

FAMILY VIOLENCE WORKING GROUP

A PROGRESS REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Anglican Church of Australia (the church) recognises that the worldwide problem of family violence affects many Australians, including those who identify as Anglicans. The prevalence and nature of family violence, including intimate partner violence, for many Australians, including those in faith communities was highlighted by the Royal Commission into Family Violence conducted in 2016. Preventing family violence has also been a priority for The Council of Australian Governments (COAG). Faith-based contexts are one of eleven identified settings where social norms, attitudes and practices are formed and reinforced and so are a key context for primary prevention work.

At our 17th General Synod in 2017 (GS17), the church resolved to investigate this problem as it affects those in our own church communities, to understand its nature and the ability of our clergy to respond to the problem in parish communities.

This report presents a summary of the work that has been undertaken since GS17 by the Family Violence Working Group and makes recommendations for the ongoing work of preventing and responding to family violence affecting Australian Anglicans.

The primary work of the Family Violence Working Group established by Standing Committee following GS17, has been the National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP).

The five recommendations we are bringing to the 18th General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia flow from the project and other priorities identified by Standing Committee.

FAMILY VIOLENCE WORKING GROUP OUTCOMES AT A GLANCE

3 Independent Research studies



Over 3000 Research Participants



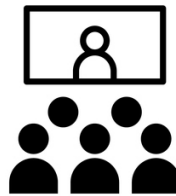
28 Key Findings about Family Violence



10 Commitments by the Anglican Church of Australia



2 National Delegates Conferences



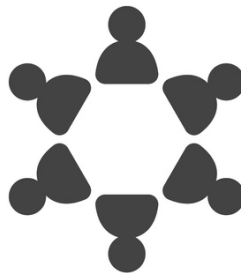
Media representation to disseminate information



Many Meetings



Meetings of Diocesan Representatives established



Research Data added to National Research Archives



!

Services of Lament

5 years of work towards prevention



4 Research Papers



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE – THE STATISTICS

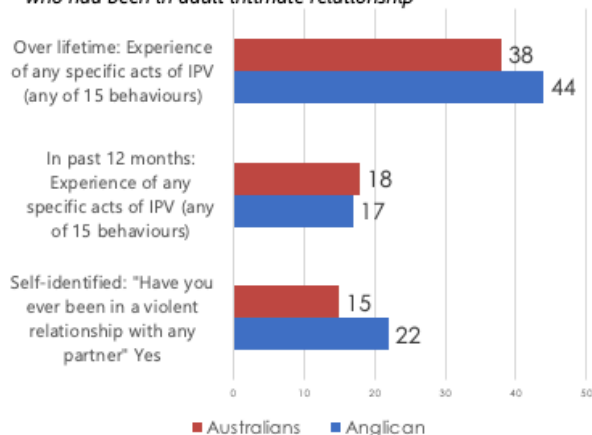


Key Finding

IPV: Anglican & general public

The prevalence of intimate partner violence among Anglicans was the same or higher than in the wider Australian community.

Figure: Self-reported experience of violence among those who had been in adult intimate relationship



Source: 2019 NAFVP Prevalence Study. Percentages are based on those who indicated they had ever been in an adult intimate relationship (all Anglican n = 1287). Composite Abuse Scale – short form was used for the first two measures.



1

OUR PURPOSE

1. The Family Violence Working Group (FVWG) was established by the Standing Committee of the Anglican Church of Australia in December 2017 following General Synod resolution R50/17 on Domestic Violence. The FVWG terms of reference, established by resolution of the GSSC encompassed a number of additional General Synod motions and included the following:
 1. Investigate a professionally designed, independent research study into the nature and prevalence of family violence within the Australian Anglican Church population.
 2. Establish the nature and extent of current Family Violence policies, pastoral care frameworks and training modules across Dioceses.
 3. Develop a “best practice” model policy and pastoral care framework for responding well to situations involving family violence within our parishes and organisations
 4. Recommend curriculum content and/or guidelines to address unhealthy views about power or the marginalisation of women and other survivors of family violence.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP

2. On December 2017, the Primate appointed the Reverend Tracy Lauersen as Convenor of the group, followed by the appointment of Dr Karin Sowada, the Right Reverend Gieve Blackwell, the Reverend Scott Holmes, the Reverend Canon Sandy Grant and Dr Naomi Priest as members of the group. Dr Naomi Priest resigned after two meetings due to a conflict of interest in the proposed Research and Mrs Ruth Holt was appointed in November 2018. These appointments were for a term concluding after the 18th General Synod. The Reverend Sandy Grant resigned his membership in June 2021. We are currently considering nominations for the appointment of a new member.

¹ Research reports can be downloaded here <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/family-violence/>
Diagram from presentation to Standing Committee

3. Over the past five years we have been grateful for the input from many Diocesan representatives who have helped progress our work and who have participated in a number of conferences run by the group.

REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

4. Since being established by Standing Committee five years ago, our work has focused on
 - progressing the Synod's resolutions to both understand and to address family violence in so far as it affects members of our churches
 - scoping, commissioning and steering independent research into the nature and prevalence of family violence in the Australian Anglican population
 - updating and providing Dioceses with advice and information about the findings of the research and actions that can be taken to prevent violence
 - consulting with Dioceses and those within our churches who are affected by family violence, and those who minister to them.
 - bringing the results of the research to light in the national conversation around violence against women, the community and the church
 - developing a framework for the Church to respond to the findings of the Research and consulting with all Anglican stakeholders to develop Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Australian Anglican Church.
 - working with Standing Committee to establish a new Families and Culture Commission that can take the work forward
5. We have undertaken research and received feedback from the Standing Committee, from Diocesan representatives, from Anglican Church of Australia Commissions, from researchers and from survivors of family violence. This feedback has been taken into account in both our work and the recommendations of this report.
6. We express our gratitude to the General Synod Standing Committee for their ongoing prioritising of this matter throughout the five years since the 17th General Synod.
7. The Working Group has
 - met on 23 occasions since GS17, either face-to-face or via teleconference or 'Zoom since being established.
 - held two two-day Conferences with Diocesan Family Violence representatives to discuss research, hear keynote sessions on Family Violence, to consult concerning the churches response and next steps and to identify priorities.
 - worked with Standing Committee to scope and commission the National Research Project into Family Violence in those associated with our Anglican Churches
 - created a steering group for the Research Project that has met regularly with the Researchers to manage the research project.
 - surveyed Diocesan policies, training approaches and pastoral care frameworks.
 - In consultation with dioceses, and victim/survivors, developed a set of commitments called *Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church of Australia* to guide the Churches best-practice response to family violence in Anglican faith communities.

8. TIMELINE OF CRITICAL ACTIVITIES

2018

- 19/02/2018 - Initial meeting of the Family Violence Working Group (FVWG)
- February 2018 - First scoping brief commissioned with an Australian University
- May 2018 – Standing Committee considers first brief. FVWG seeks approval to obtain two more scoping briefs and to bring back a recommendation and quotes to Standing Committee at its next meeting
- July 2018 - September 2018- Dioceses are surveyed regarding existing DFV Policies and Training
- November 2018 - FVWG brings three proposals before Standing Committee for consideration for a National Anglican Family Violence Study Project. Standing Committee approves the research proposal presented by NCLS Research. Standing Committee locates and approves contingency funds to support the research.

2019

- March 2019 - NCLS work closely with the FVWG and commence setting up the research project. Charles Sturt University are consulted for ethics approval for the study.
- 18-19 March, 2019 - FVWG hosts a Conference for Diocesan Delegates in Sydney to brief delegates on the research project and to discuss resources, policies and priorities.
- June 2019 - Primate's Press Release regarding the National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP)
- November 2019 – The Human Research Ethics Committee of Charles Sturt University gives ethics approval for the first part of the research study and research commences.
- December 2019: The National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP) Prevalence study is undertaken.

2020

- February 2020 - Family Violence Working Group draft National Principles for prevention and response to Violence in Anglican communities of faith
- The Working group continues to drive the research forward via its Steering Committee for the Research Project which meets regularly with NCLS Researchers.
- Refinement of the National Principles (later titled Ten Commitments) Meetings conducted using web platforms rather than in person due to COVID-19.
- NAFVP Experience Study begins with an initial Scoping Survey
- (September 2020 to January 2021)

2021

- Standing Committee briefing
- April 2021. Standing Committee endorses Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church of Australia
 - 2nd June: Bishops briefing on NAFVP research findings
 - 4th June: Women Bishops briefing
 - Public Release of the Top Line Results of the Research findings (see APPENDIX 2):
 - 9th June: Media Release
 - 8th June: Lead article in *The Australian*
 - 9th June: Interviews on Christian Radio

- 9th June ff: Letters to Prime Minister, Minister for Women and Various MP's
- 10th June: Appearance on ABC, The Drum
- 11th June: Convenor briefing for region of Melbourne Diocese
- 14th June: +Genieve Blackwell Opinion piece: The Age
- 16th June: Convenor meets with MP: The Honorable Katie Allen, member for Higgins.
- 16th June: Response from *Our Watch* to Ten Commitments
- 18th June Gippsland Anglican Article
- 2nd July; Adelaide Anglican Website Article (Convenor)
- 5th July: Convenor meets with Senator Amanda Stoker, Assistant Minister for Women
- 7th August: Convenor Presentation at Evangelical Women in Academia Conference
- 10-11 August: FVWG Deliver National "Next Steps" Conference
- 24th August : Presentation at Gippsland Clergy Conference
- 27th August : Eternity Article (Convenor)
- 17th September: Personal Submission (T Lauersen) to the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Office for Women (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet) (OfW) and consultation partners involved in developing the next National Plan to end violence against women and children (next National Plan).
- 23rd September: Response from Office of Prime Minister
- October edition of Equip Journal: Article (Convenor)
- Several Anglican websites in Australia, UK and America publish reports, as have a number of Anglican Press journals in Australia.

2022

- Reports for Standing Committee Executive, Standing Committee and General Synod
- Data sets from the NAFVP made available to the public

GENERAL SYNOD ACTION

9. We are submitting 4 recommendations for consideration at this session of the General Synod. Some recommendations relate to the findings of the National Anglican Family Violence Research Project and others to the ongoing work of family violence prevention.
10. We will report to the Nineteenth Session of General Synod as to the progress of the tasks assigned by the General Synod and its Standing Committee.
11. We are grateful to Standing Committee. The 17th General Synod resolved to ask Standing Committee to investigate the possibility of conducting research into the nature and prevalence of family violence affecting Australian Anglicans. No budget was allocated for the work. Standing Committee recognized the importance of this work and its urgency and found the necessary funds for the research. This began under the leadership of Archbishop Philip Freier and continued under the leadership of Archbishop Geoff Smith. Our special thanks also to Standing Committee member Bishop Michael Stead for his ongoing help and advice.
12. We are also grateful to each of the dioceses who have participated in our two National Conferences on family violence. Each diocese funded the participation of their

representatives. Anglican Deaconess Ministries were generous in providing a venue and even catering for our first Conference. Presenters freely shared their expertise. Our second Conference was run over ZOOM due to Covid and border restrictions but was a success thanks to the unchanged commitment of Dioceses to participate.

13. This has been challenging work and the research produced some disturbing findings, along with some encouraging findings. Someone commented upon hearing about the research being undertaken *Sunlight is the best disinfectant. We are no less broken than the world around us. Unless we face our failings, we cannot fix them.* The members of the working group have played a part in helping the church to understand the problem of family violence as it affects Australian Anglicans. Working together we can learn from these findings, driving positive change and create the good news story of a church that responded appropriately. That is worthy of the gospel we proclaim.
14. We consider it a great privilege to serve the church in this work and to have played an important role in making family violence as it affects Anglicans a part of the broader National Conversation on these matters. Whilst we feel we have been able to achieve a number of significant outcomes relating to understanding the problem, the work of preventing and responding effectively to family violence affecting members of our churches is only just beginning. Therefore a number of recommendations relate to the setting up of a new Commission to take this work forward.

1. THE NATIONAL ANGLICAN FAMILY VIOLENCE PROJECT

Background

15. The first task of the Family Violence Working Group was to investigate a professionally designed, independent research study into the nature and prevalence of family violence within the Australian Anglican Church population in response to the following resolution of General Synod:

That this General Synod requests the General Synod Standing Committee to investigate and if appropriate commission (using contingencies or other available sources of funding) a professionally designed and independent research study into the nature and prevalence of family violence prevalence [sic] within the Australian Anglican Church population. The General Synod Standing Committee could also explore the feasibility and practicality of inviting other denominations to consider participation in any such independent research. (R50/17 Domestic Violence Longitudinal Study)

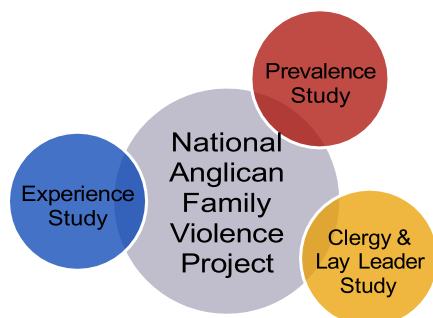
16. Over the course of a year, the working group obtained three scoping briefs from several Australian Universities and a Research Centre for the Standing Committee to consider. In November 2018, Standing Committee chose NCLS research to conduct the research with ethics approval to be sought from Charles Sturt University. Standing Committee allocated funding from contingency funds.
17. For over 25 years, NCLS Research has used empirical research to inform resources for churches to nurture life and health in their congregations, leaders and local community. They have worked with over 20 denominations in Australia and have been responsible for the largest longitudinal study of churches in the world: The National Church Life Survey, which commenced in 1991.

Diocesan Consultations 2018 & National Diocesan Conference 2019

18. In 2018, the Working Group contacted diocesan Bishops and Registrars, asking for a representative that we could consult with as we worked on those priorities identified by Standing Committee.
19. On 18-19 March of 2019, the working group held a conference for those delegates to familiarise dioceses with the upcoming study, to brief them on the findings of a recent UK study into Churches and Domestic abuse and to create an opportunity for Diocesan delegates to share resources and discuss pastoral and policy responses to Family violence by the Anglican Church. The Conference was attended by about 40 representatives from across Australia, with a majority of dioceses represented. The Working Conference enabled a contact list to be produced so that the working group could liaise as needed with Dioceses.
20. We are grateful to keynote presenter: Dr Kristen Aune, Senior Research Fellow at Coventry University who was the Principal Investigator on the 2016-18 project 'Domestic Abuse in UK Churches: A Case Study of Cumbria' (with Dr Rebecca Barnes at the University of Leicester and Mandy Marshall, Director of the charity Restored). Dr Aune was visiting Australian and briefed Conference Delegates on the UK study. Dr Ruth Powell of NCLS outlined the three research priorities for The National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP) and responded to questions from delegates. The Reverend Scott Holmes (Manager, Practice Development, Our Watch Australia: Ending Violence against Women and Children) gave a presentation on the drivers of family violence. The Reverend Tracy Lauersen, the Right Reverend Genieve Blackwell, Dr Karin Sowada, The Reverend Sandy Grant and Ruth Holt co-led working sessions where delegates shared resources and discussed pastoral and other responses and identified priorities.
21. Work continued on the National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP) throughout 2019. A steering group was established with The Reverend Tracy Lauersen and Ruth Holt meeting regularly with the Researchers to progress the project. Family Violence is a broad concept which can include violence between intimate partners, parents and children, siblings and extended family members (AIHW, 2018). The National Anglican Family Violence Project focused on violence between intimate partners. This is sometimes called 'domestic violence' or 'intimate partner violence'(IPV): violence between partners who are or were in a married or de facto relationship or a dating relationship. IPV is defined by the World Health Organisation as: "behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours" (WHO 2010, p.10) and similarly by the Australian National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey as: "any behaviour by a man or a woman within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm to those in the relationship" (ABS 2018).² Typically, one partner tries to exert power and control over the other, usually through fear (AIHW 2018).

² World Health Organization (WHO) (2010). Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: Taking action and generating evidence. World Health Organization. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2018). Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia 2018. (Cat. no. FDV 2). AIHW. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2018). National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey: Directory of Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence Statistics, 2018 (No. 4430.0). <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4533.0~2018~Main%20Features~National%20Community%20Attitudes%20Towards%20Violence%20Against%20Women%20Survey~16>,

22. The National Anglican Family Violence Project started in 2019 and was completed in early 2021. It comprised three research studies:



Study One: The Prevalence of intimate partner violence among Australians who identify as Anglican

Study Two: The attitudes and practices regarding Intimate Partner Violence among Anglican clergy and local church leaders.

Study Three: the nature of experiences of intimate partner violence for those with a connection with Anglican churches and how the Anglican Church featured in these experiences.

23. Over 3,000 men and women participated in the studies and we express our gratitude to them for participating and for sharing their experiences with the researchers and for helping the church to understand the prevalence and nature of such violence as it affects those who identify as Australian Anglicans.

Key Findings

24. Top Line Results and findings for the Project can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

28 Key findings of the research which studied representative samples of both Anglicans and those from the broader Australian population were reported by NCLS and included the following:

- **The prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) among Anglicans was the same or higher than in the wider Australian community.**
- **Women were much more likely than men to have experienced IPV.**
- **Most Anglican victims of IPV did not seek help from Anglican Churches, but for those that did most reported that it positively changed the situation or helped them feel supported.**
- **Clergy and lay leaders were well-informed about breadth of IPV and understood that it was more frequently men who commit violence.**
- **Most clergy felt that having women on the pastoral team equips the Church to better respond to IPV.**
- **Clergy confidence in their personal capacity to respond to IPV was low to moderate.**
- **Perpetrators' misuse Christian teachings and positional power.**

25. Detailed reports on the research and for each study can be found on the website of the Anglican Church of Australia: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/family-violence/> These reports include

- National Anglican Family Violence Research Report: for the Anglican Church of Australia
- NAFVP Prevalence Study Report,

- NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leaders Study Report, and
- NAFVP Experience Study Report.

26. The Anglican Website has a Frequently asked Questions 'FAQ' document to address commonly asked questions about the research: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/family-violence/>



27. We express our gratitude to lead researcher at NCLS, Dr Ruth Powell, and to Dr Miriam Pepper, along with the team that assisted them. We also thank the The Human Research Ethics Committee at Charles Sturt University who advised on the methodology for the research.

28. **The Anglican Church of Australia is the first known Australian Church to study IPV within its faith community nationally.** The findings give us understanding and also give us much to grieve for the victims and survivors of IPV. Finally, they also harness our energy so that we can play our part as a church in preventing IPV, and in helping the healing and recovery of those affected in our churches and communities.

29. Following the release of the research and its findings, the working group held a second conference to familiarise dioceses with the results of the research. Briefings were also given to Bishops and The Reverend Tracy Lauersen acted as representative of the Anglican Church on this matter with media outlets.

Recommendation 1: National Anglican Family Violence Project

That the General Synod receives the reports of the National Anglican Family Violence Project commissioned by the Anglican Church of Australia Standing Committee:

- I. National Anglican Family Violence Research Report: for the Anglican Church of Australia
 - II. NAFVP Prevalence Study Report,
 - III. NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leaders Study Report, and
 - IV. NAFVP Experience Study Report, and
- a) notes the 28 findings of the Research Project
 - b) 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
 - c) requests dioceses to respond to the findings of the National Family Violence Project and to introduce and develop primary prevention strategies and pastoral responses relating to family violence.

2. A REVIEW OF CURRENT POLICIES

30. Standing Committee asked the Working Group to establish the nature and extent of current Family Violence policies, pastoral care frameworks and training modules across Dioceses.
31. A survey of current policies, training and pastoral care frameworks was conducted in late 2018 by the Working Group, with help from Melbourne Diocesan *Prevention of Violence Against Women* Project Officer Robyn Boosey. The review found that 14 of the 23 dioceses provided feedback, of which:
- One diocese had a policy on responding to family violence.
 - No dioceses had a policy on preventing family violence.
 - Five dioceses had delivered training on family violence but no Diocese had yet developed a formalised training module.
 - Three dioceses had some form of a pastoral framework on family violence.
32. In 2021, the FVWG held another National Conference to brief diocesan representatives on the research findings and to discuss next steps. This conference featured the following presenters and speakers:
- The Most Reverend Geoff Smith
 - The Most Reverend Philip Freier
 - The right Reverend Genieve Blackwell
 - The Reverend Tracy Lauersen
 - Dr Ruth Powell, NCLS
 - Dr Miriam Pepper, NCLS
 - Senator the Hon Amanda Stoker, Assistant Minister for Women
 - The Reverend Scott Holmes
 - Patty Kinnersly, CEO , Our Watch
 - Robyn Boosey, Melbourne Diocese
 - Kara Hartley, Sydney Diocese
 - Gillian Moses, Diocese of Southern Queensland
33. During the conference, representatives identified the following gaps in their ability to address the drivers of violence and to minister to those affected by violence:
- i. Resources to drive programs forward
 - ii. Culture change
 - iii. Policies in each diocese
 - iv. Caring for victims and survivors,
 - v. Conducting an audit of parishes and dioceses
 - vi. Providing resources for rural, remote and regional areas
 - vii. Reviewing Faithfulness in Service
 - viii. Working with Culturally and linguistically diverse people and communities
 - ix. Modelling the best response,
 - x. Encouraging women in leadership,
 - xi. Prevention curriculum for schools,
 - xii. Reviewing and developing curriculum for theological colleges
34. In late 2021, The Reverend Tracy Lauersen (Convenor) contacted each Diocese in relation to the adoption by dioceses of the churches Ten Commitment's. We were able to discern that since our original review, some dioceses had done further work in terms of policy development or in establishing a committee or flagging the matter for discussion at their next synod, but it is the assessment of the working group that this

work is concentrated in a small number of our dioceses rather than being widespread. Policies, frameworks, training and resources are a key plank in addressing the drivers of family violence and helping those affected. More resources need to be focused on working together to achieve a comprehensive strategy and adequate resourcing in these areas. In the latter part of this report we recommend the establishment of a new Commission and the appointment of a national project manager to resource this work.

3. A BEST PRACTICE RESPONSE FOR PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

35. At our first National Conference on strengthening the Church's response to Family Violence in 2019, the working group facilitated a conversation with diocesan Representatives to identify work that needed to be done to best prevent and respond to domestic and family violence affecting those in our churches and communities. Diocesan Representatives prioritized actions in the following areas:

- Prayer
- Theological reflection,
- Policies,
- Training
- Cultural change as appropriate best practice responses Prayer

36. A comprehensive list of the identified short, medium and long-term priorities can be found in APPENDIX 3.

TEN COMMITMENTS FOR PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

37. In 2020, following the first conference of the Working Group, the priorities identified by Diocesan representatives became important building blocks in the development of a best practice guide. The Working Group developed the Ten Commitments for Prevention And Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church Of Australia framework as a guide for the churches work of prevention and response to family violence. The priorities identified by Diocesan representatives at the first national conference were important building blocks towards this guide. The key findings of the National Anglican Family Violence Project (the research) both confirmed and informed the priorities identified in the Ten Commitments guide.

38. Research and discussion about external best -practice models also informed our development of the Ten Commitments guide along with input from our Dioceses, clergy, lay people and victim/survivors. Dioceses and Standing Committee were consulted in writing and through a series of ZOOM workshops during COVID lockdowns. The working group is grateful for the input of so many of our Diocesan Bishops, representatives and stakeholders

39. The *Ten Commitments for Prevention And Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church Of Australia* were endorsed by the General Synod Standing Committee at its meeting in April 2021. A copy can be found in APPENDIX 4 of this report.

40. The *Ten Commitments for Prevention And Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church Of Australia* begin with lament, and are focused on

cultural change, education, training, and pastoral support. They are a tool to help resource and empower our Anglican provinces, dioceses and parish churches to bring about change, respond effectively and appropriately and to continuously improve our preventative work.

41. They also 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 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).

42. Our Watch CEO, Patty Kinnersly, made the following comments about the ten Commitment's:

Faith leaders have enormous potential to lead positive change in their community through their spiritual leadership and their connection with the community.

The Anglican Church has a significant opportunity to use its influence to change the social norms and beliefs that drive violence against women, such as by supporting people to build respectful relationships.

As gender inequality is the core of the problem, gender equality must be it is the heart of the solution.

We are supportive of the Anglican Churches Ten Commitments that focus on gender equality and respectful relationships.

43. On behalf of the Prime Minister, the Hon Ben Morton , Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet wrote in a letter to the Convenor

Leaders in faith communities can have a powerful influence and role in building and promoting respectful relationships, influencing gender equality and supporting those who are experiencing violence. I commend the Anglican Church of Australia for demonstrating leadership in addressing intimate partner violence, including through undertaking research to better understand the problem, and implementing programs to reach and support individuals and communities.

44. The Ten Commitments 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.

45. The Commitments drive 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.

TEN COMMITMENTS FOR PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

See Appendix 4 for full document

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.

Recommendation 2: Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church of Australia

That the General Synod:

- a) *notes the development of the Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church of Australia as a best practice guide for the Anglican Church of Australia to prevent and respond to violence.*
- b) *notes the endorsement of the Ten Commitments for prevention and response to domestic and family violence in the Anglican Church of Australia by the Standing Committee*
- c) *thanks those dioceses who have adopted the Ten Commitment's in their recent diocesan Synods*
- d) *encourages remaining dioceses to adopt the Ten Commitment's at their coming synods.*

4. RECOMMENDED CURRICULUM CONTENT AND/OR GUIDELINES TO ADDRESS UNHEALTHY VIEWS ABOUT POWER OR THE MARGINALISATION OF WOMEN AND OTHER SURVIVORS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE.

46. The Ten Commitments framework referenced above encompasses training of clergy, lay leaders and members of parishes, along with children and youth. It also addresses unhealthy views about power and/or the marginalization of women and other survivors of family violence.
47. In addition to conducting the earlier referenced survey of current diocesan training and curriculum and consulting with key stakeholders in the dioceses which are most advanced in conducting some forms of Family Violence training and pastoral care training, the Working Group also reviewed current training provided by external providers. The working group adopted some recommended curriculum content into the Ten Commitments guide. Standing Committee also approved some limited funds for the development of online resources for clergy, which are underway. The working group believes that the best way to continue this work is to employ a National Program Manager to coordinate and facilitate the development of resources to be made available to all Dioceses.

5. REFERENCES FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEE AFTER ESTABLISHING THE FAMILY VIOLENCE WORKING GROUP

NATSIAC RESOLUTION

48. The General Synod Standing Committee further requested the Family Violence Working Group to consult with NATSIAC to bring a recommendation to Standing Committee on how best to progress a response to GS23/17 on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Violence.
49. The Australian Government Institute of Health and Welfare estimated in 2006 that physical or threatened violence among the indigenous population was more than twice the rate of the non-Indigenous population³. The Working Group was advised by the researchers approached for the National Study that due to the potentially significantly different rate of family violence in indigenous communities and due to its likely different nature, a separate

³ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/family-violence-indigenous-peoples/contents/executive-summary> accessed 24/02/2020.

study of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islanders would be required. They also suggested that a number of government funded family violence prevention initiatives were 'in the pipeline' at the time of consultation. Any additional study conducted by the Anglican Church of Australia would need to be resolved by General Synod, scoped and funded. The Working Group recommends monitoring government-funded initiatives to be undertaken following the Federal Government's latest National Plan to end Violence against women and children.

50. Anglican Aboriginal clergy and lay brothers and sisters in our church were invited to take part in the Clergy Focus groups for Study Three and are naturally included in parts 1, 2 and 3 of the research study (although randomisation in some parts of the study may have affected this outcome).
51. The Working Group is hoping to include some Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander-specific resources in an online resource. We will also continue consulting with NATSIAC on the best way to progress the resolution of GS23/17. Clearly more resources are needed if we are to undertake the clergy training which is at the heart of that resolution. We apologise that we have unable to progress these goals faster.

Recommendation 3: Family Violence in First Nations Communities

That the General Synod, noting that the recent Federal Government draft National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children prioritises two five-year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander action plans, requests the Family Violence Working Group (or Families and Culture Commission if ratified by General Synod) to continue monitoring this development, to work with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council (NATSIAC), the Church's First Nations leaders and relevant diocesan teams to assist them to develop family violence prevention resources appropriate for their context and to report back to the next General Synod.

6. THE FAMILIES AND CULTURE COMMISSION

52. Family violence is a large and complex problem. An adequate response by our Church requires more resources and a more comprehensive response than we are realistically able to progress within a committee-driven structure, either at General Synod or diocesan level. The Working Group also notes the overwhelming amount of goodwill which dioceses have towards developing a comprehensive and common approach; in addition, faith settings have been identified as a key area for bringing about change in the Federal Government's National Plan.
53. At our second National FVWG conference, the following were identified as priorities
 - I. Developing a national network for resource sharing
 - II. Funding the Church's response to Family Violence and creating positions to drive change
 - III. Developing sound teaching
 - IV. Conducting services of lament
 - V. Working with each other
 - VI. Cooperating with national and local agencies
 - VII. Creating clear branding and communication
 - VIII. Training our clergy and our laity (many of whom are 'first responders') in pastoral care and in conflict management.
 - IX. Developing relationships with Agencies

54. At this conference, there was an observable sense that dioceses felt they could not do the work alone and saw the need for a national response and resourcing.
55. Few dioceses are able to fund the employment of a local person to drive these changes. By co-funding a Commission resourced with a National Project Manager that can strategically bring existing initiatives together and introduce fresh strategies to benefit the whole church, we can make real progress.
56. Establishing a new Anglican Commission for our National Church will give the work the structure that is needed for lasting change to be accomplished. The Commission would lead a national approach to a significant problem affecting our members and their communities.
57. The Family Violence Working Group therefore recommended the establishment of a new commission, the Families and Culture Commission, to address these matters to Synod and the Standing Committee. The Working Group anticipates the ongoing work of the Commission⁴ would include
- a. examining questions that relate to family violence affecting members of the Church, the drivers of violence and the well-being of families and women referred to it by the Primate, the Standing Committee or the General Synod, and to report thereon to the referring party and to the Standing Committee, and
 - b. making recommendations to the Standing Committee on matters relating to family violence affecting members of the Church, violence prevention and the well-being of families and women.

Operationally, work referred by the Primate, Standing Committee or General Synod would include

- I. providing operational leadership for a national networked program of implementation of the Ten Commitments of the Church, working collaboratively with dioceses and churches;
- II. resourcing the work of provinces and dioceses to respond to the key findings of the National Family Violence Project;
- III. establishing national communities of practice for priority areas of our strategy;
- IV. networking the sharing of resources across Dioceses and Provinces;
- V. furthering our understanding of, and response to, violence within the Australian Anglican Church population, including violence against the elderly and violence as it is experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse members of the church;
- VI. working with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council (NATSIAC), the Church's First Nations leaders and relevant diocesan teams, to assist them in development of family violence prevention resources appropriate for their context;
- VII. Monitoring and assessing developments on the NAFVP and other relevant research;
- VIII. Building relationships and acting as the primary liaison for key internal and external partners including Federal Government peak bodies such

⁴ The commission name: "Families and Culture Commission' gives a positive potential to the work of the commission. We want not only to address a problem but to also lead to the flourishing of families in our churches. We note also the recent establishment by the Church of England of its positively-titled 'Families and Households Commission'.

as Our Watch, and assisting dioceses with the development of local relationships in the states;

- IX. Developing and managing targets, performance metrics and action plans across the Church.

58. In late 2021, General Synod Standing Committee, noting the results of the National Anglican Family Violence Research Project, the scope of prevention work outlined in the Ten Commitments made by the Church and the long-term nature of culture change:

- a. established a new commission to continue the work of the Family Violence Working Group to be ratified at the Eighteenth Session of General Synod (GS18)
- b. agreed that the commission would be called the Families and Culture Commission
- c. asked the Church Law Commission to draft an amendment to section 8 of the Strategic Issues, Commissions, Task Forces and Networks Canon 1998 to add the commission and to add a new section 12 D to outline its functions
- d. noted the Family Violence Working Group's intention to bring a motion to GS18 to resource the commission's work

Recommendation 4: Families and Culture Commission

That the General Synod, noting the results of the *National Anglican Family Violence Research Project*, the scope of prevention work outlined in the Ten Commitments made by the Church and the long-term nature of culture change

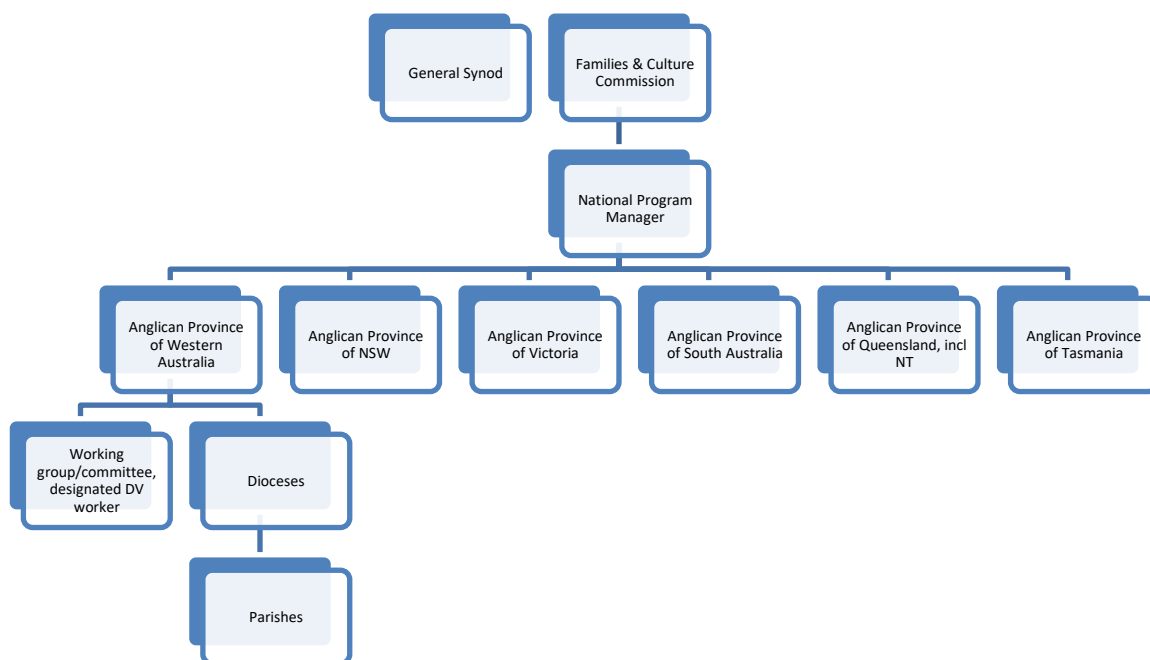
- a) ratifies the new Families and Culture Commission established by the General Synod Standing Committee
- b) confirms the functions of the Families and Culture Commission to be
 - I. to examine questions that relate to family violence affecting members of the Church, the drivers of violence and the well-being of families and women referred to it by the Primate, the Standing Committee or the General Synod, and to report thereon to the referring party and to the Standing Committee, and
 - II. to make recommendations to the Standing Committee on matters relating to family violence affecting members of the Church, violence prevention and the well-being of families and women.
- c) confirms that any resolutions at this Synod which referred tasks to the Family Violence Working Group will now be referred to the Families and Culture Commission.

Resourcing the Families and Culture Commission

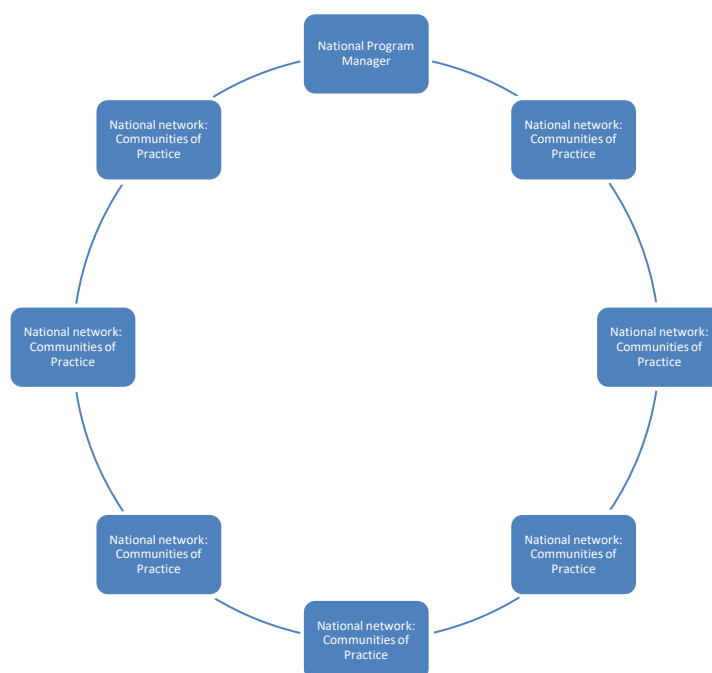
59. With the extent of the problems now known in the Anglican Church, we can respond as a church with actions that result in meaningful change. The Working Group recommends that the Commission be resourced with the employment of a National Program Manager who can work with our provinces and dioceses to embed our Ten Commitments to prevent and respond to violence. The Working Group considers that meaningful change will occur when the following factors are present:

- Strong commitment demonstrated with outspoken leadership
- Systemic and structural drivers of violence addressed
- Synodical will and resulting policies
- The creation of data to measure the problem and drive and measure change
- Partnerships are redrawn and silo'd approaches minimised

60. Employing a National Program Manager to work with the Commission would ensure a well resourced National Approach to this issue in the church. We outline this National Approach below and compare it to other approaches. A further comparison of costs and of what work can be achieved under the three model scenarios outlined above is at Appendix 5.
61. A National Approach. A National Program Manager, taking direction from the Families and Culture Commission, and working across and with Australian Anglican provinces and those dioceses who are not part of provinces.



62. Working under the direction of the Families and Culture Commission, the National Program Manager would also lead and coordinate Communities of Practice: networks across the national church of diocesan representatives focused on embedding each of the Ten Commitments for prevention and response to family violence.
63. The National Program Manager would be a resource that the whole church could utilise to embed consistent and meaningful changes, managing programs initiated by the Families and Culture Commission and drawn from the Ten Commitments. They would help provinces and dioceses (and in some cases particular parishes) with resources. Aspects of their role would include bringing the church together in working on this issue, working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait lay and clergy leadership and NATSIAC, communicating the work being done that makes visible the value we assign to prevention and response to family violence, creating communications and resources, drawing together the resources that currently reside in particular dioceses, adapting resources such as policies and communications to suit cultural and linguistic contexts in particular dioceses, and training or consulting on training of clergy and laity.



64. Key Focus areas.

The first work of the Families and Culture Commission, through the National Program Manager role would be to establish relationships with each Province and any existing diocesan Domestic Violence staff, and establish the work of communities of practice focused around each of the Ten Commitments. Helping the church to work in partnership, each Community of Practice (COP) will refine a long-term strategy with action plans that relate to primary, secondary and tertiary prevention and response to family violence. The Program Manager will be the hands and feet of our General Synod Families and Culture Commissions work, coordinating and rolling out these strategies in the most collaborative and efficient way for the whole church. Early achievements would be around COP workshops, the development of communications and the approval of existing training and the design of targeted training for our clergy and laity.

65. A Provincial Approach without National Program Management and Resourcing

Some provinces have set up a Family Violence or Domestic Violence Committee or working group of volunteer members. These groups could work with the Mothers Union in their province, suggest prayer services and run workshops. Their work would be limited by the volunteer nature of their membership and they would be focused on provincial outcomes. These provincial groups could recommend agenda items and resourcing matters for Bishop's Councils. Again, this work would be limited by the workload and finances of the Bishop's Council.

66. A Diocesan Approach without National Program Management and Resourcing

Some dioceses have established a Family Violence or Domestic Violence Committee or working group of volunteer members. These groups could work with diocesan Mothers Union, suggest prayer services, run workshops. Their work would be limited by the volunteer nature of their membership. These diocesan groups could suggest agenda items for Bishop's Councils. Again, this work would be limited by the workload of the Bishop's Council and finances of the diocese. Some Dioceses may raise funds for a local domestic violence worker who could run workshops and assist particular parishes keen to implement initiatives to prevent or respond to family violence.

67. Conclusion

Those of us who work to introduce change in our parishes and dioceses may be familiar with the strategic importance of the trinity of 'stating', 'staffing' and 'staging' new initiatives. For example, if we want to grow our children's ministry, we firstly 'state' that desirable vision in our church vision documents and talk about it at our parish councils and in our leadership priorities. Secondly we allocate funding and 'staff' and resource the children's ministry, and thirdly, we ensure that children's ministry is a feature of our regular Sunday meetings and weekly ministry as a church community. In relation to family violence affecting Australian Anglicans we have taken step one of this trinity: we have shone a light on the problem and we have stated that we desire to address the problem. There is only so much that committees can accomplish. The next step to achieve meaningful change across our churches is to staff and stage our priorities in regard to these matters. A National Program Manager is needed to lead this work. Having consulted with the General Secretary and with Standing Committee, the Working Group recommends that \$52,000 be allocated in the 2022 General Synod Statutory Assessment budget and \$186,000 in the 2023 budget and 2024-25 forecasts. This amount will allow for the employment of a Program Manager and an adequate amount for equipment, oncosts, travel, meetings and outsourced services (graphic design, printing, video preparation, conference hosting) to produce key outputs.

Recommendation 5: Resourcing the Families and Culture Commission

That the General Synod, noting the results of the National Anglican Family Violence Research Project, the scope of prevention work outlined in the Ten Commitments made by the Church and the long-term nature of culture change supports the allocation of General Synod resources to meet the objectives of the Family and Culture Commission and

- a. requests the Treasurer to recast the General Synod budget to allocate \$52,000 to the Family and Culture Commission in the 2022 General Synod Statutory Assessment budget and \$186,000 in the 2023 budget and 2024-25 forecasts; and
- b. requests Standing Committee to apply this funding to staffing and resourcing the Anglican Church of Australia's prevention and response to family violence affecting its members.

APPENDIX 1 – MOTIONS FOR THE 18th GENERAL SYNOD**Motion 1: National Anglican Family Violence Project**

The General Synod receives the reports of the National Anglican Family Violence Project commissioned by the Anglican Church of Australia Standing Committee:

- I. National Anglican Family Violence Research Report: for the Anglican Church of Australia
 - II. NAFVP Prevalence Study Report,
 - III. NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leaders Study Report, and
 - IV. NAFVP Experience Study Report, and
- a) notes the 28 findings of the Research Project
 - b) 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
 - c) requests dioceses to respond to the findings of the National Family Violence Project and to introduce and develop primary prevention strategies and pastoral responses relating to family violence.

Motion 2: Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church of Australia

The General Synod:

- a) notes the development of the Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church of Australia as a best practice guide for the Anglican Church of Australia to prevent and respond to violence.
- b) notes the endorsement of the Ten Commitments for prevention and response to domestic and family violence in the Anglican Church of Australia by the Standing Committee
- c) thanks those dioceses who have adopted the Ten Commitments in their recent diocesan Synods
- d) encourages remaining dioceses to adopt the Ten Commitments at their coming synods.

MOTION 3: Families and Culture Commission

The General Synod, noting *the results of the National Anglican Family Violence Research Project, the scope of prevention work outlined in the Ten Commitments made by the Church and the long-term nature of culture change*

- a) ratifies the new Families and Culture Commission established by the General Synod Standing Committee
- b) confirms the functions of the Families and Culture Commission to be
 - I. to examine questions that relate to family violence affecting members of the Church, the drivers of violence and the well-being of families and women referred to it by the Primate, the Standing Committee or the General Synod, and to report thereon to the referring party and to the Standing Committee, and
 - II. to make recommendations to the Standing Committee on matters relating to family violence affecting members of the Church, violence prevention and the well-being of families and women.

- c) confirms that any resolutions at this synod which referred tasks to the Family Violence Working Group will now be referred to the Families and Culture Commission

Motion 4: Resourcing the Families and Culture Commission

The General Synod, noting the results of the National Anglican Family Violence Research Project, the scope of prevention work outlined in the Ten Commitments made by the Church and the long-term nature of culture change supports the allocation of General Synod resources to meet the objectives of the Family and Culture Commission and

- a. requests the Treasurer to recast the General Synod budget to allocate \$52,000 to the Family and Culture Commission in the 2022 General Synod Statutory Assessment budget and \$186,000 in the 2023 budget and 2024-25 forecasts; and
- b. requests Standing Committee to apply this funding to staffing and resourcing the Anglican Church of Australia's prevention and response to family violence affecting its members.

Motion 5: Family Violence and First Nations Communities

The General Synod, noting that the new Federal Government draft national plan to end violence against women and children prioritises two five-year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander action plans, requests the Families and Culture Commission to continue to monitor this development, to work with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council (NATSIAC), the Church's First Nations leaders and relevant diocesan teams to assist them to develop family violence prevention resources appropriate for their context and to report back to the next General Synod.

APPENDIX 2: NATIONAL ANGLICAN FAMILY VIOLENCE PROJECT: TOP LINE RESULTS

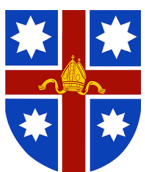
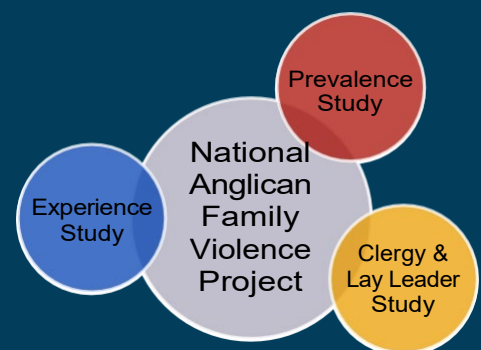


National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP)

National Anglican Family Violence Research Report Top Line Results

April 2021

NCLS Research



Commissioned by the
Anglican Church of Australia



Charles Sturt
University

National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP)

Warning: This report addresses intimate partner violence (domestic abuse) and contains examples of the types of violence that people have experienced.

National Anglican Family Violence Research Report: Top Line Results

The authors of this report offer our thanks to:

- The Anglican Church of Australia General Synod's Family Violence Working Group, chaired by Reverend Tracy Lauersen and the Project Steering Group
- The Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee
- Colleagues who assisted us with advice and reviews of our work for this study
- Tracy McEwan for her contribution to the analysis and writing for the Experience Study
- Respondents in all studies for the time and effort to participate, and in particular
- Respondents who have their own direct experience of intimate partner violence who drew on their strength and courage to share for the sake of others.

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Report Design by Aileen Noguera.

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1 Foreword



Anglican Church of Australia

General Synod Family Violence Working Group

Australia has an intimate partner violence (IPV) problem. Many of us would be familiar with the widely reported findings that on average in Australia, one woman each week is murdered by a current or former intimate partner. Research tells us that 1 in 3 Australian women report having experienced physical or sexual violence from the age of 15.¹ Tragically, violence is often at the hands of a current or former partner and it is gendered, with significantly more women experiencing violence and its impacts than men.

We also know that IPV (a subset of family violence) is experienced in different ways by different communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities report different levels of prevalence and different drivers of violence. Disabled people, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities report different rates and experiences of violence.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence reported in 2016 that faith communities were vital settings for influencing attitudes and providing leadership in relation to family violence.² However, the role that our churches are able to play was limited until now by a lack of current Australian data on how women and men in *church communities* experience violence. In order to understand the nature and prevalence of IPV in our church communities so that we can contribute to overcoming this scourge, our 2017 General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia resolved to investigate its prevalence and nature in our own church population.³ Following the Synod motion, our Standing Committee established the Family Violence Working Group, with one of its objectives being to investigate, and if possible to commission, a research study into the nature and prevalence of family violence within the Australian Anglican Church population.

This top line report of the National Anglican Family Violence Project highlights the results of that objective and subsequent research. It provides valuable information about the nature and prevalence of IPV in Anglican church communities. The key findings of this research tell us that there is a significant IPV problem within the Australian Anglican Church population. This is tragic, it is confronting and it is lamentable. But knowing about it, including gaining insight into the nature of the problem as it occurs in communities of faith, we can now respond appropriately to prevent and address it.

Thank you to the many Anglicans who participated in this study, particularly those who have experienced IPV and its ongoing effects. We are very grateful for your willingness to share. Thank you to the members of our working group: the Right Reverend Genieve Blackwell, the Reverend Scott Holmes, Ms Ruth Holt, the Reverend Sandy Grant and Dr Karin Sowada. All of whose hard work has

¹ <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/quick-facts/> quoting Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2017. Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2016, ABS cat. no. 4906.0. Canberra: ABS.

² <http://rcfv.archive.royalcommission.vic.gov.au/MediaLibraries/RCFamilyViolence/Reports/Final/RCFV-Vol-V.pdf>, p32ff.

³ R50/17 Domestic Violence Longitudinal Study

been invaluable in progressing the project. Thank you to Dr Ruth Powell and Dr Miriam Pepper, researchers at NCLS Research who conducted the research - for enabling us to understand the prevalence and nature of IPV amongst Anglicans, and thank you to the members of our Anglican Church of Australia Standing Committee.

The Standing Committee of the Anglican Church of Australia has received the reports of the project and endorsed 10 commitments for prevention and response. They are focused on cultural change, education, training, and support. These can be accessed on the General Synod webpage: www.anglican.org.au.

The Family Violence Working Group will continue to consult with Dioceses and work on bringing further recommendations arising from their work and the National Family Violence Project research to the 18th General Synod of the Church.

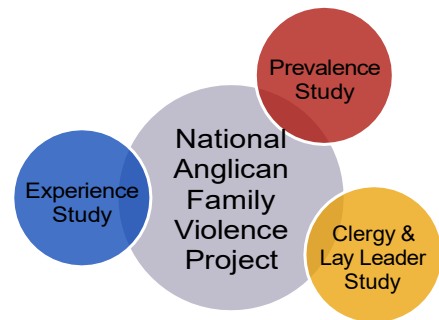


The Reverend Tracy Lauersen Convenor,
Family Violence Working Group,
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2 Executive Summary



This report provides a top line overview of results from three studies that make up the National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP), undertaken between 2019 and early 2021. The aim of this research project is to investigate the nature and prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) among those with a connection to the Anglican Church of Australia.



2.1 NAFVP Prevalence Study

How prevalent is intimate partner violence among Australians who identify as Anglican?

The study was an online survey of over 2,000 males and females, aged 18+, conducted in December 2019. The Online Research Unit hosted the survey and provided the respondents. Results for a sample of the general public (n=1146) were compared with Australians who identified as Anglican (n=825). A larger sample of Anglicans (n=1382) was used to compare those who attended church regularly with those who didn't. These were non-probability samples from online panels so representativeness to the wider population cannot be claimed.

- 1 The prevalence of intimate partner violence among Anglicans was the same or higher than in the wider Australian community.
- 2 The prevalence of intimate partner violence among church-attending Anglicans was the same or higher than among other Anglicans.
- 3 The prevalence of intimate partner violence was higher among women than men.
- 4 Most Anglican victims of domestic violence did not seek help from Anglican churches.

2.2 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study

What are the attitudes and practices regarding IPV among Anglican clergy and local church leaders?

All Anglican parishes were sent invitations for their leaders to take part in the Clergy and Lay Leader Survey, and responses were received from approximately a quarter of Anglican parishes. The final number of survey respondents was 827, from 358 parishes, consisting of 383 clergy respondents and 444 lay respondents.

Attitudes and knowledge

1. Clergy views on gender roles within marriage and the family varied strongly by church tradition.
2. Clergy and lay leaders were well informed about the breadth of domestic violence.
3. Clergy and lay leaders understood that it is more often men than women who commit domestic violence.

4. Clergy and lay leaders were sensitive to the wide array of factors that may contribute to domestic violence.
5. Clergy and lay leaders were aware of the widespread nature of the problem of domestic violence in Australia, but less aware of its prevalence in church communities.
6. Most clergy believed that Scripture is misused by the abuser in Christian families.

Practices in local churches

7. Churches have a role in education about domestic violence.
8. Most clergy had been aware of victims of abuse in their churches and had dealt with specific domestic violence situations as part of their ministry.
9. Dealing with domestic violence situations resulted in some negative impacts for most clergy.
10. Two thirds of clergy had not collaborated with clergy/leaders from other churches in relation to domestic violence.

Equipped for response

11. Clergy confidence in their personal capacity to respond to domestic violence was low to moderate.
12. Although few leadership teams had been trained, there was moderate confidence in the churches' readiness to respond.
13. A minority of clergy felt very familiar with support services or very confident to refer people to them.
14. Familiarity with diocesan resources was moderate and ratings of diocesan support were evenly spread from excellent to very poor.
15. Views by clergy of the role of the bishop when a clergyperson was a victim or abuser were to be pastoral, to carry out disciplinary procedures and to seek involvement of services outside the church.

2.3 NAFVP Experience Study

What is the nature of experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) for those with a connection with Anglican churches? How has the Anglican Church featured in these experiences.

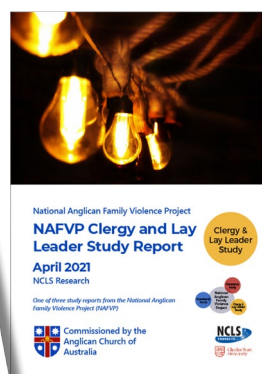
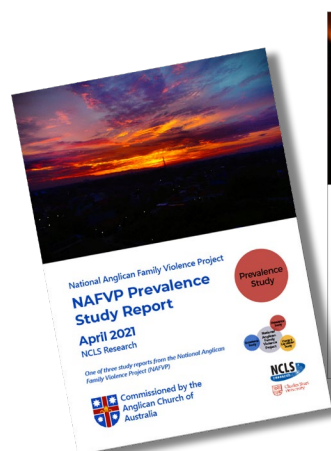
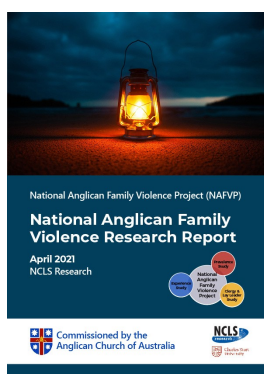
This study involved two phases. Some 305 respondents took part in a scoping survey and some 81% had IPV experience. The second phase involved face to face interviews. Of the 179 people who had direct experience, 86 were open to interview and 20 were selected. They spanned a diversity of experiences of and views about the Anglican Church in relation to IPV (e.g. positive, negative, mixed experiences) and diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.

16. Faith and church both assist and hinder those who are experiencing domestic violence.
17. Although unintended, Christian teachings sometimes contribute to and potentially amplify situations of domestic violence.
18. Perpetrators' misuse Christian teachings and positional power.
19. Christian teaching that addresses IPV can also empower victim-survivors to begin a process of change.
20. When churches acknowledge that domestic violence happens it can help victim-survivors.
21. Churches who have built awareness of domestic violence are more able to respond when victim-survivors are ready.

22. Trusted relationships in churches reduce isolation for victim-survivors.
23. Specialist domestic violence services and health professionals have a central role.
24. At their best, churches play a role in fulfilling the following needs after separation as a contribution to rebuilding and recovering life: to be safe, to have material provision, to be in relationships of care, empathy and acceptance, to have an identity, to make a contribution, to have a spiritual life and relationship with God.

Full results from across this project are presented in the main research report and three detailed reports for each study, which will be made available in coming months:

- *National Anglican Family Violence Research Report: for the Anglican Church of Australia.* (Powell & Pepper, 2021)
- *NAFVP Prevalence Study Report: The prevalence of intimate partner violence among Australians who identify as Anglican* (Pepper & Powell, 2021).
- *NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study Report: Anglican clergy and lay leader attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and practices regarding intimate partner violence* (Powell & Pepper, 2021).
- *NAFVP Experience Study Report: The nature of experiences of family violence for those with a connection with Anglican churches* (Pepper, Powell & McEwan, 2021).



3 Definitions & scope



3.1 Definitions

In this project, IPV is defined as violence between partners who are or were in a married or de facto relationship or a dating relationship. IPV is a subset of family violence, which refers to violence between family members, such as intimate partners, parents and children, siblings and extended family members (AIHW, 2018). IPV is defined by the World Health Organisation as: “behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours” (WHO 2010, p.10) and similarly the Australian National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey as: “any behaviour by a man or a woman within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm to those in the relationship” (ABS 2018). Typically, one partner tries to exert power and control over the other, usually through fear (AIHW 2018).

Behaviour toward the victim can include the following (AIHW 2018):

- Physical violence: slaps, hits, punches, being pushed down stairs or across a room, choking and burns, as well as the use of knives, firearms and other weapons.
- Sexual violence: rape, sexual abuse, unwanted sexual advances or harassment, being forced to watch or engage in pornography, sexual coercion, having sexual intercourse out of fear of what a partner might do
- Psychological and emotional abuse: intimidation, belittling, humiliation, and the effects of financial, social and other non-physical forms of abuse. This may also include “gaslighting”, where the abuser attempts to make the victim doubt their perceptions, thoughts and sanity (Gleeson, 2018). Spiritual abuse is a form of psychological and emotional abuse that is specific to religious/spiritual contexts (Oakley et al., 2018).
- Coercive control: isolating victims from family and friends, controlling access to finances, monitoring their movements, restricting access to information and assistance.
- Threats of violence: against the victim, children and others important to the victim.

In summary, IPV:

- Is a subset of a broader concept known as “family violence”, which concerns violence between family members.
- Is between intimate partners: those who are or were in a married or de facto relationship or a dating relationship.
- Is multi-faceted: Physical violence is only one type of violence. Violence can be expressed in various ways – including physical, sexual, psychological, social, emotional, financial, and spiritual.
- Is about individual acts and sustained patterns: It is not only individual violent acts, but also patterns of sustained violence wherein a person tries to intimidate and control their partner or former partner.
- Is used synonymously in this project with the terms “domestic violence” and “domestic abuse”.

Limits of project scope: This project had to have some limits in its scope in order to conduct meaningful and effective research. So, the project does not address:

- Violence between people who are not intimate partners
- The abuse of children (anyone under 18 years of age)
- The abuse of elders
- Violence within specific minority groups, such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- People who do not have a current or historic link to the Anglican Church.

3.2 Ethical conduct and trauma-informed practices

The research has been undertaken in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC, 2018) and with the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of Charles Sturt University. Only participants who had given their full and informed consent to take part were included in the study. Every effort was made to ensure confidentiality with all data made anonymous or de-identified in all outputs. Further, researchers were trained in trauma-informed approaches to research. Care for participants' wellbeing was upheld at all times and participant distress protocols were developed for the research. Information about national and local support services was provided to all participants.

3.3 Limitations of research methodology: non-probability samples

The three surveys undertaken for this project provide results which offer much insight. Using statistical terminology, a limitation of these studies is that they each use non-probability samples. Probability sampling means that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected and therefore a random sample will be statistically representative of the whole population.

The Prevalence Study methodology was a non-probability survey utilising samples drawn from online panels. The Family Violence Working Group who commissioned this research wished to compare prevalence between church-attending Anglicans, others who identify as Anglican, and the Australian population. There were no existing data for this analysis, and the expense of collecting new data from a large enough probability sample (given the low incidence of church-attending Anglicans) is prohibitive. The Online Research Unit (ORU) hosted the survey and provided the samples. ORU describes itself as Australia's leading online data collection agency and meets ISO 20252 & ISO 26362 standards for both market research and panel work. However, because it utilises non-probability samples, it is not possible to claim that the whole population or all Anglicans are represented. In general, all online panels have some level of bias (e.g. those without internet are excluded). Notwithstanding these inherent limitations, online panels are widely used for research, including this study, and we believe they represented the most viable option available to meet the stated goals of the study. Counter measures that we implemented to address potential biases were to set demographic quotas on recruitment and to weight the data in line with Australian and Anglican population characteristics.

Non-probability samples were also used for the other two studies as they relied on people to choose to take part. The Clergy and Lay Leader Study was promoted directly to Anglican churches across Australia, with participation requested by all clergy and by lay leaders with an interest in the topic. The Experience Study Scoping Survey was promoted through a wide range of Anglican networks. All surveys were opt-in and with full disclosure of study aims. Significant care should also be taken in comparing the results from these surveys with other surveys, due to differences in method. See each of the Study Reports for further detailed discussion about methodology.

4 NAFVP Prevalence Study

The prevalence of domestic violence among people who identify as Anglican

4.1 Prevalence Study Method



Prevalence Study

The study was an online survey of over 2,000 males and females, aged 18+, conducted in December 2019. The Online Research Unit hosted the survey and provided the respondents. Standalone quotas were set for age, gender and location, derived from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing, with additional soft quotas set for education. Results for a sample of the general public (n=1146) were compared with Australians who identified as Anglican (n=825). A larger sample of Anglicans (n=1382) was used to compare those

who attended church regularly with those who didn't. These were non-probability samples from online panels so representativeness to the wider population cannot be claimed.

To measure IPV we used an established multidimensional scale of 'IPV victimisation'. The 15-item short form of the Composite Abuse Scale (CAS-SF), (Ford-Gilboe et al., 2016) is an instrument which lists specific acts in several domains and includes physical, sexual, financial and psychological violence. We also included a small number of spiritual abuse items in our study, which is appropriate for our study context (the Anglican Church). Five spiritual abuse items were sourced from Aune and Barnes (2018) and one was designed specifically for this study. Sample items are shown in the Research Report.

4.2 The prevalence of domestic violence: general public and Anglican populations

Key finding: The prevalence of intimate partner violence among Anglicans was the same or higher than in the wider Australian community.

It can be difficult to accurately record the extent of intimate partner violence in a population. Such incidents frequently occur behind closed doors and are often concealed by, and denied by, their perpetrators and sometimes by their victims (ABS, 2018). An aim of the Prevalence Study was to collect up-to-date information on how common or widespread domestic violence was, as reported by comparable samples of all Australians and people who identified as Anglican.

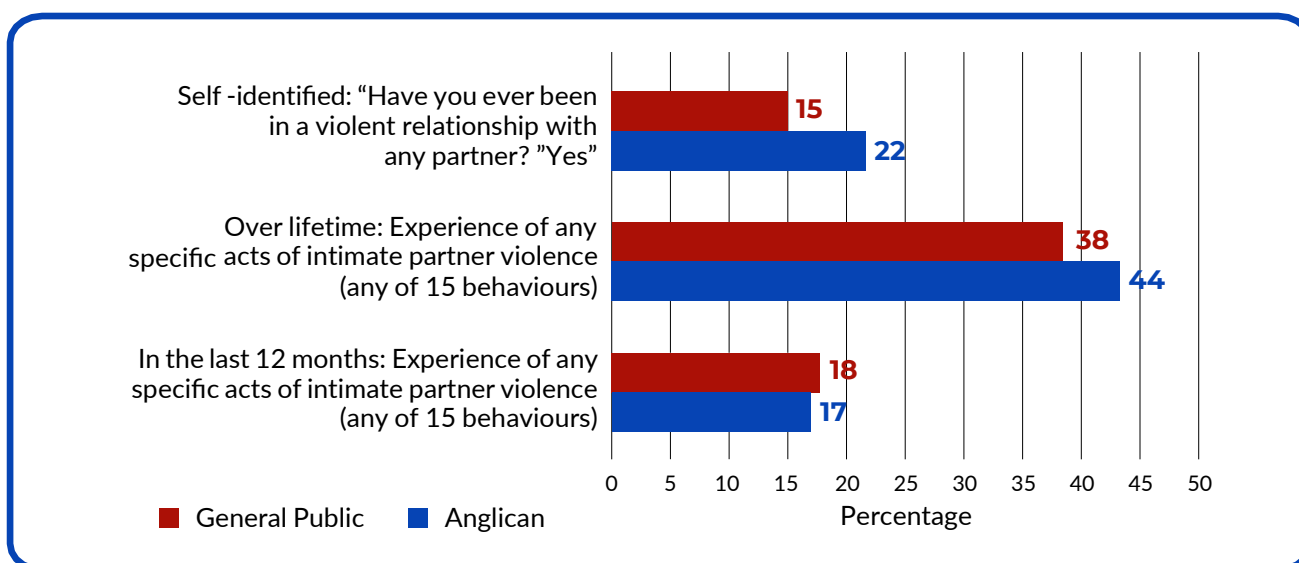
When asked the direct question "Have you ever been in a violent relationship with any partner?" some 22% of Anglicans who had ever been in an adult intimate relationship said "yes". This compares to 15% for the equivalent group of the general Australian public.

When presented with specific instances of violence, higher proportions of respondents in the general public and among Anglicans agreed that these actions had happened to them during their adult

lifetime. In the general population, the prevalence of IPV overall across their adult lifetime was 38% of those who had ever been in an adult intimate relationship. Among those who identified as Anglican it was 44% (see Figure 1). Some 10% of the general public sample, and 10% of Anglicans, also reported having experienced spiritual abuse at some point in their adult life.

The survey was conducted in December 2019, so respondents were being asked to report on their experiences over 2019. In the 2019 NAFVP Prevalence Study, the prevalence of IPV in the previous 12 months was 18% in the general public sample, and 17% in the Anglican sample. Some 5% of the general public sample, and 4% of Anglicans, also reported having experienced spiritual abuse in the previous 12 months.

Figure 1: Three measures of prevalence of IPV: general public & Anglican samples



Source: 2019 NAFVP Prevalence Study. A global item asked respondents to self-identify as having been in a violent relationship. A series of individual acts were listed using items from the Composite Abuse Scale Short Form (CAS-SF), with additional items about spiritual abuse (not shown in chart). Percentages are based on those who indicated they had ever been in an adult intimate relationship (general population n = 949; Anglican n = 765).

4.3 Church attendance and domestic violence

Key finding; The prevalence of intimate partner violence among church-attending Anglicans was the same or higher than among other Anglicans.

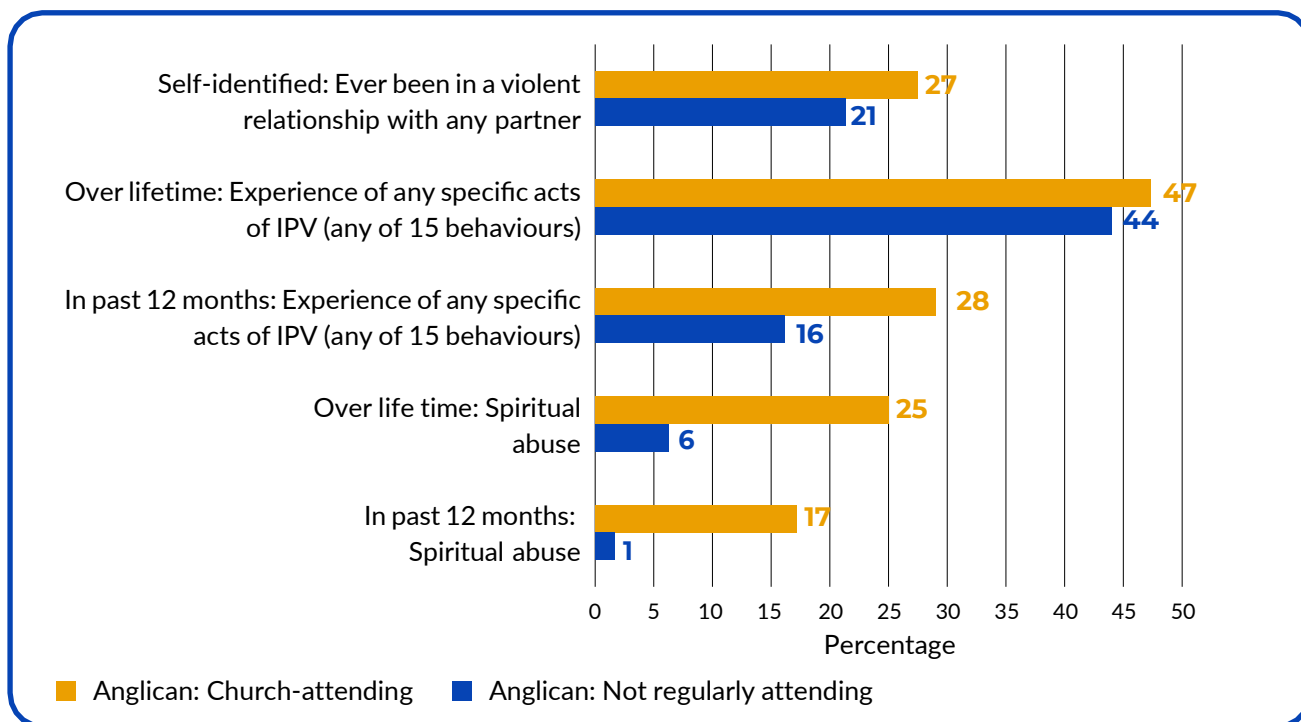
Defining church attendance: We distinguish "church-attending Anglicans" and "Anglicans who do not attend regularly" as Anglicans who indicated that they attended religious services at least several times a year versus those who attended less often. Church attenders comprised 26% of all Anglicans in the Prevalence Study. This broader definition was chosen, rather than "at least monthly" church attendance, in order to achieve a reasonable number of cases of church attenders for analysis and to reduce vulnerability to weighting fluctuations. In a further test, the definition of church-attending was set as "at least monthly". While the percentages differed for this smaller sample, the overall patterns of the two analyses are similar.

When asked the direct question “Have you ever been in a violent relationship with any partner?” some 27% of church-attending Anglicans who had ever been in an adult intimate relationship said “yes”. This compares to 21% of other Anglicans (see Figure 2). This was not a statistically significant difference.

In terms of the CASR-SF, the lifetime prevalence of IPV overall did not differ significantly between church-attending Anglicans and other Anglicans (47% and 44% respectively). The 12-month prevalence of IPV was higher for church-attending Anglicans than for other Anglicans (28% and 16% respectively). Possible reasons for this significant difference when considering a 12-month time frame are not obvious.

Some 25% of church-attending Anglicans reported having experienced spiritual abuse at some point in their adult life, compared with 6% of other Anglicans. Some 17% of church-attending Anglicans reported having experienced spiritual abuse in the previous 12 months, compared with 1% of other Anglicans.

Figure 2: Experience of violence in the all Anglican sample by church attendance



Source: 2019 NAFVP Prevalence Study. Percentages are based on those who indicated they had ever been in an adult intimate relationship (all Anglican n = 1,287).
 NB. Differences between attendance types for self-identified and lifetime measures were not statistically significantly different.

4.4 Gender and domestic violence

Key finding: The prevalence of intimate partner violence was higher among women than men.

In the survey, women were much more likely than men to have experienced intimate partner violence, both in the Australian public and among Anglicans, and among both frequent and non-frequent attenders, with the exception of reports from the past 12 months.

Table 1: Lifetime prevalence of IPV and spiritual abuse victimisation in the general public and Anglican samples by gender

	General Public			Anglican		
	Female %	Male %	Total %	Female %	Male %	Total %
IPV – any (15 behaviours)	44	31	38	52	33	44
Physical violence – any (7 behaviours)	31	19	25	39	23	32
Sexual violence – any (2 behaviours)	18	7	13	23	5	15
Harassment – any (2 behaviours)	20	12	16	30	15	23
Spiritual abuse – any (6 behaviours)	11	10	10	13	6	10

Source: 2019 NAFVP Prevalence Study. Items are from the Composite Abuse Scale Short Form (CAS-SF), with additional items about spiritual abuse. Percentages are based on those who indicated they had ever been in an adult intimate relationship (general population n = 949; Anglican n = 765).

4.5 Approachability of the church

Key finding: Most Anglican victims of domestic violence did not seek help from Anglican churches (88%).

The small group who did seek help most commonly approached clergy and most reported that it either positively changed their situation, or helped them to feel supported.

5 NAFVP Clergy & Lay Leader Study:

knowledge, practices & being equipped



5.1 Clergy and Lay Leader Study Method

Clergy & Lay Leader Study

The Clergy and Lay Leader Study focuses on the attitudes and practices regarding IPV among Anglican clergy and local church leaders.

It used a mixed methods approach with two phases:

Phase 1: Focus groups of Anglican clergy in the Diocese of Sydney, NSW (metropolitan) in December 2019 and the Diocese of Southern Queensland (metropolitan and regional) in February 2020 (two groups in

total). Clergy participants who responded to a general invitation were particularly invested in the topic, with significant and direct experience with ministering to both victim survivors and perpetrators. Data assisted with design of an online survey.

Phase 2: An online survey of approximately 30 minutes duration was promoted to parishes across Australia from May to August 2020, with a request for all clergy plus interested lay leaders to participate. The final number of respondents was 827, from 387 parishes, consisting of:

- 383 clergy respondents, two-thirds of whom were rectors, vicars or senior ministers, from 304 parishes, and
- 444 lay respondents, a quarter of whom were wardens and a fifth of whom were other parish councillors, from 201 parishes.

Results may be biased towards clergy and lay leaders with a stronger awareness of and interest in the topic than is likely to be the case across Australian Anglican parishes as a whole.

5.2 Attitudes and knowledge regarding domestic violence

Clergy views on gender roles within marriage and the family varied strongly by church tradition.

Church and the institution of marriage are deeply interwoven, particularly for churchgoers. Most clergy, across church traditions, agreed with the statement that "marriage is a sacred covenant which is important to preserve". However, church tradition plays a strong role with regard to views on gender roles within marriage and the family with key differences between Anglo-Catholic clergy and clergy from Evangelical and Reformed traditions.

Clergy and lay leaders were well informed about breadth of domestic violence. Almost all survey participants understood that domestic violence was more than physical and sexual violence but also included psychological abuse and controlling behaviours. While clergy were more likely to indicate this awareness than an earlier survey of the Australian population, it is possible that the increasingly high profile of domestic violence in the Australian media may have improved general knowledge and understanding.

Clergy and lay leaders understood that it is more often men than women who commit domestic violence. This view aligns with wider evidence from various sources that it is mainly men, or men more often, who commit acts of domestic violence.

Clergy and lay leaders were sensitive to the wide array of factors that may contribute to domestic violence. Factors considered by a majority of church leaders to be present a lot of the time were one partner wanting to dominate or control the other, having an alcohol problem, and having a narcissistic personality. In addition, a wide array of other factors were acknowledged as playing a part.

Clergy and lay leaders were aware of the widespread nature of the problem of domestic violence in Australia, but less aware of its prevalence in church communities. Nine in ten clergy and lay leaders agreed that domestic violence is common in Australia, and around six in ten agreed that domestic violence is just as common in churches. A view that domestic violence is less common in the churches is challenged by the NAFVP Prevalence Study which found that people who experience domestic violence are part of Anglican Church communities in similar or higher proportions than the wider community.

Most clergy believed that Scripture is misused by the abuser in Christian families. Misuse of Scripture by the abuser was considered to be implicated at least some of the time by nine in ten clergy, while the theology of male headship was a factor at least some of the time for eight in ten clergy (seven in ten Evangelicals, nine in ten Anglo-Catholics).

5.3 Practices in local church contexts

Churches have a role in education about domestic violence. There was widespread agreement among clergy that domestic violence is an issue that should be discussed in church and that local churches should do more to raise awareness of domestic violence. Around seven in ten clergy reported that their church prayed for victims of domestic violence in the previous 12 months. A minority of clergy reported often or sometimes talking about domestic violence in public settings, including preaching. According to clergy, other actions by churches, such as display of posters and leaflets, donations of money or goods or working with local organisations, occurred in around a third to half of churches.

Most clergy had been aware of victims of abuse in their churches and had dealt with specific domestic violence situations as part of their ministry. Three quarters of clergy had been aware of people in their churches who were victims of domestic violence, and around half were aware of perpetrators. The most common action, used by almost all clergy who had dealt with domestic violence situations, was to provide pastoral and spiritual care to the victim, followed by referring the victim to support services. Around half of clergy offered counselling to the victim, talked to the perpetrator and assisted with a safety plan. More interventionist actions such as contacting the police, providing the rectory as a refuge, or intervening to keep children safe were undertaken by a quarter of clergy. Most clergy felt that having women on the pastoral team equips a church to better respond to domestic violence.

Dealing with domestic violence situations resulted in some negative impacts for most clergy. Among clergy who have dealt with domestic violence situations in ministry, the majority identified a negative personal impact. Fatigue was particularly common and four in ten said they had experienced

manipulation from a perpetrator of domestic violence. Domestic violence situations may be protracted and complex, and especially if both perpetrator and victim are a part of the same church and impacts on clergy considerable.

Two thirds of clergy had not collaborated with clergy/leaders from other churches in relation to domestic violence. This survey question was non-specific and it is unclear whether clergy were reporting on collaboration on educational programs, seeking information and advice from others, and perhaps even passing on information about particular domestic violence situations. Three in ten had made contact with the diocese (informed or sought help) in relation to a specific domestic violence situation.

5.4 How equipped are clergy and lay leaders to respond?

Clergy confidence in their personal capacity to respond to domestic violence was low to moderate. On the whole, clergy reported being knowledgeable, experienced and trained in domestic violence situations. However, confidence in their personal capacity to respond to domestic violence was low to moderate. Confidence was only a little higher among clergy who had been trained.

Although few leadership teams had been trained, there was moderate confidence in the churches' readiness to respond. A minority of lay respondents had been trained and their confidence was relatively low. However, clergy respondents were a little more likely to agree that their team knew how to respond to domestic violence situations than they themselves did personally.

A minority of clergy felt very familiar with support services or very confident to refer people to them. Almost all clergy felt that it was their responsibility when ministering to a victim of domestic violence to help them to access support services, yet a minority felt very confident to make these referrals. Given the importance of specialised support for people in domestic violence situations, clergy awareness of domestic violence support services and confidence to refer people to them could be further improved through targeted training.

Familiarity with diocesan resources was moderate and ratings of diocesan support were evenly spread from excellent to very poor. Familiarity with resources (e.g. documents, training, support) from the diocese was moderate, while familiarity with resources from other parts of the Anglican church or from other Christian groups was lower. Ratings of diocesan support for churches to respond to domestic violence was fairly evenly spread from excellent support to very poor support.

Views by clergy of the role of the bishop when a clergyperson was a victim or abuser were: to be pastoral, to carry out disciplinary procedures and to seek involvement of services outside the church. Using an open text format, most respondents gave their views about the role of the bishop when a clergyperson is a victim or a perpetrator. Views most commonly expressed about the role of the bishop when a clergyperson is a victim was to provide pastoral support, and when a clergyperson is a perpetrator, to carry out discipline accordance with church procedures. In both cases, the second most common response was that the bishop should seek the involvement of organisations and services outside of the church.

6 NAFVP Experience Study:

Hearing from those with experiences of IPV



6.1 NAFVP Experience Study Method



The key research questions for the NAFVP Experience Study were “What is the nature of experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) for those with a connection with Anglican churches?”, and “How has the Anglican Church featured in these experiences?”

The study used a mixed methods approach with two phases.

Phase 1: Online scoping and recruitment survey. The online scoping and recruitment survey aimed to probe the diversity of experiences of IPV across the Anglican Church and to assist with the recruitment of interview participants. The survey was open from September 2020 to January 2021. Some 305 individuals took part, with 81% having had some sort of personal experience with IPV, including 58% who had experienced violence from an intimate partner.

Phase 2: Face-to-face interviews. Phase 2 involved individual in-depth qualitative interviews with 20 people across Australia (19 women and one man) who had experienced violence from an intimate partner (victim-survivors). These participants were handpicked following their participation in the online scoping and recruitment study. Interviews took place via Zoom, in person, and via phone, between November 2021 and February 2021. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and analysed by means of coding and interpreting the meaning and significance of the data at a deeper level. To understand the role of churches in participants’ experience of violence, we used a framework that drew together trajectories of abuse, church culture and relationships, and human needs.

This summary describes features of violence experienced by our participants and highlights a few key findings about:

- The role of the church within the dynamics of the abusive relationship, supporting people towards change or hindering them from it and as they rebuild and recover life.
- Participants recommendations for both church communities and church leaders.

6.2 About interview participants and features of violence

Anyone can experience domestic violence. It affects people from all backgrounds and walks of life. Violent relationships are characterised by a breadth of abusive behaviour and patterns of control and intimidation over time. Domestic abuse can cause significant harm to an individual’s wellbeing. We heard from our participants:

- The experience of various forms of violence – physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, social, economic and spiritual abuse
- Early warning signs or “red flags” that participants commented were sometimes present in the relationship

- Contrasts between violence at home and the image presented by the abusive partner in public
- Coercive controlling dynamics and cycles of abuse
- Participants' efforts to try and make sense of the abuse, especially personality disorders and problems such as narcissism (which may or may not have been formally diagnosed),
- The impact of the abuse on participants' wellbeing and identity
- Ways that participants used their agency, the ability to make choices and act on them, in the abusive relationship.

“Coercive control”: Fundamental to the dynamics in abusive behaviour is the misuse of power and control. Typically, one partner tries to exert power and control over the other, usually through fear (AIHW 2018). The term ‘coercive control’ has gained increased traction in Australia, with the support of the speciality family violence sector. It draws attention to the fact that an incident in isolation may seem insignificant, but when viewed in a context of a pattern of ongoing violence, its significance is more impactful. While isolated events or actions can be explained away, or perhaps seen in terms of a struggling or ‘bad’ marriage, the idea of coercive control captures the ongoing nature of domestic violence, which can pervade all of life and refers to the full breadth of abusive behaviours including physical, sexual, psychological, and more. It includes isolating victims from family and friends, controlling access to finances, monitoring their movements, restricting access to information and assistance (AIHW 2018). It impacts on victims’ independence, wellbeing and safety and is the most common risk factor leading up to an intimate partner homicide (Snell, 2020).

Cycles of violence: A common way that some participants described their experience of intimate partner violence was as a cycle. There were periods when the situation was less or not abusive, but then things would deteriorate again. This cyclic dynamic was one of a range of factors that kept victims ‘trapped’ in their situation.

He used to get triggered by small things...For example, if I didn't cook dinner, he used to hit me. If I didn't clean the house, he used to hit me. And I never understood why that happened. In my family, that never used to happen...Because those days, I had to call in sick all the time because I would be bruised all over... That was next level violence...Yes, it was tough. Those days were tough because I would end up with pain and aches in my body

Physical was unusual. The verbal and threatening and other emotional abuse was standard. It was really the blanket of our marriage. The emotional stuff never stopped... That was just constant. I never knew what I was coming home to... There was never really an in between and that was probably the hardest thing... the walking on eggshells all the time and it changed in an instant.

6.3 Findings about the role of the church

When people in abusive relationships are part of Anglican Church communities, their church interactions can be overwhelmingly positive or overwhelmingly negative. However, our research suggests that it is common for churches to play a dynamic and varied part. The full NAFVP Experience Study report is over 140 pages long. It is based on the analysis of survey responses from over 300 people and more than 400 pages of transcripts from 20 in-depth interviews with 19 women and one man from across Australia who had been in abusive relationships and also had a connection with an Anglican church. It contains many direct quotes from participants which indicate complex and nuanced journeys.

Participant experiences pointed to the different roles that churches can play during different phases of an abusive relationship. Church leaders and the church community play a role:

- Within the dynamic of ongoing abusive relationships
- In supporting people in abusive relationships to make choices and act on them and/or in impeding them from enacting change
- In helping or hindering them to rebuild and recover life.

6.3.1 The role of the church: religious teachings and norms

Faith and church both assist and hinder those who are experiencing domestic violence. Christian faith and being part of a church community can both assist and hinder people living in situations of intimate partner violence. Social and religious norms shape how people think they ought to behave within a local church context and also how they actually behave. This impacts on expectations and interactions with clergy as well as among churchgoers.

I think what was hard was battling that inner Anglican that said marriage is forever and you don't get divorced. And I'd been brought up to love and obey, submit, I was a perfect Anglican wife. I'd been brought up to believe that men were the head of the household and what they said went, not to question anything like that, just to pray hard and keep the kitchen clean and keep the children's faces clean and tidy

Although unintended, Christian teachings sometimes contribute to and potentially amplify situations of domestic violence. Our interviews showed that, however unintended it may be, teachings related to marriage, gender and forgiveness can be a contributing factor in the extension of the cycle of IPV and can create a situation of harm for people in abusive relationships. Absolutist discourses related to marriage as a lifelong commitment, the submission of the wife to the husband, unconditional forgiveness, and suffering for Christ – whether they are taught by church leaders, internalised by victim-survivors, or co-opted by abusers in this way – are harmful for those who experience abuse. Participants recounted feelings of self-doubt, self-blame, entrapment and shame that they directly attributed to certain discourses about intimate relationships. Conversely, discourses such as marriage as a covenant, the equality of partners in a marriage, and God's mercy and love can help to empower victim-survivors to extricate themselves from abusive relationships.

Perpetrators' misuse Christian teachings and positional power. Participants shared examples of how perpetrators made claims about Christian teachings and used their power in relation to church structures to control and extend the cycle of abuse. In some cases, participants said that their abusive partners used obligations around the sanctity of marriage, the headship of the husband, and the imperative to forgive to control them.

Examples of what was experienced as harmful within the context of abusive relationships are:

- Marriage is a lifelong commitment and a covenant that cannot be broken in any circumstances.
- Being the “perfect wife”.
- A man has control in a marriage and a wife must submit to her husband.
- Being faithful involves suffering and total self-giving.
- Forgiveness must be unconditional.

6.3.2 The role of the church: a culture of awareness and readiness to respond

I'd had a conversation with our minister at one point and he said, “no I don't think that's what the Bible says at all, I don't think God would oblige you to remain in that situation. There's clearly a power issue in this marriage and there's no place for that in a Christian marriage. There is at least some abuse going on in your home and that's done a lot of damage to you and you don't have to stay with that, you shouldn't be feeling scared in your own home. There's no place for control, you should be equal”. I left with his support and I stayed separated from him with the senior minister's support.

Christian teaching that addresses IPV can also empower victim-survivors to begin a process of change. At key moments - or crucial instants or occasions - in the cycle of abusive relationships - where people have an opportunity to make choices and act on them, clergy and church leaders can offer alternate perspectives that empower victim-survivors to begin a process of change. Among participants were people whose church had helped them to realise that they were experiencing domestic violence and that it wasn't acceptable. A sermon, or talking with their minister/pastor, helped provide a framework and language for their understanding. When clergy speak in ways that are fully sensitised by the reality of IPV in church communities - whether in teaching and preaching or privately in conversation - it can carry considerable weight with members of the congregation.

Discourses that participants described as liberating, whether heard from church leaders or sometimes by means of participants' own reading or listening, included:

- Marriage is a covenant between two parties and requires two parties to uphold it
- The partners in a marriage are equal and there is no place for one partner controlling the other
- God is merciful and loving and would support a partner leaving their abusive relationship.
 - God doesn't want vulnerable people to suffer.

Participants commented that Christian teachings about marriage and gender need to be communicated in ways that actively addresses the potential for and the reality of abuse in intimate relationships.

When churches acknowledge that domestic violence happens it can help victim-survivors. Giving visibility to the reality of intimate partner violence and acknowledgement of abusive relationships in church communities can support people living in situations of intimate partner violence.

Churches who have built awareness of domestic violence are more able to respond when victim-survivors are ready. People in abusive relationships can be better equipped to seize key moments for change if they know where to access to a scaffold of multi-faceted support.

6.3.3 The role of the church: ongoing trusted and caring relationships

In our analysis, we understood churches as places of or spaces for relationship. In this study, we were sensitised to the relationships and social interactions between our participants, church leaders and congregants. In cases where the partner was also a part of that church community, this also included relationships between the abusive partner and others in the church.

At its best the church community can provide a vital set of relationships, independent of the perpetrator, that can sustain victim-survivors across the trajectory of their experience.

Trusted relationships in churches reduce isolation for victim-survivors. While a person remains within the context of an abusive relationship, church relationships characterised by care and trust can reduce social isolation and provide support for people living in situations of IPV.

Trusted relationships within church communities support people to make choices and act on them by enabling meaningful, ongoing support and disclosures at key moments.

Participants highlighted the critical importance of genuine care. Asking after an individual's wellbeing may or may not result in a disclosure, but if done out of genuine concern for that person and in a way that doesn't expose them to other people or to judgment, this signals to the victim-survivor that this is someone they could perhaps reach out to in future. Trusted people in the church might not always know what to do or what to recommend, but if they show genuine concern for a person's wellbeing, perspective and agency it can make a real difference.

Specialist domestic violence services and health professionals have a central role. Specialist domestic violence support services and health professionals – sometimes in conjunction with church – play a central role in helping participants find safety and improve their overall well-being.

6.3.4 The role of church: ongoing support to rebuild and recover life

In our analysis we heard how churches can help or hinder those who experience abuse to meet their needs and based on a review of the data, framed needs as follows:

- To be safe
- To have material provision
- To be in relationships of care, empathy and acceptance
- To have an identity
- To make a contribution
- To have a spiritual life and relationship with God.

In this study, at the time of their interview, all participants had physically separated from their abusive partners. As participants shared their stories, it emerged that the impact of trauma often continued. Analysis revealed that church can play a role in fulfilling the following needs after separation as a contribution to rebuilding and recovering life.

To be safe: The church can be a place of safety and healing after separation. In cases where both partners have been part of a church community, there is no single solution about who remains connected. If a perpetrator remains in the community, the church needs to be equipped to hold the abuser to account and to keep the abused partner (and other people) safe.

To have material provision: After separation victim-survivors may need material support including individualised support services and day-to-day help with finances, food, housing and accessing specialist domestic violence support services such as counselling and legal aid.

To be in relationships of care, empathy and acceptance: After separation connections and relationships inside church characterised by empathy, care and trust were essential for a participant's wellbeing after separation.

To have their own identity: After separation churches can support victim-survivors as they re-establish their own identity by (1) not identifying the victim-survivor by their experience or marriage status; (2) allowing victim-survivor space and time to re-establish her self-identity.

To make a contribution: To be offering, helping to produce or achieve something was frequently a significant need for participants after separation. Many participants spoke about how they used their own experiences of IPV to support other victim-survivors. Several participants were active in raising awareness, both through formal church organisations and informal relationships. After separation, many participants went on to make significant contributions to the church through lay and ordained ministry.

To have a spiritual life and relationship with God: After separation, church was a place that facilitated transcendent experiences and healing for some participants, where they could grow in their understanding of and connection with God through and beyond their experiences of abuse. Key people in church, especially clergy, were central in this journey. However, often when participants were not adequately supported by their church community during their experiences of IPV their involvement with church remains fraught. Some also described their greater empathy for others who were on the margins of the church.

6.4 Participant recommendations for the Anglican Church

The influence of church leaders and whole church community relates to how they:

- present and reinforce religious teachings,
- create a culture of general awareness and readiness to respond when abusive relationships are present in a church context,
- provide ongoing trusted and caring relationships across the full trajectory of a person's experience.
- offer various types of support to help those with an experience of violence to meet their needs for safety, material security, relationship, spirituality and identity; including referral to specialist domestic violence support services and health professionals.

Participants' recommendations for Anglican church communities and for church leaders have been summarised below.

6.4.1 Participant recommendations for church communities

- Acknowledge it happens. The hidden nature of IPV in churches adds to shame and disconnection.
- Have visible IPV resources in church. These help to educate the community of the signs of abuse and let victim-survivors know how and where to get support.
- Use many different methods to inform and empower, including: sermons, seminars, pre-marriage preparation courses and direct conversations.
- Do not allow discomfort to deter from raising the issue.
- Be alert, aware of the signs and ask questions about needs on a regular basis.
- Provide safe spaces.
- Keep connections in place.
- Address self-doubt: have key trusted people to affirm their sense of reality.
- Know about processes and support service options for key moments.
- Don't make assumptions about what help is needed in individual circumstances. Ask questions in key moments of crisis about what support and resources victim-survivors require.

6.4.2 Participant recommendations for church leaders

- Provide IPV training for clergy, lay leaders and congregations.
- Ensure that professional standards and regular reviews for clergy include an IPV dimension.
- Provide pastoral workers to work with perpetrators and address their behaviours.
- Ensure that all processes and procedures are informed by victim-survivor input.
- Develop a scaffold of key people and services where leaders and congregation members can obtain information about how to offer assistance in situations of crisis.
- Develop and make widely available easy to access pamphlets and booklets on IPV in a Christian context.
- Offer Christian teaching on marriage and gender that addresses the potential for and the reality of abuse in intimate relationships.

Dr Ruth Powell and Dr Miriam Pepper
NCLS Research



National Anglican Family Violence Research Report: Top Line Results

This top line report provides a short overview of results from three studies that make up the National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP), undertaken between 2019 and early 2021. The aim of this research project is to investigate the nature and prevalence of intimate partner violence among those with a connection to the Anglican Church of Australia.

Full results from across this project are presented in the main research report and three detailed reports for each study, which will be made available in coming months:

- National Anglican Family Violence Research Report: for the Anglican Church of Australia
- NAFVP Prevalence Study Report,
- NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leaders Study Report, and
- NAFVP Experience Study Report.



**Commissioned by the
Anglican Church of Australia**

APPENDIX 3: BEST PRACTICE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES IN 2019

**Family Violence Working Group National Conference
Strengthening the Church's response to Family Violence
March 18-19, Sydney**

Group 1 (Prayer and Liturgy)

Short Term

- Domestic Violence prayer for use by all dioceses (R, P, I)⁵
- One contact person for Domestic Violence in each diocese as representative for the Working Group (R)
- Inclusive language policy (P)
- **Create online resource depository (R, P, I)**
- Identify agencies currently working in domestic and family violence (R)
- Upload resources we have to Anglican DFV Network (R, P, I)
- Network representatives to compile lists of local contact numbers for resource depository and to promote in Ad Clerum and local Anglican newspaper (R)

NOTE: quality control for resources

Medium Term

- **Identify Biblical texts and theological reflection** : range of helpful and unhelpful interpretations (P)
- **Specific liturgy for: (R, P, I)**
White Ribbon
International Womens Day
Mothering Sunday
Use gender-inclusive liturgy
Checklist of what to think about when selecting liturgy
- **Assessment tool for: (P)**
Bible Study
Youth Ministry
Children's Ministry
Marriage Preparation
Elderly
- Create/develop/use existing posters/leaflets for use/distribution in parishes (R, P)
- **Partner with experts in the DFV field: (R)**
referral
community awareness
shared expertise
- Create resources for conversation (as for assessment tool above) (P)

Long Term

⁵ In the following list of items, P represents an action which prevents violence before it starts, R indicates an action to respond to violence and I indicates an action which resources intervening when violence occurs. **Bold signifies a priority**

- Review resources annually for currency and changing social policies (R, P)
- New Prayer Book material (R, P)
- Sources of funding for DFV specific projects (R, P)
- Establish '1800' Helpline for churches (R)
- Celebrate Stories of Change (R, P, I)

GROUP 2 Governance, policy and synod activities

Overarching principles

1. Biblical and theological basis
2. Communication of policy internally and externally
3. Working with the experts including professionals and victims/survivors

Short term

1. Synod motions – on gender equity, highlighting and acknowledging the issues, establishing working groups,
2. Gender/diversity audits across diocesan committees, commissions etc, leading to strategies for responses

Medium term

4. Synod motion establishing fund for victims
5. Budget provision for the work of a working group, policy development, training etc
6. Protocols for conduct and response
7. Policy for conduct, responses, eg for DV leave provisions
8. Clergy supervision
9. Diocesan working groups to look at issues of governance
10. Diocese providing policy templates for parishes (and other issues) – or at Provincial level to assist regional dioceses.

Long term

1. Clergy supervision
2. Consistent policy and practice across the Anglican Church of Australia
3. Safe churches framework including systematic policy review and reaffirmation with external constructive critique
4. Theological colleges making it possible for postgrad study by women through scholarships etc

Top three

1. GSFVWG resourcing dioceses with policy templates, tools, benchmarking for diocesan policy
2. recommending each diocese establish it's own WG through synod motions
3. Gender/diversity audits in every diocese leading to strategies and policy for encouraging diversity including gender equality

GROUP 3 TRAINING

Development of CORE Curriculum based on review of existing Evidence Based Resources (or those currently under development) with provision for periodical review.

- 1) Identification of Learning Needs for each group:
 - Bishops & PSU

- Clergy & Spouses
 - Lay Leaders
 - Congregations
 - Theological Students
- 2) Developing a Process for Training to be rolled out throughout the Anglican Church:-\
- Online
 - Train The Trainer

GROUP 4 Cultural Change

Prevention

Short-term

Talk about at Parish Level. – sermons on violence

Consider impacts of language. Challenge of complexity of DV language and theology

Develop advocacy framework, establishing cultural boundaries

Empower local conversations to be advocates.

Starting to recognise impact of privilege

Medium

Look at Godly play etc for gender stereotypes LGBTIQ

Understanding research and related language & how we use it. (All 3)

Ensure top down bottom up approach is taken (all 3)

Long Term

Leadership capacity building, accountability, transparency, integrity

Parish level champions (advocates)

Early Intervention

Short Term

Partner with Anglicare culture of collaboration

Work with family violence sector.

Keep it on the agenda

Marriage prep

Medium Term

Work with local community to identify capacity.

Long Term

Response

Short Term

Ensuring recognition of those within parish to who it applies

Awareness of awareness used

Move from CYA to embedded practice.

Medium Term

Equip congregations to respond to crisis/ identify need.

Long Term

Deal with impact of pornography

Impact on men and women

Investigate of abuse of power in the church.

Top 3

Education – drivers,
Theological conversation. Language
Collaboration and partnership with impact assessment.

APPENDIX 4: TEN COMMITMENTS FOR PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA



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 worktogether 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.

The Reverend Tracy Lauersen, Convenor (Gippsland, member of General Synod Standing Committee)

The Right Reverend Genieve Blackwell (Melbourne)

The Reverend Canon Sandy Grant (Sydney)

Reverend Scott Holmes (Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne)

Ms Ruth Holt (Canberra Goulburn)

Dr Karin Sowada (Sydney, member of General Synod Standing Committee)

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)¹*

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.²

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)³*

Rates of violence are higher when institutions promote, condone or remain silent in the face of violence, and the misuse of power and authority.⁴ 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.⁵
- 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) ⁶

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) ⁷

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"⁸. 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. ⁹

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.



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) ¹⁰*

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. ¹¹

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”.¹²

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.

¹ 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.

² Resolution of Anglican Church of Australia General Synod 17 (adapted)

³ Matthew 6:10 GOD'S WORD Translation (GW)

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

⁵ 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

⁶ Common English Bible (CEB). Copyright © 2011 by Common English Bible

⁷ Mark 12:31 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

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⁸ Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

⁹ Calvin, Commentary on Titus

¹⁰ Hebrews 12:11 New International Reader's Version (NIRV)

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

¹² "What gets measured, gets managed" attributed to Peter Drucker.

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APPENDIX 5: Comparison of what can be achieved and costs associated with a provincial, diocesan or national approach to family violence prevention and response in the Anglican Church of Australia

ACTION	APPROACH		
	Diocesan Approach	Provincial Approach. Committee/working Group with paid position per province	National Approach: Program Manager and program budget drawing together & working across provinces and non-provincial dioceses
	COSTS		
	none	5* 100,000: up to @\$500,000 per annum	@\$186,000 per annum (pro-rata)
Diocesan adoption of <i>10 Commitments</i>	✓		
Developing a national network for resource sharing			✓
Funding the Church's response to Family Violence and creating positions to drive change		✓	✓
Creating new resources			✓
Developing sound teaching			✓
Conducting services of lament	✓	✓	✓
Working with each other		✓ possible	✓
Cooperating with national and local agencies			✓
Creating clear branding and communication			✓
Training our clergy and our laity (many of whom are 'first responders') in pastoral care and in conflict management.		✓ Possible depending on budget	✓
Developing relationships with Agencies			✓
Culture change			✓
Policies in each diocese		✓ Possible, however one policy will not fit all dioceses in province	✓
Caring for victims and survivors,	✓ possible		
Conducting an audit of parishes and dioceses			✓
Providing resources for rural, remote and regional areas			✓
Contributing to the review of Faithfulness in Service	✓		✓

Working with Culturally and linguistically diverse people and communities			✓
Modelling the best response,			✓
Encouraging women in leadership,			✓
Prevention curriculum for schools,			✓
Reviewing and developing curriculum for theological colleges			✓
Resources to drive programs forward			✓
Development of communications: posters, pamphlets, digital resources for parishes			✓
Development of training across various platforms and contexts			✓