



# Anglican Church of Australia

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## CURRICULUM FOR TRAINING OF MEMBERS OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

### Introduction

This document has been developed by the Professional Standards Commission as a curriculum for training of Professional Standards Committees and Professional Standards Boards or their equivalent.

### Purpose of the curriculum

The purpose of the curriculum for training Professional Standards Committees and Boards is to ensure that Committees and Boards undertake their functions in a consistent, fair and informed manner.

### Recommendations for delivery of the training

This curriculum addresses the specific content of training of Committees and Boards. It is good practice for this training to occur in a face-to-face workshop setting.

Each diocese should ensure that:

- Committees and Boards undertake training which gives effect to this curriculum;
- the content of its training takes into account the applicable diocesan legislation;
- workshop presenters are appropriately qualified and experienced.

### Curriculum

1. Understanding sexual abuse (refer to Guidelines for Risk Assessment)
  - a. What is sexual abuse?
    - i. Sexual assault
    - ii. Sexual exploitation
    - iii. Sexual harassment
  - b. Who are sexual abusers?
    - i. From every social group
    - ii. Paedophilia
  - c. What are the characteristics of sexual abusers?
    - i. Wanting to offend
    - ii. Giving themselves permission
    - iii. Creating the opportunity to offend (eg grooming)
    - iv. Overcoming the victim's resistance
  - d. What is the impact of sexual abuse? (refer to *Faithfulness in Service* 6.15)
    - i. How abuse affects the person and their relationships

- ii. How abuse affects secondary victims
- iii. How abuse affects ministry

Recommended resources as found on the General Synod website, [www.anglican.org.au](http://www.anglican.org.au) search Professional Standards

- i. *Faithfulness In Service*
- ii. Guidelines for Risk Assessment relating to sexual abuse (includes Appendix 4, bibliography of useful resources)

## 2. Understanding the Professional Standards process

All participants in the process should be well informed about the process and their role in it – Committee members, Board members, Director of Professional Standards and the Bishop

- a. Function of Committee
  - i. To receive complaints & information and where appropriate arrange for an investigation or other action
  - ii. Provides assistance to a board
- b. Role of a Committee member
  - i. To ensure receipt of complaints and investigations comply with the diocesan legislation/ordinance
  - ii. To determine following the investigation whether a matter should be referred to the Board
- c. Function of Director of Professional Standards
  - i. The executive officer for the committee
- d. Function of the Board
  - i. To determine fitness for office and when ministry should be subject to conditions
- e. Role of a Board member
  - i. To make findings and recommendations regarding fitness for office
  - ii. President will inform the non-legal members about the procedures
  - iii. President will determine any questions of law or procedure
- f. Role of support person
  - i. To help the complainant/respondent to understand the process and support them through it
- g. Role of Bishop
  - i. Decides how to act on the recommendation of the Board
- h. Diocesan legislation/ordinance
  - i. Professional Standards Ordinance and protocols
  - ii. *Faithfulness In Service*
  - iii. Other relevant documents containing standards of the Church eg *Ordinal*

- i. Managing the expectations of complainants and respondents
  - i. Ensure complainants, respondents, support persons and legal representatives are informed as to the processes and procedures as they impact on them
  - ii. The complainant is a witness and does not determine the process. Because at a Board hearing the focus is on the respondent's fitness for office, complainants may think their complaint is minimised
  - iii. The focus for the respondent is on their fitness for office, not their "innocence or guilt"
  - iv. A support person is not an advocate

### 3. Conflict of Interest

- a. General principles
  - i. Occurs when the member of Committee/Board has connections with a person that inhibit them from properly performing their function or role
  - ii. May also occur when a person is serving in multiple roles which give rise to conflicting requirements
  - iii. Members of Committees and Boards will be screened including a National Register check
- b. Understanding boundaries – relationships with complainant, respondent and other interested persons
  - i. Explicit instructions will be given to all participants regarding contact between parties
  - ii. Guidelines to maintain appropriate boundaries
    - Board and Committee members should not permit informal contact from the complainant or respondent
    - Bishop will delegate pastoral responsibilities for the complainant and respondent.
    - Support person also needs to maintain appropriate boundaries

It is suggested that scenarios be used to illustrate appropriate boundaries

### 4. Investigations

- a. The process for the Committee to give instructions for the investigation and the content required (clarity and scope)
- b. The content of the investigation report
- c. The rules of the Church that are applicable to an assessment of fitness for office
- d. The use of the investigation report in determining whether to make a reference to a Board

### 5. Procedure of a hearing

- a. Steps in the hearing process
- b. Procedural fairness

- i. No bias
- ii. Notifying respondent of allegations material that may impact upon assessment of fitness for office and giving opportunity to adduce evidence
- c. Sensitivity to witnesses (adults and children)
- d. Principles for determining whether a hearing or any part of a hearing is closed or open
- e. Receiving relevant material (evidence)
- f. Examination of witnesses

## 6. Making decisions & recommendations

- a. Weighing evidence
- b. Testing evidence (burden of proof)
- c. Relevance of codes of conduct and other standards
- d. Fitness for office/continuation in ministry including any conditions
- e. Personal accountability and the place of forgiveness (repentance does not necessarily mean that a person is fit for office)
- f. Assessment of risk (including likelihood of reoccurrence of behaviour) and appropriate recommendations
- g. Writing decisions and recommendations (necessity for giving sufficient reasons to explain decisions and recommendations)

## 7. Self-care

- a. Recognition of impact of hearing/viewing disturbing material on well-being of people involved in the process
- b. System of support such as de-briefing or supervision will be provided as a matter of course

## 8. Communications

- a. Public communications
  - i. Who will make public communications on the matter?
  - ii. When will public communications be made?
  - iii. What content will be included in public communications?
  - iv. Who will be advised of the decision and recommendations?
- b. Internal communications
  - i. Method, confidentiality and security of communications between Committee/Board members (including use of electronic devices)
- c. Storage of communications
  - i. How documents generated by the Committee/Board will be managed and stored