



Culture of Safety

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Major changes to the Safe Church now Culture of Safety role/practices:

- Change of name from Safe Church to Culture of Safety reflecting the broader responsibilities now required of this team/unit
- Additional staff member – Culture of Safety (formerly Safe Church) Research Officer - now three team members working 1.6 FTE
- Managing the Uniting Church's Professional Standards to ensure best practice; code of ethics and safety requirements are understood and practiced by our Ministry agents and lay leaders
- Joining the UCA Redress Ltd, working with the schools, colleges and agencies as we all respond to the National Redress Scheme Requests for Information(RFIs) and Direct Personal Responses (DPRs) provided to the Redress applicants
- Most recent to co-ordinate the response to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

MAJOR WORK AND OUTCOMES:

Our Culture of Safety Work plan reflects the following 4 focus areas and where possible with reference to how they relate to UCA's four Strategic Directions.

I. Reconciliation and Redress

The current focus is on responding to complaints and claims of historical child abuse – particularly child sexual abuse - by survivors, the National Redress Scheme, the State legislative changes to the Statute of Limitations for Child Sexual Abuse, civil litigation and supporting, working and communicating openly with the UCA congregations, schools, colleges and agencies about how we can be part of the whole reconciliation and healing process required by the Uniting Church towards survivors and communities across Australia.

Key outcomes

- Successfully co-ordinating the WA Synod's complex and time consuming opting in/on boarding process through the UCA Redress Ltd to the National Redress Scheme from October last year
- More recently managing the above mentioned response to RFIs for 32 National Redress applicants, searching records and ensuring our team, when reading the distressing applications, remains safe from vicarious trauma
- Community engagement through speaking and meeting with survivors and their advocacy groups to ensure we communicated the Uniting Church's commitment to being part of the National Redress Scheme during a long delay in the processing of our paperwork by the Scheme operators to get us on boarded – from December 2018 to March 2019 - with the



resulting distress and contact from many of the survivors from our children's homes who were told their application were on hold until we joined.

2. Safe Church Awareness Programme training and Safe Church Policy implementation

The current focus is on maintaining the momentum of the last three years of promoting and running Safe Church Awareness Workshops which have been attended by members of most congregations across WA. Encouraging the various multicultural churches to host Workshops or come as a group to the scheduled ones. Promotion of Safe Church and safeguarding messages through a variety of communication channels including speaking at Synod and Presbytery meetings. Community engagement and building relationships with church ministry agents and lay leaders in congregations and also staff within the Synod office and WA Presbytery by the Culture of Safety team has encouraged greater uptake of the safe church training and the subsequent interest by those attending to implement safe church policies and practices in their ministry programmes. Open communication and meetings with other Synods individually and as a national group (the Safe Church Framework Implementation Network – SCFIN) has allowed us to share resources and harmonise the key messages of the Safe Church training we deliver across the Uniting Church.

Key outcomes

- Partnering with the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) who runs this national Safe Church programme and provides the training materials to present a train the trainer for new Safe Church Presenters in WA to progress their Safe Church Presenter endorsement by the NCCA. This included a new Uniting Church in WA Safe Church Presenter who is also a Culture of Safety team member.
- Recent opportunity to speak during a worship service at GKI and discussion with the Elders and Minister there about hosting a Safe Church Workshop in February 2020 and putting in place safe church practices in their ministry programmes.
- Working in partnership with CEDAL to provide a Safe Church training session for the Cert IV Theology students to spread the knowledge of safe church practices to the potential new leaders in our churches.
- Culture of Safety team member presenting an elective at the NCCA 2019 Safer Churches Conference in September in Brisbane to share knowledge and tools to a broader audience of how to create safer churches.

3. Professional Standards

The current focus is to pull together the various professional standards requirements for ministry agents and lay leaders for which the Culture of Safety team are now responsible. This is in line with the UCA's strategic direction, training for ministry leadership, and particularly to review and if needed to introduce and maintain appropriate training and leadership development strategies. A case in point is the Ethical Ministry Workshops which after a review has very recently been taken on by our team and will be delivered in a different way in response to participant feedback, an unsustainable delivery method and after discussion with other Synods. We are aiming to communicate to all Ministry agents and lay leaders that responding to and completing these professional standards helps to create a culture of safety which they can

transmit to others within the Uniting Church and safeguard those from the local community participating in our ministry programmes.

Key outcomes

- Communication to all Ministry agents and lay leaders providing a reminder about the Working With Children Checks and the fact that the Culture of Safety team would be processing these in future.
- Established an internal matrix of the various ministry agent and lay leader groupings and the professional standards requirements each must complete by a set timeframe. This clarifies for our team who is required to do what professional standards training, professional development activities and types of checks/screening.
- A register of Professional Standards has also now been developed which allows our team to check very easily who has completed their respective requirements by the due date and those who need to be followed up.
- An initial notice of the change to the delivery method of the Ethical Ministry Workshops was communicated via Wild Apricot.

4. Managing the Uniting Church Archives and Request for Records

The Culture of Safety team has been working very closely with the Archivist and her volunteers as they have responded for several years to survivors and lawyers requesting records that are held either in the Synod Archives or at the Battye Library. The Archivist and the Culture of Safety team will continue to work together and ensure that where we have records available we will make the process for accessing them by survivors as easy, safe and supported as we can whilst maintaining the privacy of any third parties who might also be referred to in the records.

Key outcomes

- Recruiting and inducting the Culture of Safety Research Officer who is now very familiar with the Uniting Church archives retrieval process for the Battye Library.
- The Research Officer has recently also taken on a large part of the records research, retrieval, and filing by applicant's name required for responding to the RFIs including the responsibility for recording and maintaining the data base of Redress applicants, Redress application Reference numbers and the due dates for returning completed RFIs. She also shares the load of reading some of the Redress applications in preparation for researching records and responding to the RFIs.
- Recent discovery of records at BKI that could be about Sister Kate's. The Archivist and the Executive Officer: Culture of Safety are working with the Board and Facilities Manager of BKI to take stock of what is there.

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