

Statement On Domestic And Family Violence

National Council of Australian Baptist Ministries

We believe that all people are created in God's image, loved and valued by their Creator, and should be treated with equal regard. There is no place for physical violence or other controlling or abusive behaviour in any relationship, particularly in Christian relationships or Baptist churches.

The Bible speaks out strongly against the misuse of power. Attempts to control others are corrosive to relationships, damaging to people's enjoyment of life as God intended, and abusive to people God loves. Scripture should never be used to justify violence, control or manipulate others through the use of power in personal relationships.

Some Baptist churches and agencies have been working to support family abuse survivors for some time.

Despite these efforts, it is with sadness of heart that we acknowledge that in our history we have often failed people living in abusive relationships. We failed to recognise the existence of violence and abuse in our homes, and when we did recognise it, all too often we didn't do what was necessary to protect those who were being abused.

To those people we failed, we are sorry. Sorry for letting you down when you sought our help; sorry for ignoring your pain and suffering; sorry for failing to make your safety and well-being our priority. We pray for your healing and recovery, and thank God for the people who work and serve to support you and other family violence survivors.

We cannot erase the failures of the past, but we commit to do better in the future.

The National Council of Australian Baptist Ministries urges every member congregation to accept the challenge set by our national domestic violence campaign, [No Place for Violence Here](#). Together over the next year we will strive to increase our awareness of domestic and family violence, make changes to the culture of our churches, support the services helping people escaping family violence, and advocate to meet the funding shortfalls in these services.

This campaign is just one way to help us realise our vision for Baptist churches in Australia. We aspire to be communities that:

- are safe and secure, where the voices and experiences of women, children, elderly and other vulnerable people are valued
- provide practical help for people experiencing family violence
- empower women to speak, serve and lead in response to God's call on their lives
- understand the broader influences in society that lead to violence, and act to bring about change.