

DIOCESE OF GIPPSLAND

GIPPSLAND SAFE MINISTRY AUTHORITY

The *Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017* of the General Synod of the Australian Church of Australia (adopted by the Gippsland Synod in December 2017) requires each Diocese to establish a Diocesan Safe Ministry Authority. The Authority is responsible for safe ministry in the Diocese, including the screening and training of clergy and licensed or authorised church workers.

CONSTITUTION

Interpretation

1. In this Constitution—

Accredited training means training that—

- (a) includes the course content in the Safe Ministry Training National Benchmarks so far as it relates to ministry to children, with reasonable adjustments for cultural, linguistic and ability diversity; and
- (b) is delivered by persons accredited by the Authority or by another Church body or organisation approved by the Authority;

Authority means the Gippsland Safe Ministry Authority constituted under section 2;

Child means anyone under the age of 18;

Church authority means a diocesan bishop or a person or body having authority to ordain, licence, elect, appoint, dismiss or suspend a member of the clergy or a lay person;

Church body means a body corporate, organisation or association that exercises ministry within, or on behalf of, or in the name of, the Church, and is controlled by a diocese or province or the General Synod;

Church worker means a lay person undertaking any ministry to children who—

- (a) is licensed or authorised by the Bishop to undertake ministry to children;
or
- (b) holds a position or performs a function with the actual or apparent authority of a Church authority or Church body;

Clergy means Bishop, priest or deacon;

Code means Faithfulness in Service, a national code approved by General Synod as adopted by Bishop in Council from time to time;

Diocesan Corporation means the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland Administration Limited;

General Synod means the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia;

Safe ministry personnel means clergy and church workers performing a safe ministry role;

Qualified person means a person who satisfies the relevant standard of screening applying to that person under the SMCCA;

SMCCA means the *Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017* of General Synod as adopted by the Synod of Gippsland;

Standards of screening means the standards and guidelines prescribed from time to time under the *Safe Ministry to Children Canon 2017* of General Synodⁱ.

2. *Gippsland Safe Ministry Authority*

(1) The Gippsland Safe Ministry Authority consists of 8 members of whom 7 are appointed by the Bishop in Council on the advice of the Diocesan Corporation, one as Chair, and one as Deputy Chair and—

- (a) 5 as ordinary members; and
- (b) the Director of Professional Standards.

(2) A person appointed as a member of the Authority holds office for a period of not more than 3 years but is eligible to be re-appointed.

(3) If a member of the Authority resigns or otherwise ceases to hold office before the expiration of the term of appointment, the Bishop in Council, on the advice of the Diocesan Corporation, may appoint a person to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term of office of that member or until resigning or otherwise ceasing to hold office.

3. *Functions of the Authority*

(1) The functions of the Authority are—

- (a) to ensure that standards of screening and standards of training as set out in the SMCCA are met;
- (b) to ensure that screening is carried out by the relevant screening authority in accordance with the SMCCAⁱⁱ;
- (c) to ensure that safe ministry to children is provided to children in the Diocese in accordance with the SMCCA and this Constitution;
- (d) to ensure that every parish in the Diocese implements and maintains a Code of Conduct for Child Safety in accordance with the *Child wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* of the Victorian Parliament;

- (e) to appoint accredited trainers to deliver safe ministry training for parishes and Church bodies in the Diocese;
- (f) to ensure that, in accordance with the *Working with Children Act 2005* of the Victorian Parliament, persons working with children in the Diocese hold current Working with Children Checks issued by the Department of Justice & Regulation, Victoria;
- (g) to determine in what circumstances Church workers must have a Victorian Police Check.

4. *Persons authorised to undertake screening*

- (1) The Bishop, the Chair of the Authority, the Deputy Chair of the Authority and the Director of Professional Standards are authorised to screen ordinands, licensed clergy, licensed or authorised church workers, members of the Professional Standards Committee and Safe Ministry personnel.
- (2) Where the Board of Electors has elected a person to be the Bishop of the Diocese, the person must be screened by the Board of Electors.
- (3) The Authority may appoint a qualified person to undertake screening of church workers undertaking ministry to children.

5. *Meetings of the Authority*

- (1) The Authority may meet from time to time as determined by the Chair or the Deputy Chair of the Authority and may conduct its business by telephone or electronic communication.
- (2) The Chair, the Deputy Chair, the Director of Professional Standards and 2 ordinary members constitute a quorum.

6. *The Authority to report to Bishop in Council*

The Authority, on the advice of the Diocesan Corporation, must report on its activities at least 4 times each year or as otherwise required by the Bishop in Council.

7. *Keeping of records, security of records and privacy*

- (1) The Authority must ensure that proper records are kept of screening and accredited training of clergy and church workers and safe ministry training.
- (2) The Authority must ensure that persons undertaking screening of clergy and church workers comply with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* of the Victorian Parliament.

- (3) The Authority must ensure that records referred to in subsection (1) are kept in a secure place and accessible only by members of the Authority or by persons authorised by the Authority.

8. *Amendment of this Constitution*

This Constitution may be amended from time to time by the Bishop in Council after consultation with the Diocesan Corporation.

NOTES

1. Part 4 of SMCCA contains details of audits of each diocese to be carried out by an independent person appointed by the General Secretary of the General Synod at intervals of not more than 3 years.
2. Part 5 of SMCCA requires a Safe Ministry Authority, at the request of the General Secretary of General Synod, to inform the General Secretary of the details of the screening and training of persons from the Diocese who are being considered for appointment or election for a General Synod professional standards role or a General Synod safe ministry role.

ⁱ Includes, where applicable, national register assessment, safe ministry assessment, medical assessment, psychological assess, church ministry assessment (where the person was previously authorised for ministry in the Province of Victoria or in another diocese of this Church or another denomination)

ⁱⁱ The Second Schedule of the SMCCA provides 4 categories of screening authorities:

- (a) The Bishop or delegate to screen ordinands, licensed clergy, licensed or authorised church workers, The electing body to screen a Bishop of the Diocese
- (b) The appointing person or body to screen church workers undertaking ministry to children
- (c) The appointing person or body to screen professional standards personnel and safe ministry personnel.