



Anglican Diocese of  
**BENDIGO**  
SAFE CHURCH

# Safe Church Training

## What? Why? Who? How?



*Maldon parishioners are all smiles after their Safe Church Induction workshop.*

This booklet has been designed to answer some common questions about Safe Church workshops.

For further information, speak with your parish priest or contact the Bendigo Anglican Diocese registry office:

(03) 5443 4711

[reception@bendigoanglican.org.au](mailto:reception@bendigoanglican.org.au)

# WHAT?

## What is covered?

Bendigo Diocese engages the specialist services of Safer Communities, an Australian organisation that has been working in the area of prevention, response and recovery from abuse since 2007. They regularly update our course content to match Victorian, National and Anglican requirements as well as best practice in this field.

Below is an outline of the topics covered.

**Introduction:** Diocesan commitment to people safety

**Safe Ministry Foundations:**

- 1) God's love for all people
- 2) team ministry
- 3) the gift of boundaries
- 4) duty of care



**Being Proactive:** child-centered practice, safe workers, reducing risks

**Identifying Concerns:** indicators of abuse (including sexual, physical and emotional abuse, as well as neglect and domestic family violence)

**Responding to Concerns:** reporting and responding to concerns about abuse and more general church incidents

**Caring for all parties:** self-care in practice

<https://safercommunities.net.au/>

## Will the content be confronting, uncomfortable and/or depressing?

Yes, some of it will be. Unfortunately, there is darkness in the world.

However, the focus of the training, is about equipping us all to be effective bearers of light in dark places. So as well as confronting it will be enriching, empowering and ultimately life-giving.

Jesus is the light of the world and He came to give life.

One way for us to bare faithful witness to His light and life, is to be knowledgeable & wise about dark topics like abuse and to be discerning about the way we organise parish life.



# WHY?

## Why would I want to do this training?

Some of the many worthwhile reasons to do this training include ...

- the opportunity to discuss and consider how we might work together to build healthy mission-shaped faith communities
- it equips you to be wise, discerning and to set healthy boundaries: ask the registry office about 'Jesus set good boundaries' bible study
- understanding the short-term indicators and long-term affects of abuse on individuals, family, friends & professionals will mean you can better support and love others as God loves you (John 34-35)
- you are directly supporting our Bishop and Registrar as they are legally responsible for the 'goings on' in our churches and therefore held accountable if the unthinkable does occur
- understanding your responsibilities under the Victorian 'Failure to disclose offence' which affects all adults in our state
- forming stronger and deeper bonds with others doing the training
- participants have said how grateful they are to have had a safe opportunity to grapple with these difficult topics and as a result feel empowered to discuss them with loved ones.

## Why do I have to do this training?

There are two local authorities that we sit under, besides God's ultimate authority of course. The first is Victorian state government and its relevant legislation. The second is the Anglican Diocese of Bendigo and its canons, acts of Synod, policies and code of conduct.

### VICTORIAN STATE LEGISLATION:

In **2012** the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was established.

In **2016** the Child Safe Standards commenced in Victoria

In **2017** the Royal Commissions Final Report was tabled

In **2022** the new 11 Child Safe Standards commenced in Victoria

Compliance with the 11 Standards is a requirement of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005)* and regulated by the Commission for Children and Young People. <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards>

'Religious bodies, including churches' as well as organisations like sporting clubs, charities and not-for-profits are mandated to comply.

Standard 8 requires that staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Other standards that are covered by Safe Church training include:

2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled

3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm

4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance

6.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations



## DIOCESAN LEGISLATION:

The *Anglican Church of Australia* has **national minimum standards for safe ministry**. This means the same requirements apply to all clergy, lay ministers and people working with children across the whole Anglican Church. This includes working with children checks, police checks and safe church training.

We also have a *Professional Standards Act* which says that certain people must have a **Clearance for Ministry** – a safe church screening clearance to ensure the people who are ministering to children and vulnerable people are safe.

Faithfulness in Service is our *Code of Conduct*. It says that people must be aware of the symptoms of child abuse and grooming and receive regular training in child protection.

Our *Child Safe Policy* says that we will regularly train and educate our staff and volunteers to identify and minimise risks of child abuse and know our organisational policies and procedures.

<https://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/policies/>



## **WHY: I've given to the church for so many years and now I have to do this? Don't you trust me?**

Some people find the request to do this training personally affronting, like it is an attack on their character. Please know that this is not personal in the sense that it isn't about your trustworthiness. However, it is personal in the sense that it is each of our responsibility to be informed about these topics so that we can play our part in building up healthy mission-shaped faith communities.

In the past, the focus of church communities on being welcoming, kind, loving and generous has sadly made us an easy target for predators. It is easier to groom people who don't know what grooming is.

This training will help us all to continue to be welcoming, kind, loving and generous, and rather than naïve we will also be wise and discerning.

## **WHY: But we don't have any children at our parish ...**

Church services are by their very nature, a public offering. We are not an exclusive club that requires paid up membership to attend 'meetings'. Everyone is welcome to attend our services, the times & locations of which are published on the Bendigo Diocese website. Therefore it is every parishes responsibility to be ready to receive whoever chooses to grace us with their presence, including children.

In addition, whilst this training does focus on child-safety, the information relevant for children is in most cases also relevant to anyone who is vulnerable to harm. This includes the elderly, those with disabilities or mental-health conditions, people from culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds, the homeless, those under short-term duress for example, financial hardship or grief.



**WHY:** It is troubling that the church is turning into a bureaucratic nightmare. Why can't we just get on with the job? Why can't we just preach the gospel like the good old days?

The 'old days' were indeed good for many people. But for many others, they were not.

The Royal Commission heard from over 8,000 people who bravely shared their stories of abuse. Here are two snippets:

IT IS MY HOPE THAT BY THE ABUSED CHILDREN OF MY GENERATION  
TELLING THEIR STORIES TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION, THEIR SUFFERING  
AND THEIR COURAGE WILL ENSURE THAT THIS ABUSE WILL  
NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN TO ANOTHER AUSTRALIAN CHILD

### My Message to Australia

When I left my private session I felt relieved that I was able to <sup>tell</sup> you my story. I hadn't spoken about it in detail beforehand, my children never knew. It affects your whole life, my hope is that the Royal Commission may save other children from this, from their lives being ruined. The system needs to change to better protect our children

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/message-australia>

# WHO?

## Who has to do the training?

	Who?	Requirements	Renewals
<b>Category A</b>	People working with children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Police Check</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 years</li></ul>
<b>Category B</b>	Parish Governance, Leadership & Responsible Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• WWCC</li><li>• Safe Church Training</li><li>• Safe Ministry Check</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 years</li><li>• 3 years</li><li>• 5 years</li></ul>

The full Lay Safe Ministry Clearances Policy is available at:  
<https://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/lay-clearances/>

For questions regarding National Police Check, Working With Children Check or Safe Ministry Check please contact Jenny at the registry office:

**Jenny Slattery**

(03) 5443 4711

[clearances@bendigoanglican.org.au](mailto:clearances@bendigoanglican.org.au)



*So in Christ we, though many, form one body,  
and each member belongs to all the others.*

Romans 12:15

# HOW?

## Count me in. How do I sign up? 😊

There are two options, either a group in person workshop or an individual online workshop.

**In person group training** is the recommended way to go.

Talk to your parish priest about organising a training day in your parish or deanery.

Refresher Training: 10–3pm ( +delightful parish lunch with fabulous folk)

Induction Training: 10–4pm ( +scrumptious parish lunch with lovely company)

**Individual online workshops** are available for those who can't make it to the in-person version. Anglican parishioners can log in and complete this at anytime by following the instructions on our website and paying with a credit card.

[www.bendigoanglican.org.au/safe-church-training](http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/safe-church-training)

**The cost** for both in person or online are the same.

Refresher Course: \$35

Induction Course: \$35

**Contact** your Deanery Leader or the registry office if you have any questions: (03) 5443 4711

*June 2024*