



9 June 2021

## **ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA TAKES A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

Dear colleagues,

I write to share with you information about a study into the prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) within the broader Anglican community which has been released today.

The study makes confronting reading and rightly will be the cause of significant concern within the Anglican Church and the broader community.

IPV is defined as behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours.

This work has been led by the national Anglican Church through the General Synod Standing Committee and through its Family Violence Working Group. Their aim has been to examine the prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) within the broader Anglican community and the measures developed to prevent and address it.

As a Diocese, we began the journey of improving our understanding of family violence in the community and the church in 2013. In 2015, clergy and lay leaders from parishes focussed on the impact of Domestic and Family Violence on many people's lives right across our communities, including in our churches. We have been told that two resources produced in our Diocese ([the Family and Domestic Violence Flyer](#) and the [Bible and Family and Domestic and Family Violence Brochure](#)) have been of assistance.

Anglicans in the Hunter and Central Coast regions know that there is much more to be done. As in the community, there is a ground swell in the Church calling for an end to all forms of violence.

This current research, produced 28 top line findings, including

- The prevalence of IPV among Anglicans was the same or higher than in the wider Australian community.
- Women were much more likely than men to have experienced IPV.
- Most Anglican victims of IPV did not seek help from Anglican Churches, but for those that did most reported that it positively changed the situation or helped them feel supported.
- Clergy and lay leaders were well-informed about breadth of IPV and understood that it was more men who commit violence.
- Clergy confidence in their personal capacity to respond to IPV was low to moderate.
- Perpetrators' misuse Christian teachings and positional power.

The study was not designed to see whether the approaches taken in individual dioceses have resulted in a more supportive environment to those experiencing IPV.



The Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, Archbishop Geoff Smith said, “All Anglicans will feel deep sadness over these results but armed with this data we can develop a better response to protect those within our church communities from domestic violence.”

Along with the study there is a new resource which has the aim of improving the response by clergy and parishioners. [The 10 Commitments](#) to improve the way IPV is addressed within the Anglican faith community. They are focused on cultural change, education, training, and support. The Diocesan Council will seek input on and review the [10 Commitments](#) and explore the best ways for them to be applied in the Diocese.

To find out more about the research, visit: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/family-violence/>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter".

Dr Peter Stuart  
**Anglican Bishop of Newcastle**