

# **PASTORAL RESPONSE POLICY – VOLUME 6**

in respect of the Churches of Christ in NSW & the ACT Professional Conduct Protocols  
(the “*Professional Conduct Protocols*”)

**This is Volume 6 of the Churches of Christ in NSW & the ACT Professional Conduct Protocols.**

**The Churches of Christ in NSW & the ACT Professional Conduct Protocols comprises:**

**Volume 1:** Dictionary of Defined Terms.

**Volume 2:** Guide for personal behaviour and practice in ministry.

**Volume 3:** Code of Conduct

**Volume 4:** Professional Standards Unit Establishment and Functions Policy

**Volume 5:** Complaints Procedure

**Volume 6:** Pastoral Response Policy

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS SUITE OF DOCUMENTS

The *Professional Conduct Protocols* is a group of documents intended to assist *Ministering Persons* to act appropriately in their *Ministries*. The suite of documents:

- contains a dictionary of terms used in the documents;
- outlines standards and expectations of personal and professional behaviour for *Ministering Persons*;
- prescribes behaviour of *Ministering Persons* which if not observed may lead to a complaint against a *Ministering Person* and, if the complaint is upheld, may lead to the imposition of sanctions against that person;
- establishes a professional standards unit to administer the Code of Conduct;
- establishes a procedure to deal with *Complaints*; and
- ensures pastoral care is available and provided to the *Complainants* and those against whom *Complaints* are made.

As to the Professional Conduct Protocols, note:

- for *Complainants* Volumes 1, 5 and 6 are the principal documents to consider;
- for *Ministering Persons* Volumes 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 are the principal documents to consider;
- Volume 4 will likely only need consideration in the event a *Complaint* is made;
- Volume 1 contains a dictionary of the terms used in each of Volumes 2 to 6; and
- for the assistance of both *Complainants* and *Ministering Persons* some key definitions are also included in other Volumes.

This *Pastoral Response Policy* is for the benefit and assistance of:

- any person who made a *Complaint*, or is considering making a *Complaint*, with regard to a *Ministering Person* associated with *Churches of Christ in NSW & the ACT*; and
- any person who is the subject of a *Complaint*.

The address and contact details of the *Professional Standards Unit Co-ordinator* are:

Professional Standards Unit Co-ordinator, Churches of Christ in NSW & ACT  
Suite 301, Level 3, 1B Homebush Bay Drive  
Rhodes NSW 2138  
psu@ccnswact.org.au  
(02) 8573 6000

All communications are kept strictly confidential, subject to the *Professional Conduct Protocols* and the *Procedure for Responding to Child Safety Concerns*.

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## 1. Introduction

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### 1.1 Purpose

*Churches of Christ in NSW & the ACT (CCNSWACT)* honours the history that has given local congregations freedom to decide how to function as the body of Christ in their own contexts.

In most instances the appropriate place for the accountability of Christians to each other, and of ministers to congregations, is within the life and structure of each individual congregation. While that is the case, it is recognised that in certain circumstances, given the relationship of *Ministering Persons* and those to whom they exercise ministry, it is appropriate that a proper independent process of accountability in respect of *Ministering Persons* be established.

This document sets out the support and care to be provided to *Complainants, Subject Persons* and *Respondents*.

### 1.2 Commitment to Safety

*Churches of Christ in NSW & the ACT* believes that they will better transform communities and lives with fresh hope and develop leaders to lead them, when each place of ministry and mission of every *Conference Church* and *Conference Ministry* is a safe place for everyone.

*“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* John 13: 34-35 (NIV)

*“We love because he first loved us.”* 1 John 4:19 (NIV)

*“No, O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”*  
Micah 6:8 (NLT)

Our commitment to expressing the love of Christ leads to the view that all people should be able to live and work in an environment that is free from abuse or harm of any kind.

### 1.3 Defined Terms

Terms and definitions used in this document are defined in the *Dictionary*. Some of the key terms include:

**Complainant:** The person or entity who makes a complaint against a *Ministering Person*.

**Complaint:** means information about any allegation, suspicion, concern or report of a breach of a *Minimum Standard*. The conduct complained of may or may not constitute *Criminal Conduct* or *Reportable Conduct*.

**Dictionary** has the meaning set out in Volume 1 of the *Professional Conduct Protocols* and Volume 1 contains the *Dictionary*.

**PSU Co-ordinator** means the person appointed under the clause 2 of the *Professional Standards Unit Establishment and Functions Policy*.

**Reference Committee** means the committee of that name appointed pursuant to the *Professional Standards Unit Establishment and Functions Policy*.

**Respondent:** means a *Ministering Person* who is the subject of a *Complaint*.

**Subject Person** means the person who is the subject of any actions and/or omissions of a *Respondent*.

## 1.4 Authorisation

Responsible person	The <i>Executive Ministry Director</i>
Version	1.0
Review date	February 2025

## 1.5 Adoption and Effective Date

Adopted by <i>Conference Executive</i>	3 June 2023
The <i>Effective Date</i>	1 July 2023

## 2. Care Plans

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### 2.1 Care Plans for Complainants and Subject Persons

- 2.1.1 *CCNSWACT*, through the *PSU Co-ordinator* will offer counselling and/or support to each *Complainant*.
- 2.1.2 *CCNSWACT*, through the *PSU Co-ordinator* will offer counselling and/or support to any *Subject Person*.
- 2.1.3 A *Complainant* (and/or a *Subject Person*) may be offered counselling and/or support in relation to a *Complaint*, which may be made available:
- upon receipt of a *Complaint*
  - during the investigation process, including any criminal investigation and court process relating to the *Complaint*, subject to the view of Police and other government authorities;
  - during any determination of the *Complaint* or appeal process relating to the *Complaint*; and
  - for a period of 6 months after the finalisation of the *Complaint*.
- 2.1.4 The nature and extent of the counselling and/or support shall be at the discretion of the *PSU Co-ordinator* as advised by the *Reference Committee*.
- 2.1.5 Counselling and support may also be available, as determined by the *PSU Co-ordinator* in the discretion of the *PSU Co-ordinator* after consultation with the *Reference Committee*, to third parties such as family members and church members impacted by the *Complaint*.
- 2.1.6 For all *Complaints*, the *PSU Co-ordinator* should discuss counselling and support options with the *Complainant* (and any *Subject Person*) including but not limited to:
- their expectations in relation to support;
  - the provision of counselling from either:
    - independent counsellors;
    - independent pastoral carers; or
    - counsellors nominated by the *Complainant* or *Subject Person*;
  - whether other support is required in making a report to the police;
  - whether the *Complainant* or *Subject Person* would like to appoint a support person as described at Section 2.3 of this Policy; and
  - whether there is other pastoral or spiritual support that may be required.

## 2.2 Care Plans for Respondents

- 2.2.1 CCNSWACT through the *PSU Co-ordinator* will offer counselling and/or support to each *Respondent* in accordance with this clause 2.2.1. The *Respondent* may be eligible for counselling and/or support as a result of a *Complaint* being made in relation to their alleged conduct, which is available:
- a. when the *Respondent* has been notified by the *PSU Co-ordinator* of the decision to investigate the complaint;
  - b. during the investigation process;
  - c. during any determination or appeal process relating to the *Complaint*; and
  - d. for a period of 6 months after the finalisation of the *Complaint*.
- 2.2.2 The *PSU Co-ordinator* should discuss support options with the *Respondent*, including but not limited to:
- a. the provision of counselling and/or support from either:
    - i. independent counsellors;
    - ii. independent pastoral carers; or
    - iii. counsellors nominated by the *Respondent*;
  - b. whether there is other pastoral or spiritual support that may be required; and
  - c. whether the *Respondent* would like to appoint a support person as described at Section 2.3.
- 2.2.3 Counselling and support may also be available, as determined by the *PSU Co-ordinator* in the discretion of the *PSU Co-ordinator* after consultation with the *Reference Committee*, to third parties such as family members and church members impacted by the *Complaint*.

## 2.3 Support Persons

- 2.3.1 All *Complainants*, *Subject Persons* and *Respondents* are eligible for a support person and each may, respectively, with the approval of the *PSU Co-ordinator*, appoint such a person.
- 2.3.2 The role of the support person is to provide support and assistance throughout the investigation and determination process.
- 2.3.3 A support person may be appointed at the point of making a *Complaint* in order to assist the *Complainant* to make a *Complaint*, to assist a *Subject Person* deal with the consequences of the matters the subject of the *Complaint* and to assist the *Respondent* to deal with *Complaint*.
- 2.3.4 Unless otherwise approved by the *PSU Co-ordinator*, the support person should generally not be:
- a. in either the *Complainant's* or *Respondent's* organisational line of authority;
  - b. a lawyer; or
  - c. a witness in relation to the *Complaint*.
- 2.3.5 The *PSU Co-ordinator*, if requested to, may appoint a support person with suitable experience.
- 2.3.6 The support person shall not undertake the roles of representation or advocacy for the *Complainant* or *Respondent*, but rather is there to provide support through the process.
- 2.3.7 The *Respondent* is not restricted from receiving legal advice.