



Safe Church Report Synod 2019



Throughout the Bible we are called to look after the vulnerable.

“Long ago I gave these commands to my people: ‘You must see that justice is done, and must show kindness and mercy to one another. Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners who live among you, or anyone else in need.’” (Zechariah 7:9)

Safe Church is an integrated program that looks well outside the Work Health and Safety Field. Safe Church is focused on keeping all people safe particularly children and the vulnerable in our congregations. The Royal Commission recommended 10 national Principle

They are:

- 1 Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
- 2 Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- 3 Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- 4 Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- 5 People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- 6 Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
- 7 Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- 8 Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- 9 Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
- 10 Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Safe Church in the Northern Synod continues its journey. This year has been a year of application. To date all the Pilgrim Presbytery Congregations, bar one, have received the Safe Church Folders. This year I have conducted Safe Church Awareness Training at Palmerston, Casuarina, and Karama. I have plans for other Awareness trainings around the Presbytery.

I am also offering training in:-

- The use of the documents and forms that are part of the Safe Church Program.
- Op Shop specific training
- Bullying and Harassment

- Grooming Awareness

Apart from offering training, the Northern Synod has joined the National Council of Churches Safe Church Training Agreement which gives us access to their resources and training material.

Through the NCC I have been instrumental in producing a work book to be handed out to participants at Safe Church Awareness Training. Currently this workbook is in the process of being printed.

As part of my role as Safe Church Coordinator for the Northern Synod I have been participating in the National Discipline Conversation. A conversation around the Professional Standards requirements of Ministers and Ministry Agents and how the Church holds Ministers and Ministry agents accountable.

I have been active on the Safe Church Framework Implementation Network (SCFIN) as we have looked at how we implement the framework across the Synods.

Another important document we are working on is the Person of Concern Policy and the associated Safety Agreement. We hope that this will be the first document that is standardised across the Nation. More and more it is brought to our attention the need for consistency as much as possible across the Synods. We are a very mobile nation. People often work in more than one state in their lifetime.

Looking Forward

I hope over the next 12 months that I will be able to:

Meet with each Congregation and Church Council to answer questions, work on ways forward,

Continue to provide training

Put the Policies and Procedures in Plain English

I hope to find ways to work with the leaders of the Area Regional Councils so that the NRCC is enabled to implement Safe Church Programs in their congregations and communities.



I pray that each of you will be enriched on your journey, that your communities prosper and that we hold our children, young people and our vulnerable in the love of Christ.

Jesus said "Let the little children to come to me and do not hinder them" Luke 18:16

Rev Helen Paine
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