



# Code of Ethics & Companion Guide

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*Code of Ethics for Pastoral Leaders & Companion Guide* **April 2024**

## Pre-Amble

People enter into Pastoral ministry in response to a gracious call from God and the Church. This call requires Pastoral Leaders to carry out their responsibilities in a faithful, professional, and accountable manner. As Scripture says: “See to it that you fulfil the ministry that you have received from the Lord” (Col 4:17). Pastoral Leaders have been entrusted with a significant role within the life of the Church. They are called upon to exercise leadership in its worship, preaching, mission, pastoral care, and training; they also serve as Christ’s representatives in the world (2Cor 5:18-20). As Pastoral Leaders live out their call to ministry in positions of power and influence, they should seek to express the love and character of Christ in all their relationships. The call to serve as an example of Christian faith and living is an essential part of the Pastoral vocation (1 Peter 5:3, 1 Timothy 4:12-16).

In 2004 the Baptist Union of Victoria drafted a Code of Ethics for Pastoral Leaders setting out recognized good practice to aspire to and be accountable for. The draft Code was presented to the December 2004 Assembly and feedback was invited from Pastoral Leaders. In 2005, consultations with Pastoral Leaders were held throughout Victoria to receive comments on the Draft. The Code reflects the ongoing process of education that the BUV has been engaged in with its congregations and leaders, particularly in Duty of Care and healthy ministry practice.

### **Pastoral Leaders to whom the Code applies, include:**

- Ordained and Accredited Pastoral Leaders of the BUV;
- Pastoral/Missional Leaders (non-ordained but accredited);
- Candidates in Training;
- All people appointed to BUV’s ‘Special Positions’ list;
- Anyone who is registered as a BUV Marriage Celebrant;
- Any person in a position appointed by Assembly but not mentioned above.

The Code is **not** intended to replace other official documents prepared by the Baptist Union of Victoria but should be read in conjunction with them. They are:

- Doctrinal Statement of the BUV
- Safe Church policies
- Complaint Procedure for Allegations of Misconduct by Pastoral Leaders
- BUV Pastoral Leadership Accreditation Guidelines
- Privacy Policy of the BUV

The Code is **not** intended to replace a Statement of Understanding established between a Pastoral Leader and his/her congregation at the commencement of a period of ministry but should be read in conjunction with the Statement and the BUV Guidelines for Healthy Church Pastor Relationship.

The Code aims to provide Pastoral Leaders (and their churches) with clear guidelines and common benchmarks for ethical conduct, healthy ministry, and legal responsibility. It is not designed to be a replacement for the Bible as a fundamental guide for faith and practice.

The Code is **not** intended to be an exhaustive 'How to Manual' for ministry but seeks to exude something of the spirit of the Biblical call to faithfulness of ministry. Several of the Code's principles are **aspirational**: Pastoral Leaders will endeavour to fulfil them to the best of their ability. Some are **advisable**: guidelines which are strongly recommended; and other principles are **mandatory**: failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action being taken by the BUV, including the possible removal of Accreditation by the BUV.

The BUV is culturally diverse, and it is recognized that there are some differences between cultures as to how faithful ministry is practised. Nonetheless, Pastoral Leaders who are accredited with the BUV must adhere to its policies, including the Code of Ethics, and are subject to the laws and regulations of the State of Victoria and Commonwealth of Australia in which they live and serve.

The document titled "Complaint Procedure for Allegations of Misconduct by Pastoral Leaders" outlines the process undertaken when complaints of misconduct are received. Some of the principles underpinning that process are compassion, accountability, natural justice, healing and where appropriate, restoration to Pastoral Leadership. However, in some circumstances, restoration to Pastoral Leadership will not be possible. These circumstances include when the misconduct is adult to child sexual abuse or where the misconduct involves significant violence or significant predatory behaviour by the Pastoral Leader. Findings of such misconduct will result in the revocation of Ordination.

This document is based around the twelve principles of the Code of Ethics. The Companion is an elaboration and application of the Code. The Companion is an open document that will be reviewed from time-to-time by the BUV Professional Standards Group.

# Code of Ethics

## **1. Pastoral Leaders must practise ministry within the limits of their expertise and within the Code of Ethics for Pastoral Leaders.**

- 1.1 Pastoral Leaders must uphold professional standards of ministry.
- 1.2 Pastoral Leaders should offer the best quality ministry of which they are capable.
- 1.3 Pastoral Leaders must ensure that they act responsibly and with integrity towards others.
- 1.4 Pastoral Leaders should not offer unqualified advice in areas in which they do not hold current credentials.

## **2. Pastoral Leaders must treat those to whom they minister and all with whom they come into contact, with respect, honesty, justice, and compassion.**

- 2.1 Pastoral Leaders should be an example of Christ-like behaviour to the members of both the church and the community.
- 2.2 Pastoral Leaders should respect the dignity of others regardless of race, religion, gender, political beliefs, ability, age, or sexual orientation.
- 2.3 Pastoral Leaders should have a moral and spiritual commitment to truthfulness and must not knowingly plagiarise.
- 2.4 Pastoral Leaders must not engage in bullying or harassment behaviour in person or online.

## **3. Pastoral Leaders must respect the right of all people to make their own educated decisions and choices in life and encourage them to move towards maturity in Christ, taking responsibility for their own choices and actions.**

- 3.1 Pastoral Leaders should seek to empower others rather than control or exploit.
- 3.2 Pastoral Leaders should recognize diversity of opinion and encourage discussion that is respectful of persons.

**4. Pastoral Leaders must refrain from any form of conduct that exploits another for their own advantage or the advantage of any third person.**

- 4.1 Pastoral Leaders must not spiritually, emotionally, verbally, physically, or sexually abuse anyone.
- 4.2 Pastoral Leaders must not engage in a sexualised relationship with anyone other than their spouse or partner.
- 4.3 Pastoral Leaders must not seek financial gain for themselves or others from a pastoral relationship beyond recognised fees, stipends, and entitlements.

**5. Pastoral Leaders must respect the right of all to whom they minister, to a relationship of mutual trust, privacy, and confidentiality.**

- 5.1 Pastoral Leaders must maintain confidentiality unless this would result in harm to another person(s) or disclosure is required by law.
- 5.2 Pastoral Leaders must not disclose private or confidential material in public unless prior consent has been given.
- 5.3 Pastoral Leaders should comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act.

**6. Pastoral Leaders must commit themselves to ongoing personal and professional development.**

- 6.1 Pastoral Leaders should maintain professional standards of knowledge and skill in areas of ministry relevant to their context.
- 6.2 Pastoral Leaders must actively participate in the Baptist Union of Victoria's Accreditation process.
- 6.3 Pastoral Leaders must engage in professional supervision.

**7. Pastoral Leaders must accept responsibility for their own spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental health and act with due care towards their families.**

- 7.1 Pastoral Leaders should nurture their spiritual lives through regular prayer, the reading of Scripture and other spiritual disciplines.
- 7.2 Pastoral Leaders should seek to maintain a healthy balance between personal, family, church, and other responsibilities.

- 7.3 Pastoral Leaders should seek to manage their time wisely and should set aside regular opportunities for rest, recreation, and spiritual renewal.
- 7.4 Pastoral Leaders should fulfil their responsibilities of love and care for their spouse and family and avoid imposing unreasonable expectations and demands upon them.
- 7.5 Pastoral Leaders should seek to maintain their physical, emotional, and mental health.

## **8. Pastoral Leaders must avoid entering into relationships or situations that may diminish their ability to maintain professional integrity and independence.**

- 8.1 Pastoral Leaders have a responsibility to discern situations in which their ability to provide proper pastoral ministry may be compromised and to act appropriately.
- 8.2 Pastoral Leaders should exercise caution and discretion when entering into contracts or commercial arrangements with people to whom they minister.
- 8.3 Pastoral Leaders should exercise caution and discretion concerning the acceptance of gifts as a result of their ministry.

## **9. Pastoral Leaders must maintain integrity and exercise faithful stewardship in managing finances.**

- 9.1 Pastoral Leaders must manage their personal finances ethically and should seek to do so wisely.
- 9.2 Pastoral Leaders must not use Church funds, accounts, or resources for private advantage.
- 9.3 Pastoral Leaders should not charge church members for pastoral services.
- 9.4 Pastoral Leaders should refrain from direct involvement in the collection, counting and handling of money received by the church.

## **10. Pastoral Leaders must treat all colleagues in ministry with respect, consideration, and fairness.**

- 10.1 Pastoral Leaders must refrain from any communication that may needlessly damage the reputation of colleagues.

- 10.2 Pastoral Leaders should not proselytize members of other congregations and should exercise discretion in rendering pastoral service to a member of another congregation.
- 10.3 Pastoral Leaders should not determine the selection of a successor and must not interfere in the ministry of their successor/s.
- 10.4 Pastoral Leaders must not consider a call to a church to replace a current pastor who has not resigned or been removed.

**11. Pastoral Leaders must respect the Doctrinal Basis and policies of the Baptist Union of Victoria and must work within its officially recognized guidelines.**

- 11.1 Pastoral Leaders should contribute to the wider life of the denomination participating as they are able in its gatherings, ministries, and organisations.
- 11.2 Pastoral Leaders should encourage the congregation in which they are serving to participate in the fellowship of the Baptist Union of Victoria.
- 11.3 Pastoral Leaders should refrain from any communication that aims to damage the reputation and unity of the Baptist Union of Victoria.

**12. Pastoral Leaders must act lawfully at all times, unless to do so would clearly contravene Christian principles or good conscience.**

- 12.1 Pastoral Leaders should promote adherence to the law within the sphere of their ministerial responsibilities.
- 12.2 Pastoral Leaders must inform the Baptist Union's Director of Mission & Ministries or Director of Finance & Administration of any matter which may lead to legal action against the Union, Church, or themselves.
- 12.3 Pastoral Leaders must not encourage others to break the law except in instances where they consider that it may be required by Christian principles or good conscience.
- 12.4 Pastoral Leaders must be aware of their legal obligations to protect children and other vulnerable people.

# Companion Guide

*To be read in conjunction with BUV Code of Ethics*

- 1.1.1 Because Pastoral Leaders exercise a role in society that carries respect, they should act in a way that generates and maintains the trust of the community. The nature of ministry requires Pastoral Leaders to be wholesome examples to others.
- 1.2.1 Pastoral Leaders touch people's lives in times of joy, pain, celebration, grief, and vulnerability. They train the church to serve the Lord in caring for one another, praying, studying the Scriptures, and proclaiming the Gospel. They seek to enable others to grow in Christian maturity (Colossians 1:28) and to focus on God as the source of restoration and wholeness.
- 1.3.1 Because Pastoral Leaders exercise considerable influence and power, they must act at all times with integrity and maintain appropriate boundaries in their relations with others.
- 1.3.2 Pastoral Leaders should recognize that they are not called to carry out their responsibilities alone. Therefore, they will be readily accountable to and seek support from others including their local church, its leadership group, colleagues, peer support group, supervisor, and/or spiritual director, as well as the BUV Support Hub.
- 1.3.3 Pastoral Leaders should seek to encourage the members of their congregations to exercise their own gifts and capacity for ministry and service in the church and society.
- 1.4.1 Professionals are expected to act within the scope of their profession. A 'profession' is a group of people engaged in an occupation or calling whose competency depends upon specialized knowledge and experience. Any service that is offered beyond the scope of the profession of Christian ministry, must be accompanied by appropriate and recognized qualifications and ongoing professional development sufficient to maintain accreditation in that field of practice.



- 1.4.2 Pastoral Leaders are not generally trained to provide services such as specialized Counselling, Spiritual Direction or Psychological Analysis or other areas requiring specific training and qualifications.
- 1.4.3 Most professions have their own codes of ethical standards. When Pastoral Leaders are offering a service from a particular profession (e.g., Counselling or Spiritual Direction), they must also observe the Code of Ethics attached to that profession.
- 1.4.4 Where Pastoral Leaders are in any doubt about their ability or qualifications to offer a service to a person in their care, they should refer the person to a qualified professional. It is recommended that Pastors and churches maintain lists of professionals for referrals.
- 1.4.5 Pastoral Leaders are advised to avoid situations in which they provide services to congregation members beyond their Pastoral role. If such situations cannot be avoided, the Pastoral Leader is responsible for ensuring that there are clear and agreed understandings about the nature of the interaction, including expectations of financial aspects of it and expressions of authority. The Code Of Ethics applies in all such situations.
- 2.4.1 Pastoral Leaders should be aware that bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment, is illegal in Victoria; specifically in all contexts which involve very broadly defined workplace participants. Workplace participants would include Pastoral Leaders, any other staff, and all volunteers/ministry participants. For further information on bullying and harassment visit the Fair Work website: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/bullying-and-harassment>
- 3.1.1 Pastoral Leaders may express their own opinions and offer appropriate advice but recognising the power inherent in the Pastoral role, they should avoid making a decision for another person. To take the responsibility for a person's life out of their hands, may represent a form of abuse.
- 4.1.1 Pastoral Leaders should recognize the power that they exercise in their ministerial roles. They must refrain from the abuse of the power that is inherent in their role. Power needs to be exercised wisely to sustain and build up the church, never to bully, manipulate or denigrate.

- 4.1.2. Pastoral Leaders have the responsibility to ensure that their churches are places of safety where the personal boundaries of those within their care will not be violated. Where others indicate by words or actions that their conduct is unwelcome, Pastoral Leaders must stop the conduct in question.
- 4.1.3 Pastoral Leaders must refrain from sexual misconduct of any kind. Sexual misconduct includes:
- a) **Sex-based harassment:** where a person treats another person differently on the basis of their sex that is in contravention of discrimination legislation.
  - b) **Sexual harassment:** where a person would reasonably feel intimidated, victimised, offended, or humiliated by conduct directed to them that is of a sexual nature. Unwelcome behaviour includes but is not limited to verbal and physical behaviour such as overt or covert seductive speech or gestures, the display of offensive pictures, unwelcome sexual advances or unwelcome requests or demands for sexual favours or engagement in other unwelcome contact of a sexual nature. Such contact may include expressions of inappropriate 'affection' such as unwelcome kissing, touching, patting, pinching, bumping or hugging.
  - c) **Sexual assault:** any sexual contact or behaviour that occurs without explicit consent of the victim and may include a continuum of behaviour from verbal insult to sexual intercourse that makes a person feel threatened or afraid.
  - d) **Sexual conduct prohibited by criminal law,** such as rape.
- 4.1.4 All organisations in Australia must comply with a Positive Duty obligation under the Sex Discrimination Act. The Positive Duty requires all organisations in Australia to proactively and meaningfully take action to prevent and eliminate as far as possible the following unlawful behaviour from occurring:
- discrimination on the grounds of sex in a work context
  - sexual harassment in connection with work
  - sex-based harassment in connection with work
  - conduct creating a workplace environment that is hostile on the grounds of sex
  - related acts of victimisation
- 4.2.1 Pastoral Leaders must not sexualize a pastoral or professional relationship. "Sexualisation" includes sexual interaction, consensual or otherwise, with a person within their ministerial care. Apart from behaviour mentioned under 4.1.3, such interaction may also include inappropriate questioning of another's sexual history.

- 4.2.2 The term “partner” here refers to a person with whom an unmarried pastor has a romantic relationship (e.g. boy/girlfriend).
- 5.1.1 In the context of a Pastoral relationship, confidentiality is an assurance that Pastoral Leaders will not divulge written or spoken information about an individual with other people unless:
- a) Permission has been granted by the individual;
  - b) Retaining such information may result in physical, emotional or sexual harm to another person(s);
  - c) Disclosure is required by law or is necessary to prevent financial loss to some other person due to fraud or other dishonesty where undue hardship might result.
- 5.1.2 Pastoral Leaders should not seek to gain sensitive or confidential material to which they are not entitled or which would require another person to breach a confidence.
- 5.1.3 Pastoral Leaders must take care to discuss the nature and limits of their confidentiality with those they are serving in private or personal contexts.
- 5.1.4 Pastoral Leaders must ensure that confidential records are securely stored; that rooms in which sensitive conversations take place are properly sound-proofed and that staff members are informed of their duty in matters of confidentiality.
- 5.1.5 The BUV does not recognise a ‘pastor and penitent privilege’ that may give Pastoral Leaders any option to refuse to report or otherwise divulge a confession of child sexual abuse.
- 5.2.1 Pastoral Leaders should not use information or stories from private conversations in their preaching and public prayers that would reveal the other person’s identity, except with the person’s permission. Even then, it may be inappropriate to reveal such information:
- a) In deference to relatives of the person who may recognize the person(s) involved;
  - b) Because some people relish prurient information about themselves being broadcast;
  - c) Because it may discourage sensitive people from seeking help if they fear that inappropriate disclosure may be made about them.

- 5.3.1 The Privacy Act 1988 regulates the collection and handling of personal information through minimum privacy standards. These are known as the National Privacy Principles (NPPs). Accordingly, Pastors are responsible for protecting the privacy of personal information which the Church collects, holds and administers. Personal information is information which directly or indirectly identifies a person. Pastors are responsible for upholding confidential information, including not disclosing to anyone (including spouse) any confidential information without the consent of the person providing the information. (There is an exception where there is a legal obligation or a duty of care issue.)
- 6.1.1 A Pastoral Leader's professional conduct is enhanced by disciplined and prayerful reflection on the various ways in which the Christian faith affects the lives of the people within their care.
- 6.3.1 The Baptist Union of Victoria's Accreditation process provides an opportunity for Pastoral Leaders to review their sense of call on a regular basis and renew their response to it. The Pastoral Health and Growth Covenant ensures that provision is made for the establishment and continuation of mentoring and supervisory relationships that will support Pastoral Leaders in their ministries. The Covenant includes accountability for matters of personal health, lifestyle, spiritual growth, and study. Pastoral Leaders are required to participate in the BUV'S Accreditation process.
- 7.1.1 Pastoral Leaders should recognize that fruitful ministry is an expression and extension of a dependent relationship with God.
- 7.2.1 Some Pastoral Leaders will face the temptation of being consumed by the ministerial role; others will struggle to give adequate attention to ministerial priorities.
- 7.2.2 Personal wellbeing is enhanced by good friendships. It is desirable for Pastoral Leaders to develop and maintain personal friendships with people beyond their ministerial responsibilities.
- 7.3.1 It is desirable for Pastoral Leaders to establish viable work patterns that include weekly time (Sabbath) away from pastoral responsibilities and regular scheduled holiday breaks and/or annual leave. The Guidelines for Healthy

Church Pastor Relationship document should be followed to ensure that church systems and expectations support this healthy practice.

- 7.4.1 Pastoral Leaders should allow adequate time to fulfil their family responsibilities.
- 7.4.2 Pastoral Leaders should exercise fidelity and integrity in their relationship to their spouse.
- 7.4.3 Pastoral Leaders should encourage their loved ones to grow in faith. This may mean that Pastoral Leaders will ensure that someone else has the responsibility for the pastoral care of their family members.
- 7.4.4 Pastoral Leaders should respect the rights of their family members to privacy and refrain from making public references to them without first seeking their permission.
- 7.4.5 The responsibility of a Pastoral Leader's spouse is as a marital partner and, where applicable, as co-parent to their children, not as a church employee or unpaid leader (unless this arrangement has been made with the free consent of the spouse). A spouse should be able to choose the nature of their involvement in the life of the congregation (like any other church member).
- 7.5.1 Physical health requires proper nutrition, adequate sleep, regular exercise, and avoidance of the misuse of alcohol and other drugs. A regular (annual) health check with a medical practitioner, is advisable.
- 7.5.2 Pastoral Leaders should be discriminating in their use of media and avoid the use of explicit pornography and any other materials that may encourage harmful patterns of thought or behaviour.
- 7.5.3 Pastoral Leaders who experience personal difficulties with addictive forms of behaviour should seek professional help at the earliest opportunity and consult with a senior colleague, mentor, supervisor, or peer group for advice and support.
- 8.1.1 Because pastoral leadership occurs within a caring community, close friendships may develop with some members of the church community. At times, the nature of these relationships may challenge the capacity of pastoral

leaders to provide appropriate care and to practise leadership that has the interests of the wider congregation in view. Such relationships may include: special friendships that may reasonably be construed by others as evidence of partiality or conflict of interest; and relationships that are becoming romanticized. Pastoral Leaders have a responsibility to discern such developments and take appropriate action, such as:

- a) Disengaging from the pastoral relationship and arranging alternative pastoral care for the person(s) concerned;
- b) Seeking advice from a supervisor, mentor, or senior colleague.

8.3.1 Pastoral Leaders should take into account the intent and value of the gift, and the possibility of being unduly compromised or influenced by such a gift. Where Pastoral Leaders accept a gift to satisfy certain cultural traditions, they should consider using the gift for the benefit of the wider community of faith. Pastoral Leaders should declare gifts received to the Church Secretary or Diaconate to guard against conflicts of interest.

9.1.1 Pastoral Leaders should set an example of stewardship by seeking to live within their means and practising generosity as they are able.

9.1.2 Pastoral Leaders should be scrupulously honest in their private management of money. This includes seeking to pay bills in a timely manner and acting with integrity in matters of taxation.

9.1.3 Pastoral Leaders should avoid participating in artificial tax minimization schemes and claiming unwarranted expense deductions. Integrity includes managing personal finances in such a way that Pastoral Leaders would not be embarrassed by such matters being made public.

9.1.4 Pastoral Leaders may supplement their stipend through other employment. It is good practice to discuss with the church how other employment will impact on the Pastoral Leader's availability and ministry. Pastoral Leaders should not take up employment that threatens their integrity or the reputation of the Church.

9.2.1 Churches have a responsibility to ensure that Pastoral Leaders receive a fair stipend and that agreed ministry related expenses are reimbursed. Pastoral Leaders must ensure that reimbursements for ministry related expenses are

supported by appropriate documentation. Pastoral Leaders should ensure that church funds and their personal money are kept separate.

- 9.2.2 At the conclusion of a ministry within a church, Pastoral Leaders should return to the church any assets or material belonging to the church.
- 9.3.1 Pastoral Leaders must obtain the support of the church body they serve before accepting remuneration beyond that agreed in their Statement of Understanding.
- 9.3.2 Where Pastoral Leaders receive fees or honoraria for ministry activities conducted within the usual bounds of their work, these should be passed on to the church.
- 9.3.3 Pastoral Leaders should not normally accept fees or honoraria for weddings and funerals from church members.
- 9.4.1 Pastoral Leaders are often the recipients of a significant proportion of a church's funds as stipends. It is therefore good practice for them to remain "at arms-length" from the handling of monies received by the church, to avoid any perceived conflict of interest. Pastoral Leaders should encourage churches to implement generally accepted accounting practices and good internal controls.
- 10.1.1 Pastoral Leaders must refrain from gossip, slander, and other communication (both written and spoken) that is false, degrading, defamatory or harmful to another's character or reputation.
- 10.1.2 When a person transfers from another congregation, it is good practice for the Pastoral Leader of the receiving congregation to contact the leadership of the previous church, to ensure that they are aware of the move and to ascertain if there are any issues to be aware of. Where a person is under discipline from a congregation, another church should receive them into fellowship, only if they have ensured that the relevant matters have been dealt with, as far as possible. An effort should be made to assist people to resolve conflicts with other believers.
- 10.3.1 Upon conclusion of a ministry, Pastoral Leaders should normally seek membership in a different congregation from the one in which they have been

serving. Participation in activities, such as weddings and funerals would normally take place with the agreement of the current Pastoral Leadership.

10.3.2 Pastoral Leaders who are concluding a ministry, should not serve on the Search Committee for their successor. Nor should they seek to influence the composition or work of that committee. Pastoral Leaders may respond to requests for information or opinion from the Moderator.

10.3.3 Interim Pastoral Leaders must recognize the temporary nature of their tenure and not encourage the development of personal loyalties that may hinder the congregation in the process of calling and installing a new Pastoral Leader. They should not lobby to be considered for the position.

10.4.1 Pastoral Leaders should not establish a new work within close geographical proximity of another Baptist church without appropriate consultation with any local Baptist churches and the BUV Support Hub.

11.1.1 Schedule B of the *Baptist Union Incorporation Act (1930)* provides that persons who officiate or reside as Pastors upon properties held in trust by the BUV shall “hold, preach, teach and maintain the doctrines and practices” specified in the Act (i.e., the Doctrinal Basis of the Union).

11.2.1 Pastoral Leaders should report accurately and fairly the processes and decisions of Assemblies and other Church councils to the congregation and its leadership.

11.3.1 Pastoral Leaders should respect the due processes of the Union in matters of decision-making and change. When they disagree with a decision or policy of the Assembly or its councils, they should work through established procedures to express their point of view.

12.1.1 Pastoral Leaders are members of society and therefore subject to the laws of the State. They should seek to be good citizens as a commendation of the Gospel.

12.1.2 Pastoral Leaders who intend to break the law or engage in civil disobedience must be prepared to face the consequences of their actions.



- 12.1.3 Pastoral Leaders who engage in acts of civil disobedience should not behave in a violent or harmful manner.
- 12.3.1 Pastoral Leaders should not coerce others to join them in acts of civil disobedience or law breaking but should recognise and respect the rights of individuals to make free choices. In calling for or encouraging such actions, they should make clear the possible consequences.
- 12.4.1 Pastoral Leaders should maintain awareness of their obligations to remove or reduce the risk of a child being abused by an adult. Pastoral Leaders should be mindful of the need to have appropriate policies, procedures and culture within their ministry and church to ensure that children are safe. Pastoral Leaders must participate in a Safe Church Workshop at least every four years.
- 12.4.2 Pastoral Leaders should be aware of every Victorian adult's obligation to report to Police any reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child. Pastoral Leaders further should maintain awareness of current obligations under the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- 12.4.3 Pastoral Leaders should be mindful of the need to have appropriate policies, procedures, and culture within their ministry to ensure that other vulnerable people are safe. These include adults who may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.