ARMIDALE DISTRICT BAPTIST CHURCH
Sharing Christ's Love in Community

Persons of Concern Policy and Declaration

Approved: 12 July 2026

Who is a Person of Concern?

A Person of Concern is someone who:

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. is deemed to be a risk to the safety of children and/or vulnerable adults because of an adverse risk assessment relating to sexual misconduct; or
7. exhibits constant wandering across other peoples' sexual boundaries.

Explanation of the 'Known Offender' Exclusion Clause

Explanation of the Insurance Position

Currently with the General Liability Insurance Policy that covers all Baptist Churches in Australia, there is an exclusion clause which states that the insurer will not cover any compensation claims, damages or legal costs associated with any claims in respect of injury sustained by a third person (i.e., a victim) where:

Part 1 – the injury arises either directly or indirectly from sexual abuse; and the perpetrator of the sexual abuse was a representative, member, employee or service provider of the insured.

Part 2 – and the insured knew or ought reasonably to have known that the perpetrator of the sexual abuse had previously: committed sexual abuse; and/or been convicted of sexual abuse; and/or whilst being a representative, member, employee or service provider of the insured, been the subject of a prior complaint in respect of sexual abuse, which has not been appropriately investigated. (Numbers 1-4 of the Person of Concern list above.)

The Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT wants to resource churches who face the situation where a

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Person of Concern has been worshipping and been involved, or wishes to worship and be involved, in our church.

This process has been developed to reduce the Church's exposure by developing this seven-step process. If this process is followed for the Person of Concern who fits into the exclusion clause category, then the Church is eligible to access the Contingency Fund managed by Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Finance and Risk Committee to help fund legal costs incurred if the Church is sued over a Person of Concern re-offending.

Other Persons of Concern

There are also other persons of concern who do not fall within the exclusion clause and so are covered by the General Liability Insurance Policy (Numbers 5-7 of the Person of Concern list above). They are included in the Person of Concern definition as the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT believes that this process, perhaps in a modified way, is necessary and will help us manage the situation in a clear, transparent and pastoral way as well as reducing the risk of the person of concern causing harm.

Declaration Regarding Ministry With Persons of Concern

Armidale District Baptist Church commits to following the process set out in the *Australian Baptist Response to Persons of Concern* process by (please tick as appropriate):

☐ A. Ensuring that no person who is known to be a Person of Concern attends church premises or participates in any church programs, activities or events.

☑ B. notifying the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Manager when any Person of Concern is identified and following the risk management process they advise.

In making this decision, we understand that:

1. The Persons of Concern process is developed on a case by case basis with careful attention to risk management principles. There will be some instances in which the risk of harm to others cannot be appropriately managed and, in these circumstances, the person of concern may be directed not to attend any church programs, activities or events.
2. Baptist Insurance Services does not provide insurance cover for claims made in relation to harm caused by any known offender, or person who should reasonably have been identified as a known offender.
3. As an alternative to insurance coverage and to mitigate risk to churches, access to a contingency fund, managed by Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Finance and Risk Committee, is available in the event of a claim against the church in relation to harm caused by a known offender:
   a. The fund will cover legal fees only up to a maximum of $75,000.
   b. The church will be required to pay an excess of $5000.

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c. access to this fund is dependent on the church having adhered to the Persons of Concern process as advised by the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Ministry Standards Manager.

4. The church will be asked to make a financial contribution towards establishment costs if a Person of Concern risk management process proceeds to include a written *Individual Accountability and Safety Agreement*. This contribution does not represent the full cost of administering a Persons of Concern process and is subsidised by Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT.

Typical Church Attendance (including Children)	Financial Contribution*
0 – 50	$250
51 – 100	$500
101 – 150	$1,000
151 – 250	$1,500
251 – 350	$2,000
351 +	$2,500

* 2023 figures, subject to change

I declare that the relevant governance body of the church has read and understood this statement and on [date] agreed to adopt the Persons of Concern process as indicated above.

Signed: ……

Name: ……

Role: ……

Note: ADBC has agreed to follow option B, as shown above, and should such a situation arise and a copy of this document is held in the office (from November 2020)? signed by a member of the Governance Body of the Church (Elders, including Pastor or Diaconate).

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Completed Declaration:

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I declare that the relevant governance body of the church has read and understood this statement and on [date] agreed to adopt the Persons of Concern process as indicated above.

Signed: .....

Name: ROBERT DEWHURST.

Role: CHURCH SECRETARY.

12/5/2026.

Note: ADBC has agreed to follow option B, as shown above, and should such a situation arise and a copy of this document is held in the office (from November 2020)? signed by a member of the Governance Body of the Church (Elders, including Pastor or Diaconate).

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When to use this process?

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

- tells you that they have committed a sexual offence
- in the course of doing your due diligence checks for recruitment, a person discloses they have committed a past sexual offence
- if you 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 Liaison person:

Baptist Churches of South Australia
08 8357 1755
Baptist Union of Victoria & Baptist Churches of Tasmania
03 9880 6100
Queensland Baptists
07 3354 5600
Baptist Churches Western Australia
08 6313 6300
Baptist Churches NSW & ACT
02 9868 9200

Australian BAPTIST INSURANCE SCHEME
Supported by ABIS

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.

An Australian Baptist Response to Persons of Concern

Australian BAPTIST MINISTRIES

Individual Accountability & Safety Agreements

Why do we need a process?

From time to time you may face the situation where a person of concern has been worshipping and been involved, or wishes to worship and be involved, in your church. While demonstrating genuine compassion and justice, you 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 churches.
- 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

Step 1: Identification
Senior Pastor becomes aware of a person of concern in the fellowship

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Step 2: Notification
Senior Pastor notifies the Professional Standards Director

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Step 3: Decision to proceed
Meetings towards decision making: between the PSD, the local church leadership and person of concern.

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Step 4: Assessment processes
4.1 Conduct Risk assessment for Person of Concern (one of three processes)
4.2 Conduct Situational Church Assessment
4.3 Situational Risk Assessment Report

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Step 5: Establishment phase
5.1 Individual Accountability & Safety Agreement
5.2 Accountability Group - selected and trained.

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Step 6: State report

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Step 7: ABIS (see below) **notification**

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Step 8: Ongoing monitoring, support and review

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, the local church and denomination, establishing the terms and conditions for the person of concern to participate in the life of the 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.

ABIS = Australian Baptist Insurance Scheme

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