

**Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017:
Report of the diocesan audit of the
Diocese of Adelaide**

October 2021

Executive Summary

In late 2017, the Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide adopted the Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017 (the **Canon**).

The Canon contains national minimum standards for safe ministry to children in the Anglican Church of Australia, including:

- a national code of conduct that sets out behavioural expectations for ministry with children
- standards for the screening and training of clergy, and church workers engaged in ministry to children, and
- standards for safe ministry with persons of concern.

The Canon also provides for an audit of compliance by each diocese with the Canon to occur at least once every three years. This audit is referred to as the diocesan audit.

The purpose of this report is to set out the findings of the diocesan audit of the Diocese of Adelaide.

This report is the first of the second round of diocesan audits conducted pursuant to the Canon from May 2021 to late 2021. Over the coming years it is expected that every diocese that has adopted the Canon will be subject to a diocesan audit.

The audit team was able to attend to the Diocese of Adelaide in June 2021 to meet with representatives of the Diocese and to conduct the material compliance component of the diocesan audit.

We wish to extend thanks to the officers of the Diocese of Adelaide for their assistance over the course of the diocesan audit, in particular Joe Thorp, Registrar and Secretary of Synod, Raffaele Angelino, Synod Operations Manager and Tracey Jolly, Safe Ministry Administrator.

The format of this report follows the standards set out in the Canon. Under each part we set out our findings in respect of our policy assessment of the policies and procedures in place in the Diocese of Adelaide that give effect to the standards in the Canon.

We also set out the results of our material compliance assessment, which is an assessment of whether the Diocese of Adelaide has in practice complied with the standards in the Canon in the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020 (the **audit period**).

For more information about our approach to undertaking the diocesan audit see the document titled 'Diocesan audit framework' dated 27 February 2020 (the **Audit Framework**).

For a glossary of terms used throughout this report please see **Annexure A**.

Diocesan code of conduct

In Part 2 of this report, we have assessed whether any 'diocesan code of conduct' of the Diocese of Adelaide contains additional standards or guidelines that are inconsistent with the prescribed code of conduct or any equivalent code of conduct.

We reviewed the version of Faithfulness in Service in effect in the Diocese, which is identical to the prescribed code of conduct. We also identified that there was a document referred to as a 'code of conduct' as part of the online training material used by the Diocese.

The following finding was made:



The Diocese of Adelaide does not have any diocesan codes of conduct that contain additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the prescribed code of conduct.

Standards of screening

In Part 3 of this report, we have assessed the policy position of the Diocese of Adelaide against the standards of screening.

The Diocese of Adelaide screens a wider category of people than is required to be screened under the Canon. There are good reasons for having a more expansive screening regime, including that people in governance positions in the Diocese are screened for suitability for their roles where they have leadership responsibility.

In the case of the Diocese of Adelaide, members of certain governing bodies may be required to hold a working with children check pursuant to the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* (SA) (the **Child Safety Act**) even if they do not have direct contact with children. Screening for additional categories of people do not generate inconsistencies with the requirements in the Canon which are focused on child safety.

The Diocese of Adelaide permits volunteer church workers to commence ministry to children prior to undergoing all the screening steps set out in the Canon in limited circumstances. We conclude that there are cogent reasons for adopting this position considering the way in which the exemption from the requirement to hold a working with children check for a 7-day period is expressed in the Child Safety Act.

Accordingly, the Diocese has adopted the position that some volunteer church workers are required to undergo the screening steps in the Canon at the same time as they are required to obtain a working with children check.

During the course of our audit, we proposed some minor amendments to the policy documentation of the Diocese of Adelaide for consideration by the Diocese.

Notwithstanding this, we conclude that the policies and procedures in place in the Diocese of Adelaide:

- address all of the categories of worker covered by the standards of screening
- assign responsibility to identified persons to ensure that the standards of screening are complied with
- include a mechanism whereby information about the standards of screening is reported centrally
- include information about recordkeeping practices, and
- include a system of ongoing monitoring of the screening that has occurred.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Adelaide currently has in place policies and procedures that give effect to the standards of screening.



The policies and procedures of the Diocese of Adelaide do not contain any additional standards that are inconsistent with the standards of screening.



The Diocese of Adelaide has procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of screening.

Also in Part 3, we have assessed whether the Diocese of Adelaide has complied with the standards of screening in practice throughout the audit period based on the information provided to us by the Diocese of Adelaide. The findings of the material compliance assessment are set out in **Annexure B** to this report and are commented on in the body of this report.

The following factors are relevant to the findings made in the material compliance assessment:

- the findings are based on information provided by the Diocese of Adelaide that was accessible at the time the audit was conducted and based primarily on information stored on their online database
- the standards of screening require that steps occur 'prior to' appointment or otherwise if there is a cogent reason, and accordingly non-compliance does not mean that the screening step has not occurred at all, and
- the findings reflect the thresholds set out at Annexure B, which, for the most part, require 100 per cent compliance in order for a finding of compliance to be made.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening licensed clergy in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening licensed, authorised, paid church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening professional standards personnel and safe ministry personnel in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

In addition to those who were required to be screened in accordance with the Canon in the audit period (by reason that they were licensed or otherwise appointed in the audit period), the diocesan audit also considers whether all other workers who are required to be screened have a working with children check.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening all clergy licensed prior to the audit period in accordance with the Canon.



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening all licensed, authorised paid or volunteer church workers appointed prior to the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

We observe that the Diocese of Adelaide has demonstrated very high levels of compliance with the standards of screening in the audit period.

One of the reasons for achieving such high levels of compliance is that the Diocese has implemented a comprehensive online screening system, with the following features:

- a single online application that captures, in relation to each category of worker:
 - key personal details
 - their role and parish (or other ministry body)
 - their working with children check number
 - the information requested as part of a safe ministry assessment
 - their consent to undertake a national register assessment

- automatic alerts to appropriate diocesan officers, where:
 - a form is complete and requires assessment
 - a form is incomplete
 - various screening steps require renewal (for example, working with children checks are due for renewal)
- integration of the information provided in the application into the database operated by the Diocese of Adelaide, so that appropriate records are maintained
- the ability for those administering licences and appointments to be able to confirm whether someone has satisfactorily completed their application and that the appropriate assessments have occurred prior to issuing a licence, and
- when someone has been screened, they are issued a safe ministry clearance by the Diocese.

This centralised screening system is overseen by the Safe Ministry Administrator and utilised by the Registrar and Director of Professional Standards. It is integrated into the Registry-function of the Diocese and the recording of licences issued to clergy.

At a parish level, the screening system is supported by regular information sharing between the diocesan safe ministry authority and each local parish. A parish-based Safe Ministry Co-ordinator ensures that people do not engage in ministry to children without having obtained the necessary safe ministry clearance (except where there are cogent reasons as discussed further in this report), and parishes are encouraged to provide monthly reports on their activities to the diocesan safe ministry authority.

The system adopted by the Diocese of Adelaide has achieved very strong results. The results are more impressive for the large number of people that were screened in the audit period and who were considered as part of the material compliance component of the diocesan audit.

Although it is accepted that different approaches may also achieve high levels of compliance, the system adopted by the Diocese of Adelaide stands as a model 'systems-based' approach. We encourage other dioceses to consider the model adopted by the Diocese of Adelaide further.

Standards of training

We have reviewed the approach of the Diocese of Adelaide to providing accredited training. The Diocese of Adelaide has traditionally relied on a range of traditional face-to-face training modules, including those provided by relevant state agencies. In the audit period, the Diocese of Adelaide endorsed online training provided by an independent training provider.

The policies and procedures of the Diocese of Adelaide:

- require that the standards of training are complied with prior to clergy and church workers being appointed (or otherwise) to a ministry position, except as detailed in the report
- require that clergy or church workers are unable to undertake ministry to children until they have been appropriately trained, and
- assign responsibility to identified persons to ensure that this occurs and include mechanisms to respond to non-compliance by clergy and church workers.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Adelaide has in place policies and procedures that give effect to the standards of training.



The policies and procedures of the Diocese of Adelaide do not contain any additional standards that are inconsistent with the standards of training.



The Diocese of Adelaide has procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of training.

Also in Part 4 we have assessed whether the Diocese of Adelaide has complied with the standards of training in practice throughout the audit period based on the information provided to us by the Diocese of Adelaide.

The following factors are relevant to the findings made in the material compliance assessment:

- the introduction of COVID-19 public health restrictions impacted upon scheduled accredited training events through the middle of 2020, and
- the delay caused by the COVID-19 public health restrictions constitutes a cogent reason for completing accredited training outside of the period envisaged in the standards of training, where:
 - the reason for accredited training being delayed related to the COVID-19 public health restrictions, and
 - accredited training was completed within the calendar year.

This delay was mitigated somewhat by the Diocese introducing online training as the preferred accredited training in around July 2020 which enabled workers to complete training in an efficient manner.

The following finding was made:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in training clergy, church workers engaged in ministry to children and professional standards personnel and safe ministry personnel in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

Standards of safe ministry with persons of concern

We have reviewed the approach of the Diocese of Adelaide to safe ministry with persons of concern.

The following findings were made:



The Diocese of Adelaide has in place standards and guidelines that give effect to the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern, with cogent reasons provided for departure from the prescribed policy.



The Diocese of Adelaide does not have any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern.



The Diocese of Adelaide has procedures in place that effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese of the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance.

Also in Part 5 we have assessed whether the Diocese of Adelaide has complied with the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern in practice throughout the audit period based on the information provided to us by the Diocese of Adelaide.

The following finding was made:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in managing persons of concern in accordance with the standards of safe ministry with Persons of concern in the audit period.

Recordkeeping

We have considered primary source documents provided by the Diocese of Adelaide in accordance with the quality assurance process set out in the Audit Framework. There was a high level of completeness of information which the audit team considers is indicative of good recordkeeping practices.

Records are stored on a custom salesforce database with secure access to limited individuals in the Diocese. Hard copy records were easily accessible, accurate and stored securely.

The high-level of recordkeeping accuracy is attributable to the system that the Diocese has implemented to record safe ministry information. We note that some hard copy records are still maintained.

The following finding was made:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in keeping records with respect to the prescribed standards and guidelines in accordance with the Canon.

Conclusion

Overall, we conclude that the Diocese of Adelaide has adopted policies and procedures that give effect to the standards and guidelines in the Canon.

After adopting the Canon, the Diocese of Adelaide committed significant resources to developing a screening system that would give effect to the prescribed standards and guidelines. The results of that effort are set out in this report.

The compliance results are noteworthy and are the outcome of the combined efforts of Diocesan office staff, all clergy, and church workers engaged in ministry to children. It reflects significant buy-in and support from the church community, specifically at the level of the local parish, to ensure that the system implemented by the Diocese was a success.

Of course, child safety is an area which requires consistent focus and effort to sustain compliance. We encourage the Diocese of Adelaide to continue its efforts in this important area. We further encourage the Diocese of Adelaide to share its experience implementing a screening system with other dioceses.

1 Background

The Diocese of Adelaide

Established in 1847 by Letters Patent, the Diocese of Adelaide is one of the 23 dioceses of the Anglican Church of Australia, and one of three dioceses (along with the Dioceses of The Murray and Willochra) that comprise the Province of South Australia. There has historically been significant co-operation on matters relating to safe ministry at a provincial level.

The Diocese of Adelaide covers an area in south-eastern South Australia in the Adelaide metropolitan area. The Diocesan offices are based in North Adelaide across from St Peter's Cathedral.

As at around 2016, the Diocese of Adelaide had as follows:

- 62 parishes
- approximately 9,500 active church members, and
- 116 active clergy and 78 retired clergy with a permission to officiate (PTO).

In terms of ministry to children, the Diocese of Adelaide operates parish-based children's and youth ministry, which occurs mid-week and during public worship services on Sunday.

The Diocese of Adelaide has a sizable ministry to children which is supported by large numbers of volunteers.

Safe Church policy architecture

The policies and procedures discussed in this report relate primarily to the systems in place to promote awareness of any code of conduct, to ensure people are adequately screened and trained, and to ensure there are strategies in place to manage persons of concern.

In the Diocese of Adelaide, these policies and procedures are part of a broader safe church policy architecture that includes:

- policies and procedures for responding to complaints of child sexual abuse, and
- redress options for those who have experienced abuse, including via the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse.

Legislative context

In addition, the Diocese of Adelaide and/or its personnel are subject to relevant legislative obligations in force in South Australia.

This includes the obligation to ensure that people that engage in child-related work (including as ministers of religion) have obtained a working with children check in accordance with the Child Safety Act and the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Regulations 2019 (SA)* (**Child Safety Regulations**).

There are two features of the legislative regime set out in the Child Safety Act and Child Safety Regulations that are somewhat unique to the working with children check scheme in South Australia.

A. Governing members

The first is the requirement that people who are members of governing bodies hold a working with children check as they may be deemed to be '[carrying] on a business in the course of which an employee works with children' (see section 6(3)(b) of the Child Safety Act). In other jurisdictions, the requirement for members of governing bodies to hold a working with children check is often limited to prescribed sectors such as adoption services or out-of-home care.

B. The 7-day exemption

The second is the availability of the '7-day exemption'. Generally, this exemption allows that a person may engage in child-related work without a working with children check if this engagement is for less than 7 days a calendar year. There is an equivalent exemption in most working with children check schemes.

In South Australia the exemption falls within the definition of 'excluded person' at section 9(3)(b) of the Child Safety Act. 'Excluded persons' are a defined category of people excluded from the requirements in respect of working with children checks placed on individuals and on organisations in sections 16 to 19 of the Child Safety Act.

This exemption is structured slightly differently in South Australia as compared with other jurisdictions. In other jurisdictions, the exemption may not be available where a worker will be working in child-related work **more** than 7 days a calendar year.

We note that in respect of volunteer church workers only, the Diocese of Adelaide has adopted a position of allowing these workers to access the exemption.

We discuss the interaction between the relevant obligations, the use of the exemption, and the standards in the Canon in further detail as they relate to screening in Part 3 of this report.

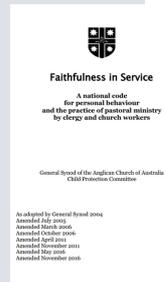
Diocesan audit

The Canon sets out that there will be a diocesan audit to be conducted at intervals of three years or less (as determined by the Standing Committee of General Synod).

In undertaking the diocesan audit, we are required to assess the following.

Prescribed code of conduct

Does any diocesan code of conduct contain additional standards or guidelines that are inconsistent with the **prescribed code of conduct** or any equivalent code of conduct?



Prescribed standards and guidelines

- Does the diocese have standards, and guidelines, that **give effect** to the **prescribed standards and guidelines**?
- Does the diocese have any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent?
- Does the diocese have in place procedures which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers, and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance?
- Have the procedures in all material respects been followed?
- Have accurate records been created and maintained?

The diocesan audit involves two kinds of assessment:

The first is an assessment of the policies and procedures of the diocese as compared with the prescribed code of conduct and prescribed standards and guidelines (the **policy assessment**).

The second is an assessment of material compliance with the prescribed standards and guidelines (the **material compliance assessment**).

Public reporting of compliance with the standards set out in the Canon is one way in which the Diocese of Adelaide is accountable and transparent about the efforts made by it to improve child safe practices. The audit of adherence by the Diocese of Adelaide to the Canon:

- ensures that the standards and guidelines set out in the Canon are being implemented
- is a process to give effect to continuous review and improvement of child safe practices, and
- provides assurance to the public that the Diocese of Adelaide (as part of the Anglican Church of Australia) is committed to safe ministry to children.

The diocesan audit is consistent with the encouragement of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (**Royal Commission**) for religious organisations to publicly report on the implementation of, and compliance with, standards of safe ministry to children.

As acknowledged in the Audit Framework, each diocese may take a different approach to implementing the standards in the Canon.

These approaches may be informed by the legislative context in which they operate, and the administrative systems available to implement and monitor the standards. Where possible we have accounted for these differences in the course of the diocesan audit.

2 Code of Conduct

Prescribed code of conduct

Clergy and church workers in the Diocese of Adelaide (with limited exceptions) are bound to observe the prescribed code of conduct.



The prescribed code of conduct comprises sections 3 and 5 (read in conjunction with section 1 and section 2) of 'Faithfulness in Service: A national code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers' as amended in November 2016.

The prescribed code of conduct reflects the high standards of behaviour expected of clergy and church workers engaged in ministry to children across the Anglican Church of Australia.

Diocesan codes of conduct

As set out in Part 1 above, the diocesan audit involves an assessment as to whether any 'diocesan code of conduct' contains additional standards or guidelines that are inconsistent with the prescribed code of conduct or any equivalent code of conduct.

In short, a diocesan code of conduct is any code of conduct relating to safe ministry to children which has been approved by the synod or diocesan council of a diocese. For most dioceses this will be the version of Faithfulness in Service a part of which constitutes the prescribed code of conduct.

The Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide has adopted the most recent version of Faithfulness in Service as the diocesan code of conduct.

While conducting our review we identified an additional code of conduct as part of the online training module adopted by the Diocese of Adelaide (the **Training Module Code of Conduct**). The Training Module Code of Conduct constitutes a diocesan code of conduct for reason that the diocesan safe ministry authority approved the training course and material as being accredited training within the meaning of the Canon.

Policy assessment

Faithfulness in Service

As indicated above, the relevant parts of Faithfulness in Service adopted by the Diocese of Adelaide as a diocesan code of conduct are identical with the prescribed code of conduct.

We make the following finding:



The version of Faithfulness in Service in force in the Diocese of Adelaide does not contain additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the prescribed code of conduct.

Training Module Code of Conduct

At the outset, we note that the Training Module Code of Conduct is a generic code of conduct that has been built into the relevant online training package and the content of which is not specific to the Diocese of Adelaide.

We anticipate that most participants in the training course would appreciate that it is a generic code of conduct. Importantly, just prior to reviewing the Training Module Code of Conduct, the participant is asked to agree that *'[as] well as the commitments [in the Training Module Code of Conduct], I will abide by the Faithfulness in Service Booklet'*.

Accordingly, the participant is alerted to the relevance of the prescribed code of conduct at the same time as reviewing and agreeing to the Training Module Code of Conduct.

We have reviewed the Training Module Code of Conduct and it does not contain any standards or guidelines that are additional to or inconsistent with the standards and guidelines in the prescribed code of conduct.

We make the following finding:



The Training Module Code of Conduct does not contain additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the prescribed code of conduct.

Notwithstanding this, the Diocese should consider the Training Module Code of Conduct further, including whether there is a risk that the existence of the Training Module Code of Conduct could generate confusion as to the applicable code of conduct or to its relevance with reference to the broader safe ministry architecture of the Diocese.

3 Standards of screening

Standards of screening

The standards of screening require that clergy and church workers undergo various screening steps prior to being appointed (or otherwise) to their role.

For most clergy and church workers, the standards of screening provide that in order for a person to be appointed (or otherwise) they are required to:

- obtain a working with children check or working with vulnerable people check
- if this is not required, then undergo a criminal history assessment or risk assessment, and
- undergo the following assessments:
 - a national register assessment
 - a safe ministry assessment
 - where the person was previously authorised for ministry in another Province, diocese or denomination then a church ministry assessment may be required if not reasonably satisfied that this has previously been done.

The Canon limits the categories of church workers subject to the standards of screening to those who are engaged in ministry to children.

Some categories of worker are subject to higher screening standards due to the stage of ministry they are entering into, with candidates for ordination as a deacon (sometimes referred to as ordinands) required to undergo a medical assessment and a psychological assessment.

Other categories of worker are subject to alternative screening processes, for example, volunteer church workers are eligible to hold conditional working with children checks or working with vulnerable people checks, and only need to undergo a safe ministry assessment if they are over the age of 13. Volunteer church workers are not required to undergo a church ministry assessment.

Definitions

In this report we use the following definitions from the Canon, although the screening step may be defined differently by the Diocese in its policies and procedures. For a glossary of defined terms see **Annexure A**.

church ministry assessment means a reasonable endeavour made to obtain information about the person from the responsible authority, and if obtained consideration of that information

medical assessment means consideration of a medical report of the person by a registered medical practitioner

national register assessment means a check whether there is any information about the person entered in the National Register, and if so consideration of that information

psychological assessment means consideration of a psychological report that includes an assessment of psychosexual maturity of the person by a registered psychologist

safe ministry assessment means consideration of the person's completed Safe Ministry Check, and if applicable referees' completed Safe Ministry Checks

risk assessment means a risk assessment provided by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion Screening Unit of South Australia

Likewise, safe ministry personnel and professional standards personnel, if they have not otherwise been required to be screened by virtue of being a member of clergy or a church worker, are required to undergo a national register assessment.

The standards of screening do not apply to those who were appointed (or otherwise) before the Canon has come into effect in a diocese, except insofar as the standards of screening relate to those workers requiring a working with children check or working with vulnerable people check, or alternatively a criminal history assessment or risk assessment.

The Canon was introduced in a period where there was no requirement to obtain a working with children check to engage in child-related work in a religious organisation in South Australia. Instead, certain categories of worker were required to be screened by different regulatory agencies, in what was referred to as a 'risk assessment' in the Canon.

On 1 July 2019, people engaged in child-related work in religious organisations were required to obtain a working with children check, with relevant transitional provisions in the Child Safety Act allowing those who otherwise had a valid risk assessment to continue in child-related work until the expiry of that risk assessment.

Accordingly, in the audit period many clergy and church workers were transitioning between risk assessments and working with children checks. The Diocese of Adelaide, and at time the relevant parishes, have assisted clergy and church workers make this transition in liaison with the relevant regulatory body.

Policy assessment

The diocesan audit is required to assess whether a diocese has:

- standards, and guidelines that give effect to the standards of screening (unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so)
- any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the standards of screening, and

- procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of screening.

The policies and procedures of the Diocese of Adelaide that give effect to the standards in the Canon are as follows:

- the Safe Ministry Policy
- Safe Ministry webpages on the Adelaide Anglican website
- application forms (Blue, Orange or Green),
- Safe Ministry Co-ordinator Role Description and Monthly Reporting Template, and
- Persons requiring a working with children check.

Safe Ministry Policy and Application forms

The policy architecture of the Diocese of Adelaide as set out in the Safe Ministry Policy describes a centralised system of screening overseen by the Safe Ministry Administrator, Registrar and Director of Professional Standards (and ultimately the diocesan safe ministry authority).

Clergy, and church workers engaged in ministry to children, are required to lodge an online application (being either the Blue, Orange or Green form depending on their role and age) prior to appointment or as otherwise described below, which involves the following steps:

- completing the information required for the Diocese to conduct a safe ministry assessment
- providing information in respect of a working with children check
- providing information in respect of referees who are contacted automatically by text message and emailed for a reference, and
- completing accredited training.

We have reviewed the relevant Blue, Orange or Green forms and are satisfied they accord with the forms referenced in the Canon. Accordingly, an assessment of those forms would constitute a safe ministry assessment within the meaning of the Canon.

The Diocese conducts a national register assessment based on the information provided as part of the application, as well as undertaking a safe ministry assessment, and church ministry assessment if necessary.

Once the Diocese has undertaken the necessary screening steps, the member of clergy, or the church worker engaged in ministry to children, is issued a 'safe ministry clearance'. The Registrar can confirm that a member of clergy has obtained a safe ministry clearance prior to issuing a licence on behalf of the Archbishop.

The policy documentation indicates that a safe ministry clearance needs to be obtained every three years. There may be good reasons for requiring that people resubmit relevant child safety information every three years. In terms of the standards of screening, there is only an ongoing requirement to maintain a valid working with children check and accredited training once the other screening steps have been completed.

Safe Ministry Co-ordinator Role Description and Monthly Reporting Template

In order to ensure that there is appropriate information sharing between the central administration of the screening system and each parish, the Safe Ministry Administrator and Registrar provide regular reports to each parish setting out who is approved for ministry to children. In the same way, parishes are asked to report back on who is in engaging in ministry to children in each parish by completing monthly returns in the form of the Monthly Reporting Template.

Safe Ministry Co-ordinators in each parish have the important role of ensuring that only those who have obtained a safe ministry clearance engage in ministry to children in a parish (or as otherwise allowed under the Safe Ministry Policy) and assisting in the monthly reporting.

Persons requiring a working with children check

The Diocese of Adelaide screens a wider category of people than is required to be screened under the Canon. There are good reasons for having a more expansive screening regime, including that people in governance positions in the Diocese are screened for suitability for their roles where they have leadership responsibility.

One of the reasons why the Diocese of Adelaide screens a wider category of people is that the requirement to hold a working with children check set out in the Child Safety Act may extend to those people who are members of governing bodies (even if they do not have direct contact with children). Screening for additional categories of people does not generate inconsistencies with the requirements in the Canon which are focused on child safety.

As mentioned in Part 2, the Diocese of Adelaide has adopted the position of allowing volunteer church workers to avail themselves of the 7-day exemption from the requirement to hold a working with children check. Accordingly, some volunteer church workers may commence in ministry prior to obtaining a working with children check and a Safe Ministry Clearance.

We consider that this is a cogent reason for the departure from the requirement in the Canon that the screening steps occur prior to appointment for volunteer church workers for the following reasons:

- the approach complies with the requirement to obtain a working with children check in the Child Safety Act and the Canon, and
- there are practical reasons in favour of the application of the other screening steps occurring at the same time as the statutory requirement to obtain a working with children check, which in any event is proximate to the date they commence in ministry.

We have raised additional matters for the Diocese to consider alongside this, including the importance of other child safety practices such as adequate supervision.

Further below in Part 3, notwithstanding the approach of the Diocese, most volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period that were considered as part of the material compliance component obtained a safe ministry clearance and working with children check or equivalent **prior** to commencing ministry with children.

Accordingly, even if we did not consider the policy position to be a cogent reason for adopting standards and guidelines inconsistent with the Canon, the Diocese would still have achieved high-levels of compliance in this category of worker.

Finally, the Diocese of Adelaide requires that candidates for ordination attend a comprehensive psychological assessment. We understand that this occurs at the discernment stage prior to participating in a ministry discernment event. Candidates for ordination are required to obtain a safe ministry clearance as well.

Read together, the policies and procedures of the Diocese of Adelaide give effect to the standards of screening in that they require that people undertake the following screening steps set out in the table below.

	Working with children check	Criminal history assessment	National register assessment	Safe ministry assessment	Medical assessment	Psychological assessment	Church ministry assessment
Candidates for Ordination	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clergy (incl. Bishops)	✓		✓	✓			✓
Church workers (licenced, authorised and paid)	✓		✓	✓			✓
Church workers (volunteers)	✓		✓	✓			
Safe ministry and professional standards personnel			✓				

✓ Consistent with the standards of screening in the Canon.

Table 1: Standards of screening in the Diocese of Adelaide

The Diocese of Adelaide monitors observance of compliance with the standards of screening centrally, with the Safe Ministry Administrator conducting the various screening assessments with the Registrar and Director of Professional Standards as necessary.

The Diocese of Adelaide provides for appropriate responses to non-observance by requiring that people not be issued a licence or engage in ministry to children if they have not obtained a safe ministry clearance.

When read together, the policies and procedures of the Diocese of Adelaide:

- address all of the categories of worker covered by the standards of screening
- assign responsibility to identified persons to ensure that the standards of screening are complied with
- include a mechanism whereby information about the standards of screening are reported centrally
- include information about recordkeeping practices, and
- include a system of ongoing monitoring of the screening that has occurred.

We make the following findings:



The Diocese of Adelaide has in place policies and procedures that give effect to the standards of screening.



The policies and procedures of the Diocese of Adelaide do not contain any additional standards that are inconsistent with the standards of screening in the Canon.



The Diocese of Adelaide has procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of screening.

Material compliance assessment

General

As part of the diocesan audit we are required to assess whether a diocese has followed its procedures in all material respects, and created and maintained records in a secure manner.

As set out above, we have concluded that the Diocese of Adelaide has in place policies and procedures that give effect to the standards of screening in the Canon.

The audit team has requested that the Diocese of Adelaide provide us information in relation to **all** clergy licenced after 1 January 2020 and prior to 31 December 2020 (the **audit period**), as well as more limited information in relation to all other clergy.

In respect of church workers undertaking ministry to children, the audit team developed a sample population of church workers in accordance with the process in the Audit Framework. To do this, the audit team identified 5 sample parishes who were subject of closer inquiry. Those sample parishes undertook a range of different ministries with children and located in the urban centre and suburban fringes of Adelaide.

The diocesan audit has involved a quality assurance process as part of assessing the information provided by the diocesan safe ministry authority. To do this the audit team has:

- been provided access to soft copy files of clergy and church workers in the process of completing the material compliance process and in order to confirm that the information provided by the diocese is accurate
- received this information via the salesforce database utilised by the Diocese of Adelaide
- identified any issues in the information provided by the diocesan safe ministry authority, and confirmed this with the diocesan safe ministry authority
- obtained hard copy documents where the information related to a historic period, and

- determined the impact, if any, that the quality assurance process has on our assessment of material compliance.

The audit team was advantaged by attending on site at the diocesan office and all queries were responded to by the Safe Ministry Administrator in a comprehensive and timely way.

As part of our material compliance assessment the diocesan audit is required to consider matters that may also be legislative obligations for the diocese. It is important to note that the assessment of whether or not a diocese has complied with the standards of screening is not an assessment of whether or not they have complied with legislative obligations.

The Diocese of Adelaide records, for example, when various licences have been issued, but this information may not correlate to the date when the individual commenced engaging in child-related work. Accordingly, non-compliance for the individual in relation to having a working with children check in accordance with the standards of screening does not necessarily mean there has been non-compliance with the legal obligations set out in the Child Safety Act.

Likewise, the following factors are relevant to the findings made in the material compliance assessment:

- the findings relate to compliance with the standards of screening in the audit period only, which included a period of time where the Diocese of Adelaide was also managing its response to the COVID-19 public health crisis
- during the audit period many workers in the Diocese of Adelaide transitioned onto working with children checks from risk assessments, with some people appointed in the audit period still on valid risk assessments in accordance with the transitional provisions in the Child Safety Act and this has been taken into account
- the findings are based on information provided by the Diocese of Adelaide that was accessible at the time the audit was conducted and based primarily on information stored on their online database

- the standards of screening require that steps occur 'prior to' appointment and accordingly non-compliance does not mean that the screening step has not occurred at all
- some of the findings relate to categories of worker where there were only a small number of people that fell into that category, and in those circumstances non-compliance in respect of one or two people may have had a disproportionate impact on the total compliance result for that category, and
- the findings reflect the thresholds set out at **Annexure B**, which, for the most part, require 100 per cent compliance in order for a finding of compliance to be made.

Candidates for ordination

The Diocese of Adelaide did not ordain anyone to the diaconate in the audit period.

As a result, we do not make a finding as to compliance of the Diocese of Adelaide with the standards of screening for this category of worker.

The Diocese of Adelaide should ensure that there is sufficient co-ordination between the diocesan safe ministry authority and the ministry development arm of the Diocese to ensure that the specific screening steps relating to candidates for ordination occur.

Clergy

We have reviewed the information provided by the Diocese of Adelaide relating to clergy who were issued a licence (or were appointed Bishop) in the audit period.

As set out in **Annexure B**, in the audit period, clergy undertook the following screening steps **prior to** being licensed:

- 100 per cent had obtained a working with children check if required, or otherwise a risk assessment
- 100 per cent had undertaken a national register assessment, and
- 100 per cent had undertaken a safe ministry assessment (and a church ministry assessment as necessary).

We make the following finding:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening licensed clergy in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

This compliance result is significant considering the large number of people who were licensed in the audit period. One of the reasons for this high level of compliance is the screening system that has been adopted by the Diocese of Adelaide and that is integrated with the Registry-function of the Diocese.

As a result of this integration, the Registry can easily ensure that all the relevant screening steps have been complete prior to a licence being issued.

In addition to those clergy licensed in the audit period, all other licensed clergy were reviewed for whether or not they have a working with children check (or if a working with children check was not required, a risk assessment), with the result being that 100 per cent of all other clergy have a working with children check (or risk assessment).

We make the following finding:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening all clergy licensed prior to the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

Licensed, authorised and paid church workers engaged in ministry to children

We have reviewed the information provided by the Diocese of Adelaide relating to people appointed as a licenced, authorised or paid church worker engaged in ministry to children in the audit period.

At the outset it is important to note that the Diocese of Adelaide has a very small number of people who fall into this category. The reason for this is that the sample population selected related to parishes in which there were few appointments to the role of a licensed, authorised or paid church worker engaged in ministry to children in the audit period.

As set out in **Annexure B**, in the audit period, licensed, authorised or paid church workers engaged in ministry to children undertook the following screening steps **prior to** being licensed:

- 100 per cent had obtained a working with children check if required, or otherwise a criminal history assessment
- 100 per cent had undertaken a national register assessment, and
- 100 per cent had undertaken a safe ministry assessment (and a church ministry assessment as necessary).

This is a very high rate of completion of all screening steps for this category of worker.

We make the following finding:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening licensed, authorised, paid church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

Volunteer church workers

We have reviewed the information provided by the Diocese of Adelaide relating to volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period. Volunteer church workers undertake the bulk of ministry to children in the Diocese of Adelaide.

As set out in **Annexure B**, in the audit period, volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children undertook the following screening steps **prior to** being licensed:

- 100 per cent had obtained a working with children check if required, or otherwise a criminal history assessment, and
- 100 per cent had undertaken a safe ministry assessment (and a church ministry assessment as necessary).

We make the following finding:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

In addition to those volunteer church workers appointed in the audit period, all other licensed, authorised paid or volunteer church workers undertaking ministry to children in the sample population were reviewed for whether or not they have a working with children check (or if a working with children check is not required, a risk assessment), with the result being that 100 per cent of all other church workers have a working with children check (or risk assessment).

We make the following finding:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening all licensed, authorised paid or volunteer church workers appointed prior to the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

Safe ministry personnel and professional standards personnel

As set out in **Annexure B**, 100 per cent of professional standards personnel and safe ministry personnel undertook the required screening step (a national register assessment) **prior to** being appointed in the audit period.

We make the following finding:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in screening professional standards personnel and safe ministry personnel in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

Recordkeeping

The standards of screening require that the Diocese of Adelaide keeps accurate and complete records of the screening of clergy and church workers, and that these records are created and maintained in a secure manner.

We have considered primary source documents provided by the Diocese of Adelaide in accordance with the quality assurance process set out in the Audit Framework, including being granted access to their database.

The Diocese of Adelaide had a high level of completeness of information provided which the audit team considers is indicative of good recordkeeping practices. Records are stored on a custom salesforce database with secure access to limited individuals in the Diocese. Hard copy records were easily accessible, accurate and stored securely.

The high-level of recordkeeping accuracy is attributable to the system that the Diocese has implemented to record safe ministry information. We note that some hard copy records are still maintained.

We make the following finding:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in keeping records with respect to the standards of screening in accordance with the Canon.

4 Standards of Training

Standards of training

The standards of training require that clergy, and church workers who engage in ministry to children, undergo accredited training in the three years prior to being appointed (or otherwise).

Training is 'accredited training' if it includes the course content set out in the Safe Ministry Training National Benchmarks and is delivered by people who are accredited, or via online training that is accredited, by the diocesan safe ministry authority. Alternatively, accredited training could be training provided by another Church body that the diocesan safe ministry authority has determined is equivalent.

The standards of training do not apply to those who were appointed (or otherwise) prior to 1 January 2018 (as they were not subject to the Canon at the time this occurred).

However, the standards require that after 1 January 2021 all clergy, and church workers who engage in ministry to children, have received accredited training in the last three years.

Policy Assessment

The diocesan audit is required to assess whether a diocese has:

- standards, and guidelines that give effect to the standards of training (unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so)
- any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the standards of training, and
- procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of training.

Accredited training

For the standards of training we are also required to assess whether training is 'accredited', meaning whether it incorporates the content set out in the Safe Ministry Training National Benchmarks.

We have considered the training material delivered during the audit period to clergy, and church workers who undertake ministry to children.

The diocesan safe ministry authority has endorsed the use of training material provided by Safe Ministry Check, a safe ministry service provider, which includes the following three short online courses:

- Safe Ministry Awareness
- Leader Training Course, and
- Supervisor Training Course.

The training courses provided by Safe Ministry Check are augmented by a short video from the Diocese of Adelaide which is specific as to the approach taken in the Diocese of Adelaide.

On the whole, the courses provided by Safe Ministry Check cover safe ministry information in a convenient and accessible way. We have raised some areas that the Diocese-specific training could focus on to comprehensively address the Safe Ministry Training National Benchmarks and to provide diocesan and jurisdiction specific information.

The policy of the Diocese of Adelaide that gives effect to the standards of training in the Canon is the Safe Church Policy.

Safe Church Policy

The Safe Church Policy states that clergy, and church workers engaged in ministry to children, must obtain a safe ministry clearance which requires the satisfactory completion of accredited training every three years. Other than as discussed above, these categories of worker must obtain a safe ministry clearance prior to commencing in ministry.

Other categories of worker are also required to complete accredited training, including workers who do not fall within the scope of the Canon. This does not create an inconsistency with the Canon.

The Diocese of Adelaide monitors observance of compliance with the standards of training via the same architecture used to monitor observance with the standards of screening. The date of attendance at accredited training is entered into the salesforce database, with automatic renewal notices sent prior to expiry of the relevant training renewal period.

We note that the move to online training will make the completion of accredited training prior to commencing ministry more efficient as workers are not required to wait until a scheduled training event in the local area.

When read together, the policies and procedures of the Diocese of Adelaide:

- require that the standards of training are complied with prior to clergy and church workers being appointed (or otherwise) to a ministry position
- require that clergy or church workers are unable to undertake ministry to children until they have been appropriately screened and trained, and
- assign responsibility to identified persons to ensure that this occurs, and include mechanisms to response to non-compliance by clergy and church workers.

We make the following findings:



The Diocese of Adelaide has in place policies and procedures that give effect to the standards of training.



The policies and procedures of the Diocese of Adelaide do not contain any additional standards that are inconsistent with the standards of training in the Canon.



The Diocese of Adelaide has procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the standards of training.

Material Compliance Assessment

General

The audit team has requested that the Diocese of Adelaide provide us de-identified information in relation to all candidates for ordination, clergy, licenced, authorised or paid church workers and volunteer church workers appointed (or otherwise) in the audit period.

Assessment

We have reviewed the information provided by the Diocese of Adelaide relating to all categories of worker subject to the standards of training in the Canon. The requirement in the Canon is that persons undergo training within three years prior to appointment (and in exceptional circumstances within 3 months of appointment).

We consider that accredited training prior to appointment is of key importance as it ensures that people are equipped with practical information to assist them in providing ministry to children.

Accredited training informs them of the expected standards of behaviour required of them, but also the kinds of behaviours to be alert for in other people and in children which may be cause of concern.

The Diocese of Adelaide was responding to the public health crisis relating to COVID-19 during the audit period. The following factors are relevant to the findings made in the material compliance assessment:

- the introduction of COVID-19 public health restrictions impacted upon scheduled accredited training events through the middle of 2020, and
- the delay caused by the COVID-19 public health restrictions constitutes a cogent reason for completing accredited training outside of the period envisaged in the standards of training, where:
 - the reason for accredited training being delayed related to the COVID-19 public health restrictions, and
 - accredited training was completed within the calendar year.

This delay was mitigated somewhat by the Diocese introducing online training as the preferred accredited training in around July 2020.

As set out in **Annexure B**, and based on the information provided by the Diocese of Adelaide, the following categories of worker undertook accredited training prior to or within 3 months of appointment or as allowed by reason of the COVID-19 variation as follows:

- 100 per cent of licensed clergy
- 100 per cent of licensed, authorised or paid church workers engaged in ministry to children
- 100 per cent of volunteer church workers engaged in ministry to children, and
- 100 per cent of professional standards personnel and safe ministry personnel.

We make the following finding:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in training clergy, church workers engaged in ministry to children and professional standards personnel and safe ministry personnel in the audit period in accordance with the Canon.

We note that the Diocese of Adelaide has recently implemented online training. We anticipate that this will allow clergy and church workers to satisfactorily complete accredited training in a shorter period of time and without having to wait for scheduled face to face training.

Recordkeeping

The standards of training require that the Diocese of Adelaide keeps accurate records of the satisfactory completion of accredited training by clergy and church workers, and that these records are created and maintained in a secure manner.

The soft copy records reviewed by the audit team demonstrated a high degree of accuracy between the records of attendance at training and the date nominated as being the date of training in the individuals record.

We make the following finding:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in keeping records with respect to the standards of training in accordance with the Canon.

5 Standards of safe ministry with persons of concern

Standards of safe ministry with persons of concern

The standards of safe ministry with persons of concern require that a parish or a congregation take the actions required to implement the process specified in section 5 of the document titled 'Policy for Safe Ministry in a parish where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a Person of Concern' dated 16 June 2017 (**Persons of Concern Policy**).

In the case of a congregation this process may be adapted by the diocesan safe ministry authority so as to apply to a congregation.

The standards of safe ministry with persons of concern came into effect on 1 January 2019.

Section 5 of the Persons of Concern Policy requires that each parish and/or congregation adopts a process consisting of each of the following stages:

- Stage 1** - Identify a Person of Concern
- Stage 2** - Notify the Director of Professional Standards
- Stage 3** - Develop an Interim Safety Plan
- Stage 4** - Decide Whether to Proceed Further
- Stage 5** - Conduct the necessary assessments
- Stage 6** - Establish the necessary safeguards
- Stage 7** - Monitor the arrangements made

Policy Assessment

The diocesan audit is required to assess whether a diocese has:

- standards, and guidelines that give effect to the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern (unless there are cogent reasons for not doing so)

- any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the safe ministry with persons of concern, and
- procedures in place which effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance of the safe ministry with persons of concern.

The Diocese of Adelaide has adopted the Persons of Concern Policy and accordingly have in place policies and procedures which give effect to the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern. The Professional Standards Director has responsibility for the management of persons of concern.

We make the following findings:

 The Diocese of Adelaide has in place standards and guidelines that give effect to the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern, with cogent reasons provided for departure from the prescribed policy.

 The Diocese of Adelaide does not have any additional standards and guidelines that are inconsistent with the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern.

 The Diocese of Adelaide has procedures in place that effectively monitor observance by clergy and church workers in the diocese of the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern and provide for an appropriate response to instances of non-observance.

Material compliance assessment

General

The audit team has requested that the Diocese of Adelaide provide us de-identified information in relation to all persons of concern that have come to the notice of clergy or church workers at any point during the audit period.

Assessment

As part of our assessment we have considered information provided by the Diocese of Adelaide in relation to persons of concern. We note that there was no person of concern that came to the attention of the Diocese in the audit period.

We make the following finding:



The Diocese of Adelaide has been compliant in managing persons of concern in accordance with the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern in the audit period.

Recordkeeping

In respect of recordkeeping, the Diocese of Adelaide keep both hard and soft copies of safety plans with the Director of Professional Standards.

The Diocese of Adelaide has kept accurate records in relation to the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern, which have been created and maintained in a secure manner.

We make the following finding:



The Diocese of Adelaide has kept accurate records in relation to the standards of safe ministry with persons of concern, which have been created and maintained in a secure manner.



Contact

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the audit team to discuss any aspect of this report.

Jon Cheung
Partner
+61 2 9466 5222
jcheung@prolegis.com.au

Sam Burnett
Senior Associate
+61 2 9466 5229
sburnett@prolegis.com.au

About Prolegis Lawyers

Prolegis is a specialist law firm that exclusively advises clients around Australia and overseas in relation to the charity, not-for-profit and philanthropic sectors.

Prolegis has experience undertaking compliance audits of large charities and not-for-profit organisations, including denominations and other large faith-based organisations.