

The Southern Cross Association of Churches

Safe Ministry Policy

*Open your mouth, judge righteously,
and plead the cause of the vulnerable and needy.*
Proverbs 31:8-9

Background & governance

This document outlines the principles that guide our approach and the strategies being implemented to embed a safeguarding culture across the membership of **The Southern Cross Association of Churches**,¹ hereafter referred to as **SCAC**. Because our world and organisation continue to change, we are committed to regularly reviewing and updating this policy to ensure its ongoing effectiveness, relevance, and compliance with relevant State and Federal laws designed to protect children and vulnerable people.^{1 2}

1. Commitment to safeguard vulnerable people

We are committed to the biblical call to care for the vulnerable by actively preventing harm and abuse, and by promoting the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved in our organisation. This commitment includes ensuring that vulnerable people, including children, young people, families, people with disability and older people, are informed about their rights, involved in decisions that significantly affect them, and taken seriously when they raise concerns or express their views.⁴ We recognise that their diverse needs must be considered, that families and communities have an important role in promoting safety and wellbeing, and that this care must be embedded across our culture, policy, practice and membership.^{2 3 7}

To support this commitment, all members within **SCAC** are required to complete the **SCAC Safe Ministry Safeguarding Course for Staff and Board Members** or provide evidence of comparable training. This training gives members a clear understanding of their responsibilities within **SCAC** and helps embed a safe ministry culture across our organisation.⁶

The training provided through our Safe Ministry Check account offers a strong foundation in child-safe principles. Members can build on this foundation through any additional training required in their specific state. This helps ensure a high level of compliance and supports leaders in fulfilling their duty of care.

2. Commitment to respond to concerns

We are committed to creating a culture in which people feel safe to raise concerns about inappropriate behaviour without fear of rejection or ridicule. Concerns and complaints relating to behaviour or safety within **SCAC** will be listened to and responded to appropriately. Throughout this process, we are committed to protecting the confidentiality, dignity, health and wellbeing of all individuals involved. Any child-related concern will be managed with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration and reported to the relevant State Child Protection body where required.⁸

¹ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 1:

² National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 9 & 10:

³ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 4:

⁴ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 2:

⁶ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 5 & 7:

⁷ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Point 3

3. Reporting concerns

All reports will be reviewed by a **SCAC** board member and may be submitted to: safeculture@southerncrossnetwork.org.au⁸

When concerns or allegations are raised, the SCAC board member will follow the Safe Ministry Incident Management Process. Depending on the circumstances, this may involve reporting the concern or allegation to relevant external bodies, including the Police, the relevant State Child Protection body, and the insurer of **SCAC**. In certain circumstances, the SCAC board member may appoint an Independent Ministry Investigator to investigate allegations.

4. Commitment to screening and training

SCAC is committed to ensuring that all members are appropriately screened, supported, and trained.

All current members, upon joining, have:

1. Provided three referees who can attest to their suitability, standing, and testimony within the community;
2. Completed an approved Safe Ministry training course covering appropriate behaviour, ways to minimise the risk of harm, and how to identify and report abuse. This training is renewed every two years;
3. Provided a National Police Check, which is renewed every three years;
4. Committed to the SCAC Code of Conduct, including a willingness to be held accountable for their behaviour; and
5. Provided a current and verified state-based Working with Children Check.

This screening and training framework helps promote a safe, accountable, and supportive environment for all members and those they serve.

5. Commitment to safe and accessible programs

We are committed to ensuring that our physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing for all involved. Careful consideration will be given to the activities chosen, the venue, safe ratios of supervision, appropriate toileting practices, transportation, work health and safety, parental or guardian permission and confidentiality of records kept.⁹

The Safe Ministry Contacts will regularly review **SCAC** programs and team meetings to help establish a safeguarding culture and provide ongoing training and supervision to leaders and volunteers in those roles.²

Date Instituted by The Southern Cross Association of Churches: 30th September 2022

Date of Last Review by The Southern Cross Association of Churches: 30th June 2026

⁸ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 6:

⁹ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, point 8: