



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **New Commission to tackle domestic violence**

11 May 2022

The Anglican Church of Australia has established a new Families and Culture Commission to tackle intimate partner violence which affects some of those in its Church and broader community.

“The commission is set up to safeguard the well-being of families and to respond pastorally to victim/survivors of violence in our church communities,” says the Rev’d Tracy Lauersen, a parish Priest and the Convenor of the Family Violence Working Group for the Anglican Church of Australia.

“It will also address the drivers of violence and help inform how the Church tackles the problem at both a national and parish level, resourcing its priests and lay leaders.

The establishment of the Commission follows on from research commissioned by the Church which uncovered similar levels of domestic violence in its own communities as the wider community.

Around 75% of Anglican clergy were aware of people in their churches who have been victims of abuse by an intimate partner.

Ms Lauersen said the research reports gave a breadth and depth of information about the nature of violence that was invaluable in guiding prevention strategies and appropriate pastoral responses.

It showed women are overwhelmingly the victims of violence perpetrated by men.

“Most men do not commit violence, yet most of the violence that does happen is at the hands of a current or former partner and is gendered, with men more likely than women to perpetrate it, and more likely to use frequent, prolonged and extreme violence,” Ms Lauersen says.

The Church has also adopted Ten Commitments [see attached] to prevent and address domestic violence and the new Families and Culture Commission will assist the church in advancing the strategies contained in them.

“The resounding support shown by our national church synod members to establish and to resource the Commission demonstrates the churches strong resolve to be a part of the



solution to this national problem and of their concern for victim/survivors of intimate partner violence,” the Primate of the Anglican Church, Archbishop Geoff Smith said.

The Anglican Church is the first Christian denomination in Australia to conduct such extensive independent research into domestic violence affecting those in its church communities.

The results suggest there may be a bigger domestic violence problem in all faith communities than previously thought.

“I commend the Anglican church for being courageous enough to bring this matter into the light,” Dr Ruth Powell, Director of NCLS Research, said.

**For further information contact Bill Condie at [media@adelaideanglicans.com](mailto:media@adelaideanglicans.com) or on 0405 862 785.**