our Church trains our leaders, pastoral staff and parish councils to understand and be equipped to respond in ways that prevent and address domestic and family violence.

9

Our leaders and pastoral staff hold themselves to account and are guided by the Anglican Church's Code of Conduct: *Faithfulness in Service*.

10

These commitments are regularly reviewed and improved.

# **1 Our Church acknowledges and laments the violence which has been suffered by some of our members and repents of the part we have played in allowing an environment where violence went unaddressed.**

*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.  
(1 John 1:9)<sup>1</sup>*

The Anglican Church of Australia grieves with victims and survivors of domestic and family violence, and prays for their healing and recovery.

We confess with deep shame that domestic and family violence has occurred among those who attend our churches, and even among some in leadership.

We give thanks for those women and men, clergy and lay people, who have faithfully supported, cared for and protected people affected by domestic and family violence in our churches and communities. However, we apologise for those times our teaching and pastoral care has failed adequately to support such people or to call perpetrators to account.<sup>2</sup>

Domestic and Family Violence can affect both men and women, but we know that women are far more likely to experience violence and also to suffer more consequences from that violence and our research bears this out. Many times as a church we have let people down, especially women and children.

We recognise that sin and gender inequality lie at the heart of domestic & family violence. Violent behaviour grows from attitudes and other behaviours which abuse a person's power and exercise control over another. We affirm the life-giving words of Holy Scripture, but we also recognise that some Scripture has been used to justify unacceptable behaviours and to disempower victims from escaping violent relationships. We lament this.

## **Strategies that will enable this commitment:**

- 1.1 We start with lament so that we face honestly the problem of violence in our church. As our whole church responds, with members and leaders working together, we start the long work of change.
- 1.2 Our church develops a long-term strategy with action-plans to address domestic and family violence in the Anglican Church of Australia.
- 1.3 Our church commits to work at a number of levels to prevent and address violence:
  - 1.3.1 Primary prevention – addressing underlying causes in our whole church and seeking to prevent violence before it occurs by changing attitudes, behaviours and culture and building knowledge and skills (see Commitment 2).

- 1.3.2 Early intervention – seeking to support the victims of violence within our church as early as possible with pastoral care and referral to professional agencies such as domestic and family violence services.
- 1.3.3 Responding to those experiencing violence with care and respect, aiding them to safety.

## **2 Our Church leaders commit to ensure conditions that support the prevention of violence, a church culture that promotes equality, and support for those who experience violence.**

*Let your kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth  
as it is done in heaven.  
(Matthew 6:10)<sup>3</sup>*

Rates of violence are higher when institutions promote, condone or remain silent in the face of violence, and the misuse of power and authority.<sup>4</sup> Our national, provincial, diocesan and parish leaders have a key role in setting up the conditions that will support the prevention of violence, a church culture that promotes equality, and support for those who experience violence. By working on our parish and diocesan conditions and structures and by working to change our culture and provide the right support, our church communities can flourish as God intended with respect to gender and family relationships. Our leaders must promote the equality of women and men, and respect and safety for all in the church. In order for this commitment to be true of our church, we need strategies that stop violence before it occurs, through initiatives that challenge the root causes of violence. This includes our attitudes and behaviours as women and men in the church. These strategies will involve working with everyone in our church, rather than just those at risk of being violent or experiencing violence. We will also need initiatives that can identify and engage with people at risk, support victims and work in ways to ensure that perpetrators are held to account.

### **Strategies that will enable this commitment:**

- 2.1 Long-term strategies and ongoing action plans are developed to progress this work, to seek external funding, to work with external peak bodies, engage key stakeholders, to enable collaboration and produce resources such as training, guidelines, policy templates and tools for provinces, dioceses, parishes and church agencies.
- 2.2 Parishes and other church agencies utilise the appropriate resources to guide their response to family and domestic violence.
- 2.3 As a primary prevention strategy, General Synod, our provinces, dioceses, agencies and parishes make commitments and implement priority actions to work towards the equality of women, men, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters and those who are culturally and linguistically diverse in our church.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.4 Our leaders consistently promote the rejection of any form of violence or harassment, whether that takes place in our churches or the lives of our members.
- 2.5 The public statements of our church and external communications reflect our commitment to equality, to prevention and to justice and support for victims/survivors of domestic and family violence.



- 2.6 Dioceses, parishes and agencies give consideration to practical ways that victims/survivors can be supported.
- 2.7 The General Synod and its Dioceses regularly review, evaluate and improve policies and procedures for preventing and responding to domestic and family violence.

**Ideas for how we can work together to achieve this:**

- Provinces and dioceses can establish working groups to drive change.
- 3.1 million Australians identify as Anglicans. What a force for good we can be, bringing about a better world for all as we meet to study, fellowship, worship, pray and bring up our families together.
- Dioceses with more resources can share with others that have less.
- Our existing synods, Bishops conferences and local parish gatherings can be a vehicle to promote change.

# 3 Our Church consistently teaches about equality, freedom from violence, respectful relationships and the value of every person.

*You are all God's children through faith in Christ Jesus. All of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.  
(Galatians 3:26-28) <sup>6</sup>*

As Christians, we believe all people are created in the image of God. All are precious, all are equally loved, and all should have the opportunity to thrive according to their God-given potential. We communicate what we believe in words and actions. This commitment addresses primarily the former: how we teach the Bible and worship together. The Bible is the foundation of our Christian teaching to all ages and stages, and our Prayer Book, hymns and songs are the foundation of our liturgical life. Each provide good resources for preventing and responding to domestic and family violence. Care is needed in the use of the Bible, in order to prevent its misuse and distortion.

## **Strategies that will enable this commitment:**

- 3.1 We (all those who teach all ages and stages in our churches) clearly teach and model:
  - that all human beings, both female and male are created equal in the image of God and are precious to God. Therefore the value and dignity of every individual should be upheld by all.
  - that domestic and family violence is wrong and that the Bible should never be interpreted to justify or excuse any form of abuse.
  - healthy relationships between all people, as exemplified by Jesus Christ.
- 3.2 We acknowledge that the words of Holy Scripture can be misunderstood and has been distorted to justify domestic and family violence. We work actively to guard against and prevent such distortions.
- 3.3 When we address matters such as marriage and family life, we consider how to care for any victims or survivors of domestic and family violence who may be present.
- 3.4 We encourage all people equally in the church and support them to exercise the gifts God has given them.
- 3.5 Youth and children's ministries address the issue of respectful relationships between the genders in regard to romantic, marital, friendship, collegiate and other relationships.
- 3.6 We discourage gender stereotypes, and the use of aggression or other forms of coercion to solve problems.

- 3.7 Youth and children's ministries address the difficulties raised by the widespread and early use of pornography.
- 3.8 Churches address and teach on the effects and impact of adult use pornography, and the negative attitudes towards women that this habituates.

### **Ideas for how we can work together to achieve this:**

- Sermons, Bible studies, Sunday School curriculum, prayers, church publications and ministry training activities can all affirm human dignity and equality, address abuse, and validate the trauma of domestic and family violence.
- It's not just the content of what we teach, but gender inclusive language, illustrations and examples about women as well as men, and scholarly and other quotes from both women and men are powerful too.
- Women and men being equally visible in the worship, ministry and mission of the church.
- Lent, victim/survivor themed services, white ribbon days or 16 days of action against domestic violence can be utilised by all in our church.

# 4 Our Church affirms that human relationships are to be based on respect and mutuality.

*The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:31) <sup>7</sup>*

As Christians, we believe that human relationships and especially marriage, are modelled on God's commitment to us - a commitment which is characterised by respect, mutuality and grace. Marriage is a precious gift from God: a covenant partnership in which women and men can experience loving intimacy in the safety of a faithful, committed relationship. It is God's gift for their mutual benefit and the outworking together of God's purposes. In everything we do and teach, we uphold and support relationships of respect and mutuality in our teaching of Holy Scripture, liturgies, marriage preparation and education, and pastoral care.

## **Strategies that will enable this commitment:**

- 4.1 Clergy and other pastoral staff clearly teach and that loving and healthy relationships that reflect God's intentions are characterised by mutual service of the other, mutual respect and affirmation, partnership, honesty and accountability, trust and fairness. They also clearly teach that violence, abuse and any coercive or threatening behaviour, is contrary to God's will and that it is not a sin to leave a violent or otherwise abusive partner.
- 4.2 Clergy and other pastoral staff ensure that marriage preparation, enrichment and educational material about relationships display awareness of power and control issues.
- 4.3 Clergy and other pastoral staff provide appropriate support and information to those in relationships characterised by unhealthy power and control issues, acknowledging that abuse can and does occur in Christian marriages. They appropriately refer those they are supporting to professional counselling and other services.

## **Ideas for how we can work together to achieve this:**

- Parish Councils can make statements that affirm these godly relational commitments in their mission action plans, parish profile or on their church's website.
- A lot more of how we think and behave is caught rather than taught, so every time married clergy live out these life-giving relational principles, others benefit.
- Marriage education material and pastoral care practices, wedding sermons, Sunday sermons and prayers can guard against biblical texts or theological teaching being used to promote, excuse or justify attitudes or behaviours in marriage that are physically, emotionally, spiritually or otherwise harmful towards one partner or require a person to accept or remain in a relationship with a violent or abusive partner.

- Clergy and other pastoral care staff can demonstrate an understanding of power and control dynamics; e.g. by attending to “Prepare-Enrich” questionnaire responses that indicate issues related to “partner dominance” or anger.
- Clergy and other pastoral staff can support people who are experiencing domestic and family violence in their decision-making to stay or leave, and refer to appropriate professional services for specialist support.

# **5 Our Church acknowledges the different experiences of all people and that these have played a part in whether they have been treated with respect and equality.**

*Gender, race, class, age, colour, ability- all can be categories of discrimination.*

The world is not a level playing field and a host of factors can combine to influence whether a person does or doesn't experience respect and equality. Gender, race, age, class, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, gender or sexual identity, religion, or ethnicity all play a role in how we are treated. This concept is called intersectionality and is defined as "the complex, cumulative manner in which the effects of different forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect" <sup>8</sup>. Not all people experience family and domestic violence, either as victims or as perpetrators, in the same ways or to the same extent. People who experience other forms of discrimination – such as racism, ableism, homophobia – are likely to have more complex experiences of domestic and family violence and to be targeted more frequently. Our church acknowledges the complex landscape in which we will work together to overcome victimisation.

## **Strategies that will enable this commitment:**

- 5.1 The church familiarises itself with evidence on the differing ways that domestic and family violence impacts different people, and ensures that its policies do not take a 'one size fits all' approach.
- 5.2 Parish councils and other church agencies identify and develop relationships with local service providers working with particular groups of people, such as disability services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, and migrant and refugee services.

## **Ideas for how we can work together to achieve this:**

- The Anglican Church of Australia is a diverse and multi-cultural church, so as we celebrate our diversity and overcome discrimination we can advocate for change and influence our broader communities too. As we heal, our communities also heal.
- Areas of our national church can tailor actions undertaken to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence to work well with different people.
- We can listen and work with our diverse sisters and brothers, for example our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, migrant and disabled members.
- Parish councils and other church agencies can invite representatives of diverse communities to help them to understand their experiences of inequality and/or violence.

# **6 Our Church actions are directed by the gospel of love, peace and justice, and are informed and engaged with local, state and national government initiatives as appropriate.**

*All truth is God's truth.* <sup>9</sup>

The gospel directs us to love people and to love justice as God does and to show mercy as God does. Jesus modelled a sacrificial love for others. All of these direct our efforts to prevent and address domestic and family violence. The church also understands that its commitments to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence will work best when they are informed by and engage with actions undertaken by other community organisations as appropriate. Australia has a domestic and family violence prevention sector and our federal government has invested many resources in prevention and support for victims/survivors of violence. Church partnership with these is vital to national efforts to end domestic and family violence.

## **Strategies that will enable this commitment:**

- 6.1 Diocesan policies for domestic and family violence prevention and response are informed by national frameworks and other tools as appropriate.
- 6.2 Parishes and other church agencies form active partnerships (including referral relationships) with local domestic and family violence services.
- 6.3 Parish councils and other church agencies are aware of local actions to prevent domestic and family violence and are involved with these actions where appropriate.
- 6.4 Relevant diocesan and national church officers are engaged with state and national processes to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence, e.g. through representation on relevant committees or by attendance at conferences.

## **Ideas for how we can work together to achieve this:**

- Church policies and procedures can reference National, state or local agencies, tools and resources.
- Church representatives can work alongside government agencies, attending relevant meetings, and/or delivering programs funded by government.
- Church representatives and agencies such as Anglicare, can attend forums and conferences on domestic and family violence, including the presentation of papers about domestic and family violence in faith communities.
- We can assist government and other agencies to understand how to work with people of faith who access their services.

## **7 Our church supports cultural change in our communities by communicating effectively to our members.**

*"My church had great documents but they didn't follow them".  
(a survivor of a violent relationship)*

Our church uses communication resources effectively and in an ongoing way, to support cultural change and to inform our members that domestic and family violence is honestly faced in the church. We also strengthen the churches ability to support victims/survivors and ensure that every church member knows where and how they can seek pastoral care and professional help.

### **Strategies that will enable this commitment:**

- 7.1 Each diocese communicates biblical teaching and local policies on domestic and family violence to members of the church through accessible channels, in culturally relevant ways.
- 7.2 Dioceses and parishes make the prevention of violence an ongoing goal for the church.
- 7.3 Resources such as videos, posters, case studies are made available to parishes for distribution to church members.
- 7.4 Parishes are encouraged to use their websites and other tools of communication to inform members and help victims/survivors to know how to seek pastoral care within the church and also how to contact external professional services.

### **Ideas for how we can work together to achieve this:**

- We can:
  - list external providers available to assist parishes;
  - develop video and other communication resources.
- Churches can help members to know what it means to be a friend to someone who may be experiencing violence, rather than a silent bystander to violence.
- An annual survey of church members could help us to evaluate progress.



# 8

**Our Church trains our leaders, pastoral staff and parish councils to understand and be equipped to respond in ways that prevent and address domestic and family violence.**

*No training seems pleasant at the time. In fact, it seems painful.  
But later on it produces a harvest of godliness and peace.  
It does this for those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:11) <sup>10</sup>*

Parish clergy and pastoral staff, along with chaplains, are at the front line of identifying and responding to domestic and family violence in their ministry context. Their training on these issues should start in theological college and learning should continue throughout their ministries. Church members are often 'first responders' in parishes and thus will also benefit from basic training to recognise the signs of domestic and family violence and to respond in love with supportive approaches.

## **Strategies that will enable this commitment:**

- 8.1 Theological colleges include ongoing teaching on the Bible's message regarding prevention and response to domestic and family violence, in addition to training on pastoral responses and care of victims and survivors.
- 8.2 Church pastoral staff undertake regular post-college training modules to refresh understanding and skills in the area of preventing and responding to domestic and family violence.
- 8.3 Partnerships between Dioceses and agencies can help the church to access and develop suitable training resources for parishes to use.
- 8.4 Church members are encouraged to be trained in identifying domestic and family violence in their midst and know how to make referrals for support.
- 8.5 Churches are encouraged to appoint women on staff in paid or volunteer roles.

## **Ideas for how we can work together to achieve this:**

- Theological colleges can implement training modules for students, especially ordination and chaplaincy candidates.
- Training modules for church members have been developed or are being developed by some Dioceses and these can be shared.
- Domestic and family violence training can be offered as part of church leadership in-service training, covering both prevention and response issues.
- Parishes can provide evidence that training is assisting their capacity to respond to and prevent domestic and family violence.
- Training of our clergy and other pastoral staff takes account of best practice in the way we create safe spaces in ministering, and provide agency for victims/survivors of family violence.

# 9 Our leaders and pastoral staff hold themselves to account and are guided by the Anglican Church's Code of Conduct: *Faithfulness in Service*.

*He has told you, human one, what is good and what the Lord requires from you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God.* <sup>11</sup>

Faithfulness in Service plays an important role in our national church by identifying the personal behaviour and practices of pastoral ministry that will enable clergy and church workers to serve faithfully those among whom they minister. Adherence to the national code and local variants will help enable our communities to be safer and prevent misconduct being concealed. Although domestic and family violence is only briefly named in Faithfulness in Service, other standards and guidelines are relevant to preventing and responding to it.

By resolution, the General Synod has already noted as specifically relevant the affirmations of Faithfulness in Service that:

- Abuse of power is at the heart of many relationship problems in the Church and 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)
- It is important for clergy and church workers to be good citizens and obey the laws of the community, except where those laws conflict with Christian convictions. (§6.4)
- You are not to abuse your spouse, children or other members of your family. (§6.6)

## **Strategies and standards of *Faithfulness in Service*:**

- The personal behaviour and relationships of clergy and church workers have a significant impact on the Church and the community because they are a model to others. In a context where their responsibility is to care for others, people will especially observe the way in which clergy and church workers exercise power. (§6.1)
- Abuse such as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, sexual abuse or spiritual abuse in a family or domestic context is commonly known as "family and domestic violence". (§6.3)
- A person who requires specialised help should be referred to an appropriately qualified person or agency. (§4.12) Clergy and pastoral staff are to recognise the limits of their skills and experience. They are not to undertake any ministry (such as relationship counselling, counselling for abuse) that is beyond their competence... If in doubt, they are to seek advice.

- Where ministry responsibility to one person may conflict with responsibility to another person, Clergy and other pastoral staff should seek advice from a colleague or supervisor. Consider the possibility of transferring ministry responsibility for one or both of these to another minister. (§4.14)
- Ministers and other pastoral staff engaged in individual pastoral ministry should consider keeping a factual record of their activity. Record details such as the date, time, place, participants, subject, and any proposed action arising from each activity. Record personal remarks accurately. (§4.36)
- Ministers and other pastoral staff need to know the relevant principles of the applicable privacy legislation in relation to the collection, use, disclosure and management of personal information. (§6.37)

# 10 **These commitments are regularly reviewed and improved.**

*"What gets measured, gets managed".<sup>12</sup>*

Continuous improvement is needed in our response to domestic and family violence through reviewing these commitments. We will measure and review our implementation of these commitments, at each level of our church. These reviews will strengthen our churches' capacity to respond effectively in this area. Regular reviews will help us address new challenges that arise and to modify these commitments in the light of growing knowledge and improved practices in preventing and responding to violence.

## **Strategies that will enable this commitment:**

- 10.1 The General Synod and our Dioceses review, evaluate and improve policies and procedures for preventing and responding to domestic and family violence.
- 10.2 Complaints and concerns are analysed to identify causes and any systemic failures so as to inform continuous improvement.
- 10.3 The church reports on the findings of relevant reviews to its members.

## **Ideas for how we can work together to achieve this:**

- The General Synod (or its delegated standing committee, working groups, sub committee's or commissions) reviews the implementation of these commitments in every second general session of General Synod, reports review results to the Synod members and makes recommendations.
- Dioceses and their churches can consider how to implement recommendations to improve our approach to preventing and responding to domestic and family violence.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 John 1:9. Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

<sup>2</sup> Resolution of Anglican Church of Australia General Synod 17 (adapted)

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 6:10 GOD’S WORD Translation (GW)

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<sup>4</sup> <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/workplace-equality-and-respect-standards/>

<sup>5</sup> In our society, women, men and culturally and linguistically diverse people don’t have the same opportunities and access to resources and power. Nor do all experience the same disadvantage.

Some people experience additional discrimination and disadvantage due to racism, ableism, homophobia, ageism and more.

Gender equality is the achievement of equal outcomes for women and men. This includes the achievement of equal representation, status, rights and opportunities for everyone. Research consistently argues that achieving gender equality is the key to ending violence against women.

This means we can’t treat everyone the same, because we aren’t all starting from the same place. Treating everyone the same will likely see inequalities continue or even get worse. To be fair, we need to offer different strategies, resources and opportunities to achieve the same positive outcomes for all. Put simply, gender equality is what we are working to achieve, and gender equity is the action we take to get there! In the Anglican Church, not all Dioceses ordain women to be Bishops or Priests, but every Diocese can work towards a more equal church.

This explanation of gender equality and equity is adapted from [https://whwest.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/1860\\_CommunityChampions\\_finalWEB.pdf](https://whwest.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/1860_CommunityChampions_finalWEB.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Common English Bible (CEB). Copyright © 2011 by Common English Bible

<sup>7</sup> Mark 12:31 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

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<sup>8</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

<sup>9</sup> Calvin, Commentary on Titus

<sup>10</sup> Hebrews 12:11 New International Reader’s Version (NIRV)

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<sup>11</sup> Micah 6:8 Common English Bible (CEB). Copyright © 2011 by Common English Bible

<sup>12</sup> “What gets measured, gets managed” attributed to Peter Drucker.





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