



## Attorney-General

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Ms Anne Hywood  
General Secretary  
Anglican Church of Australia  
General Synod  
Suite 4, Level 5  
189 Kent Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Hywood

I refer to your letter of 21 September 2017 to the Premier, the Hon Daniel Andrews MP, regarding the resolution of the Seventeenth Session of the General Synod - Safer Ministry. Your letter to the Premier was referred to me as the issues raised fall within my portfolio responsibilities.

In relation to the screening of individuals to work with children I can advise that in Victoria, people who work with children in either a paid or voluntary capacity, are already screened under the Working with Children Check (WWC Check) scheme. This scheme has been in place since 2006.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) has also made recommendations in relation to WWC Check schemes across Australia. In response to these recommendations, the Commonwealth Government has commenced working with state and territory WWC Check screening agencies to progress these recommendations.

Victoria also has a mandatory reporting scheme that requires certain professionals and community members to report any incidence of child abuse to child protection services. In addition, the Victorian Government recently introduced minimum child safe standards which ensure that protecting children from abuse is embedded in an organisational culture.

The Victorian Government has also introduced a reportable conduct scheme which requires some organisations to report child abuse allegations to the Commission for Children and Young People. This scheme ensures that all allegations of abuse are appropriately investigated and that individuals who pose a risk to children can be excluded from working with children, even if they don't have a criminal record.

I note that the resolution passed by the Synod on 4 September 2017 recommended that Australian Governments promote and enact legislation for a national system for child protection. Whilst a national system does not currently exist, the Royal Commission will hand down its final report on 15 December 2017, and it will make a number of recommendations to improve the protection of children throughout Australia.

The Victorian Government is continually improving its child protection system and the findings of the Royal Commission will be instrumental as the government strengthens its laws to better protect children from abuse.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Martin Pakula', with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

**THE HON MARTIN PAKULA MP**  
**Attorney-General**