

# An Australian Baptist Response to Persons of Concern



## Individual Accountability & Safety Agreements

### Why do we need a process?

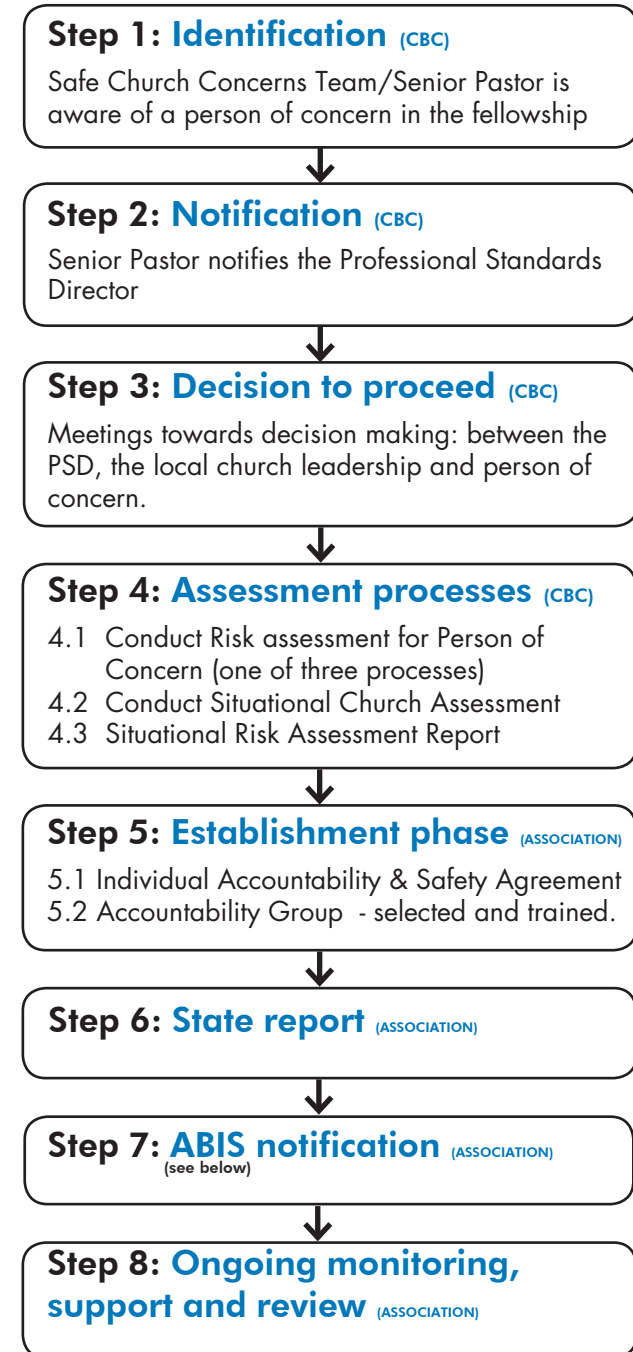
From time to time our church may face the situation where a person of concern has been worshipping and been involved, or wishes to worship and be involved, in our church. While demonstrating genuine compassion and justice, we must take steps to protect the whole church community.

This process aims to ensure that all reasonable measures have been put in place to ensure safe ministry occurs with persons of concern. Australian Baptists are committed to safe ministry, i.e. God honouring, abuse free, harm free, person valuing and respectful ministry.

### Ministry to a person of concern acknowledges

- that there is a high level of community feeling and fear about sexual abuse.
- the duty of care we have to provide safe environments for all people in our church.
- that there is no one type of person of concern, therefore individual Safety Agreements are necessary.
- that there are survivors of abuse in congregations, and we seek to care for them effectively.
- the issues of forgiveness and a person of concern's right to privacy.
- the liability issues around a person of concern reoffending.
- the need for denominational support, training, monitoring and oversight in this process.

### Flowchart



## Who are persons of concern (POC)?

### A person of concern:

1. has pleaded guilty to, been convicted of, or has admitted to a sexual criminal offence.
2. has been found to have sexually offended, arising through due diligence checks related to recruitment (screening).
3. is currently charged with a sexual offence.
4. has been the subject of an allegation of a sexual offence and this was not appropriately investigated.
5. has been found to have received an adverse risk assessment arising from sexual misconduct
6. deemed to be a risk to the safety of children and/or vulnerable adults because of an adverse risk assessment relating to sexual misconduct.
7. exhibits constant wandering across other peoples' sexual boundaries.

## What does an Individual Accountability & Safety Agreement Mean?

An individual safety agreement is an agreement between a person of concern, our church and denomination, establishing the terms and conditions for the person of concern to participate in the life of our church.

A Safety Agreement makes clear what steps the church and person of concern are taking to reduce real and potential risks associated with ministry to the person of concern.

## When to use this process?

If a person in our church, or a person interested in coming to our church:

- tells you that they have committed a sexual offence
- in the course of doing our due diligence checks for recruitment, a person discloses they have committed a past sexual offence
- if we are aware that a person has had an allegation of a past or current sexual offence
- deemed to be a risk to the safety of children and/or vulnerable adults because of an adverse risk

## Is this a Christian Response?

A Christian congregation can be one of the few places where sexual abusers, as the recipients of God's forgiveness, can mix with a Christian community. However, that forgiveness does not mean immunity from temptation to re-offend.

The forgiveness and grace of God, mediated with supervision and clear guidelines through a local church, can be a vital part of that journey.

This demonstrates the Australian Baptist Churches' mission and commitment to provide a safe place for children and other vulnerable people to grow and shine.

## Who should we contact?

Your Professional Standards or Safe Church Concerns Team (SCCT):

### Caringbah Baptist Church Office:

02 9524 2709

(ask to speak to a member of the SCCT)

[safechurch@ecbc.org.au](mailto:safechurch@ecbc.org.au)

### Baptist Churches NSW & ACT

02 9868 9200

This brochure is adapted from the original brochure developed by Australian Baptist Insurance Scheme



The definition of a Person of Concern is adapted from the Anglican Church of Australia - Professional Standards Commission "Guidelines for parish safety where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a person of concern", 2010