



Code of Ethics and Conduct

For Pastoral Leaders - Baptist Association of NSW & ACT

Approved for use by Assembly Council on 12th September 2023 and by Assembly on 11th November 2023.

Replaces previous versions.

PRE-AMBLE FOR GEORGES RIVER LIFE CHURCH

The Baptist Association of NSW and ACT adopted a Code of Ethics and Conduct (“the Code”) to outline the responsibilities of Pastoral Staff and their duty of care towards those they lead and work with. The Pastoral Leaders at Georges River Life Church (GRLC) have accepted the Code as required by the Association and are expected to comply with the Code in its entirety.

The following modifications provide a dual accountability for **Accredited and Recognised ministers** under the Code to both the Baptist Association of NSW & ACT AND Georges River Life Church.

1. The following terms wherever they appear in the Code are replaced as follows:
 - a. “the BA NSW & ACT” is replaced with the words “the BA NSW & ACT AND GRLC”.
 - b. “Baptist Association of NSW & ACT” is replaced with the words “Baptist Association of NSW & ACT AND GRLC”.
 - c. “the Baptist Association’s Team Leader - Operations, or Director of Ministries” in Section C, Clause 6.1 is replaced with the words “the Baptist Association’s Team Leader - Operations, or Director of Ministries AND the GRLC Church Leadership Team”.
 - d. “Baptist Policy” is replaced with the words “Baptist Policy AND GRLC Policy”.

GRLC has adopted and extended the operation of the Code, whereby the term “pastoral leader” refers to all GRLC staff; both paid and unpaid, including non-pastoral staff and interns; and the Church Leadership Team (CLT); who must accept the Code subject to the modifications below. The following modifications remove aspects of the Code not directly relevant to staff and volunteers who are **neither Accredited nor Recognised ministers**.

2. The following sections are excluded:
 - a. Pre-ambule Participation in BA Continuing Ministerial Development Process.
 - b. Section A.f.
 - c. Section E.4 Handling of money (Ministry Support exempt).
3. The following terms wherever they appear in the Code are replaced as follows:
 - a. “the BA NSW & ACT” is replaced with the word “GRLC”.
 - b. “Baptist Association of NSW & ACT” is replaced with the word “GRLC”.
 - c. “the Baptist Association’s Team Leader - Operations, or Director of Ministries” in Section C, Clause 6.1 is replaced with the words “GRLC Church Leadership Team”.
 - d. “Baptist Policy” is replaced with the words “GRLC Policy”.

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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

This Code of Ethics and Conduct aims to provide pastoral leaders (and their churches) with clear standards and common benchmarks for ethical conduct and legal responsibility. It is not designed to be a replacement for the Bible as a fundamental guide for faith and practice. It reflects an ongoing commitment by the Baptist Association of NSW & ACT to:

- the maturity, health and professional conduct of its pastoral leaders and the churches to which they minister.
- make clear the duty of care that pastoral leaders have towards those they lead and work with.

This Code is not intended to replace other relevant documents prepared by the Baptist Association of NSW & ACT but should be read in conjunction with them. These include but are not limited to:

- The Constitution of the Baptist Association of NSW & ACT.
- Affirmation of Ministry Guidelines.
- Safe Ministry Policy.
- Procedures for Handling Allegations.

This Code is not intended to be an exhaustive 'How to Manual' for ministry. It does seek to reflect the biblical call to godliness and faithfulness in ministry.

Pastoral leaders include the following people associated with the Baptist Association:

- Accredited Ministers.
- Recognised Ministers.
- Applicants and Candidates for Accreditation or Recognition.

PRE-AMBLE

Pastoral leaders are called by God, affirmed by the Church, and usually trained in a professional, practical and pastoral manner.

People enter vocational ministry in response to a call from God and the Church. It is this call that requires pastoral leaders to carry out their responsibilities with godly character (1 Tim 3) and in a biblically faithful manner (Col 4:17). Pastoral leaders have been given a significant role within the life of the Church. They are often called upon to exercise leadership in its worship, preaching, mission, pastoral care, and discipleship. They also serve as Christ's representatives in the world (Matt 28:18-20). As pastoral leaders live out their call to ministry in positions of power and influence, they will seek to express the love and character of Christ in all their relationships.

Pastoral leaders within the churches of the Baptist Association of NSW & ACT also exercise ministry under the auspices of the Association. Accredited and Recognised Ministers are thus accountable to work within the values and standards espoused by the Association i.e., contained within the Constitution and the Affirmation of Ministry Guidelines.

Finally, bearing as they do a call to reach the wider community and operate within the appropriate laws of the State (Rom 13:1-7), pastoral leaders will operate with the highest professional commitment to these laws.

This Code is thus informed by biblical, Associational, and professional standards.

In addition to complying with this Code of Ethics and Conduct, accredited and recognised ministers have ongoing requirements subject to the Affirmation Oversight Team including Continuing Ministerial Development, Working With Children Check Clearance (or WWVP in the ACT) and Creating Safe Spaces Training (as outlined in Stage 6 of the Affirmation of Ministry Guidelines).

In accordance with Section 9 i) of the Affirmation of Ministry Guidelines, (April 2022 edition), any complaints received against a pastoral leader which pertains to theology and doctrine will be managed by the Affirmation Oversight Team and/or the Assembly Council.

Standards and Guidelines:

Each section of this Code includes a set of standards and a list of guidelines.

Standards outline the Association's **requirements** for the personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry amongst pastoral leaders. These are the principles and practices to which a pastoral leader in our movement will be held accountable. The Pastoral Standards Committee will use the standards in this Code to inform its response to allegations brought against a pastoral leader (according to the procedures outlined in the "Procedure for Handling Allegations" document). Pastoral leaders are required to abide by the standards in this code.

Guidelines outline explanations and illustrations of **best practice** for implementing the standards and highlight practical ways to achieve them. The Pastoral Standards Committee will not commence investigations in relation to allegations brought against a pastoral leader for a breach of a guideline. However, the guidelines may assist in the interpretation of the standards and be considered as relevant by the Pastoral Standards Committee, the Affirmation Oversight Team or the local church when forming recommendations to existing pastoral leaders or applicants for Recognition or Accreditation. Pastoral leaders are asked to familiarise themselves with the guidelines in this code and consider how they might be applied to ministry practices.

KEY TERMS

abuse means the following conduct:

- bullying,
- emotional abuse,
- harassment,
- physical abuse or physical assault,
- financial abuse,
- sexual abuse or sexual assault,
- spiritual abuse,
- verbal abuse or verbal assault,
- and neglect in the case of children under a pastoral leader's direct domestic care.

bullying means behaviour directed to a person or persons which:

- is repeated,
- is unreasonable (being behaviour that a reasonable person, having considered the circumstances, would see as unreasonable, including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating, or threatening), and
- creates a risk to their health and safety.

Bullying does not include lawful conduct of ministers carried out in a reasonable manner, such as:

- disagreeing with or criticising someone's beliefs, opinions or actions in an honest and respectful way,
- giving information about inappropriate behaviour or unsatisfactory performance in an objective way to the person or persons concerned and to any other person with a proper reason for having that information,
- setting reasonable performance goals, standards, or deadlines, or
- taking legitimate disciplinary action.

emotional abuse means intentional acts or omissions that a reasonable person knows, or ought to have known, might cause significant emotional harm, without a valid or appropriate reason.

harassment means unwelcome conduct, whether intended or not, in relation to another person where a reasonable person knows, or ought to have known, that conduct might cause offence, belittlement or someone feeling threatened. It includes:

- making unwelcome physical contact with a person,
- making gestures or communicating in such a way that could reasonably give offence,
- making unjustified or unnecessary comments about a person's capacities or attributes,
- putting on open display pictures, posters, graffiti or written materials that could reasonably give offence,
- making persistent unwelcome communication with a person in any form (for example, phone calls, email, text messages), and
- stalking a person.

physical abuse means any intentional act or use of force which does, or could reasonably be expected to, cause injury to another person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, or shoving. It does not include lawful discipline by a parent or guardian or lawful acts of self-defence.

sexual abuse of a child means any form of sexual conduct with, towards or in the presence of a child that would be considered a criminal offence. This could include sexual contact, grooming behaviour, indecent exposure or possessing, creating, or exposing children to child exploitation material.

sexual abuse of an adult means sexual assault, or any other sexual conduct prohibited by criminal law.

sexual assault means any intentional or reckless act, use of force or threat to use force involving some form of sexual activity against an adult without their consent.

sexual harassment means an unwelcome sexual advance or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. It involves circumstances in which a reasonable person would have anticipated that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated. Such conduct may include seductive speech or gestures, the display or sending of offensive pictures, unwelcome sexual advances, continuing unwanted romantic communication, making jokes containing sexual references or innuendo using any form of communication, stalking or expressions of inappropriate 'affection' such as unwelcome kissing, touching, patting, or pinching.

spiritual abuse means the mistreatment of a person by actions or threats when justified by appeal to God, faith, or religion. It includes:

- using a position of spiritual authority to dominate, control or manipulate another person or group,
- using a position of spiritual authority to seek inappropriate deference from others,
- isolating a person from friends and family members, and
- using biblical or religious terminology to justify other forms of abuse.

verbal abuse is where words are used to assault, ridicule, manipulate, belittle, and/or degrade another person.

SECTION A. PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS STANDARDS

1. Pastoral leaders must exercise ministry within the limits of their expertise and must not offer unqualified advice in areas for which they do not hold credentials.
2. Pastoral leaders must treat those to whom they minister, and all with whom they come into contact, with respect and compassion.
 - 2.1 Pastoral leaders must not harass or inappropriately discriminate against anyone on the basis of their race, religion, gender, political beliefs, ability or sexual orientation.
3. Pastoral leaders must be aware that there is a power dynamic within their role and must not abuse their power.
4. Pastoral leaders must not bully, harass, or spiritually, emotionally, verbally, physically or sexually abuse anyone.
5. Pastoral leaders must refrain from any form of conduct that exploits another for their own advantage, or the advantage of any third person.
6. Pastoral leaders must not breach trust, privacy and confidentiality unless to prevent risk of serious harm, or it is authorised or required by law, or the information could reasonably be considered non-sensitive or public.
7. Pastoral leaders are to recognise and to appropriately declare any conflicts of interest to their church leadership, manager or employer, when they become aware of them and take appropriate steps to manage such conflicts.
8. Pastoral leaders must respect the doctrinal basis, values and policies as expressed in the Constitution of the Baptist Association of NSW & ACT and must work within its officially recognised guidelines.

PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS GUIDELINES

- a. Pastoral leaders should uphold professional standards outlined in this Code. They should act responsibly and with integrity toward others, ministering with an attitude worthy of their call.

Accountability, support and relationships with colleagues and the Association

- b. Pastoral leaders should recognise they are not called to carry out their responsibilities alone or unsupported. They should be accountable to and seek support from others including their church, its leadership, colleagues, peer support group, mentor, coach, professional pastoral supervisor and/or spiritual director and appropriate staff from the Association. They should commit to ongoing personal, spiritual and professional development. They are encouraged to also consider seeking advice from

appropriately qualified members of other organisations affiliated with the Association such as Morling College, Baptist Mission Australia or Baptist Care as appropriate or necessary.

- c. Pastoral leaders are encouraged to be engaged in the wider Baptist movement and to support their local region, Baptist Association Assemblies, events and committees. They should also encourage the congregation in which they are serving to participate in the activities and events of the Baptist Association of NSW & ACT.
- d. Pastoral leaders should be cautious and considered in relation to any public communication that has the potential to damage the reputation and unity of the Baptist Association of NSW & ACT, its leadership and member churches. Caution should also be exercised regarding public communication to or about colleagues of other church groups or organisations.
- e. Pastoral leaders should respect the due processes of the Association 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.
- f. Pastoral leaders should not engage in a pattern of intentionally attracting people from other congregations to their church community without appropriate consultation. They should exercise discretion in rendering pastoral service to a member of another congregation. They should not establish a new work within close geographic proximity of another Baptist church, or with a similar specialised competing focus (e.g., campus or prison ministry etc), without appropriate consultation with any relevant Baptist churches or organisations and the Association.

Professionalism and scope

- g. Any professional advice or service that is offered by a pastor beyond the scope of Christian ministry should be accompanied by appropriate and recognised qualifications. Pastoral leaders are not normally trained to provide services such as specialised Counselling, Psychological Assessment or other areas requiring specific training and qualifications.
- h. When pastoral leaders are offering a service from a particular profession for which they are qualified (for example, Counselling or Psychology), they should consider the code of ethics attached to that profession.
- i. Where pastoral leaders are in any doubt about their ability or qualifications to offer a service to a person in their care, the pastoral leader should not continue to offer the service but instead consider referring that person to an appropriately qualified professional.

Influence, power and authority

Abuse of power is when someone with authority uses that authority to unjustifiably exploit or harm others or through unjustified lack of action allows exploitation or harm to others. Abuse of power can be blatant or subtle in its expression.

- j. Pastoral leaders exercise considerable influence and power. Therefore, they should always act with integrity and maintain appropriate boundaries to avoid inappropriate dependent relationships.
- k. Pastoral leaders should acknowledge that when called to pastor a church they are being placed in a position of authority. With that authority comes the responsibility to exercise it in a way consistent with a follower of Jesus – in humility, servanthood, honesty and love.
- l. Pastoral leaders should be aware that their age, intelligence, Bible knowledge, positional authority, physical presence, technology, confidential information, trust or other means could be negatively used to abuse the power they have been given. Their influence should be exercised wisely to sustain and build up the church, never to bully, manipulate, denigrate or used to further their own interests.

Confidentiality and Privacy

- m. Pastoral leaders should not divulge written or spoken sensitive information about an individual with other people unless: permission has been granted by the individual; retaining such information would result in physical, emotional or sexual harm to another person(s); and 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.
- n. Pastoral leaders should inform any staff or volunteers they oversee, of their responsibilities to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- o. Where a pastoral leader has permission to use private information or confidential stories in all public communication, it may still be inappropriate to reveal such information: in deference to relatives of the person who may recognise the person(s) involved; because some people relish personal information about themselves being broadcast or; because it may discourage people from seeking help if they fear that inappropriate disclosure may be made about them.
- p. Pastoral leaders should usually discuss the nature and limits of their confidentiality with those receiving pastoral counselling.

General Conflicts of Interest

A Conflict of interest may be actual, potential, or perceived and may be financial or non-financial. An actual conflict arises where there is a direct conflict between two competing duties or interests. Potential conflicts relate to the possibility of an actual conflict arising in the future. Perceived conflicts arise where someone could reasonably hold the view that the person would be likely to be influenced by a personal interest, even though it is not an actual or potential conflict. Conflicts of interest may arise in relation to the financial and business dealings of the Church, in leadership and staffing appointments, and in complaint handling. Conflicts of interest occur when a pastor's personal interests conflict with their responsibility to act in the best interests of the Church. Personal interests include direct interests, as well as those of family, friends, or other organisations a pastor may have an interest in. It also includes a conflict between a pastor's duty to the Church and another duty that they have with another organisation.

- q. Conflicts of interest are common and not in themselves an issue when managed appropriately. Pastoral leaders should therefore make every effort to manage such conflicts appropriately. When not managed appropriately, conflicts of interest present a risk that a person will make a decision based on, or affected by, their personal interests, rather than in the best interests of the Church.

Conflicts of Interest in pastoral relationships

- r. Pastoral leaders have a responsibility to discern situations in which their ability to provide proper pastoral care may be compromised, and to act appropriately, seeking advice if needed.
- s. Because pastoral leadership occurs within a community, close friendships may develop, potentially causing a dual relationship. At times the nature of these relationships may challenge the capacity of pastoral leaders to provide appropriate care. Such relationships may include special friendships that could reasonably be construed as evidence of partiality or a conflict of interest, and relationships becoming romanticised. Pastoral leaders have a responsibility to discern such developments and take appropriate action such as: disengaging from the pastoral relationship and arranging alternative pastoral care for the person(s) in question, and seeking advice from a supervisor, mentor, or senior colleague.

Conflicts of Interest in pastoral appointment processes

- t. Pastoral leaders should not unduly influence the selection of a successor and should allow the church leadership to discern and recommend appropriate succession processes. Pastoral leaders who are concluding a ministry should not usually serve on the Search Committee for their successor. Nor

should they seek to influence the composition or work of that committee without the invitation of the church leadership. Pastoral leaders should not negatively interfere in the ministry of their successor/s.

- u. Pastoral leaders should not serve on an interview panel or selection committee when considering appointing a family member or other relative to a staff position at the church in which they serve.
- v. Interim pastoral leaders should recognise the temporary nature of their tenure and not encourage the development of personal loyalties that may hinder the process of calling a new pastoral leader.

SECTION B. CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS STANDARDS

1. Pastoral leaders must not engage in any behaviour of a sexual nature with a child under 18.
2. When undertaking pastoral ministry duties, pastoral leaders must not administer corporal punishment to children in their care.
3. Pastoral leaders must not knowingly make available to children under 18 any substance or product whose supply to or use by children is prohibited by law.
4. Pastoral leaders must take all required and reasonable steps to ensure that their churches are places of safety where the personal boundaries of those within their care will not be violated.
5. Pastoral leaders must comply with all child protection legislation, including:
 - reporting allegations of child sexual abuse and other criminal offences to the police,
 - fulfilling obligations as mandatory reporters including when a child is at risk of significant harm, and
 - fulfilling obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
6. Pastoral leaders must encourage and support their churches to implement any relevant Child Safe Standards (as required for churches by relevant legislation). This includes:
 - the church adopting a Safe Church Policy,
 - implementation of screening processes such as Working with Children Check (NSW) or Working with Vulnerable Persons Clearance (ACT),
 - the church complying with WHS obligations,
 - relevant staff and volunteers completing regular safe church training,
 - the church ensuring relevant staff and volunteers commit to a code of conduct,
 - the church adopting a complaints procedure, and
 - appropriate record keeping.
7. Pastoral leaders must ensure that appropriate risk management is undertaken to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm. This includes advocating for and supporting the church in implementing the Australian Baptist Ministries endorsed Persons of Concern risk management process for any known sex offenders as per the relevant procedures.

CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS GUIDELINES

- a. Pastoral leaders should encourage their church to adopt written guidelines outlining appropriate interaction with children and young people including:
- supervision,
 - leader participant ratios,
 - attendance and parental permission,
 - being alone with children or young people, and
 - online or other forms of communication with children or young people.

These are addressed in the Baptist Association's resource "Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People."

- b. Generally, a pastoral leader should not be alone in private (outside of line of sight of another person) with any child or young person unless they are family members. If a pastoral leader meets with someone under 18, they should:
- seek parental or guardian consent where practicable,
 - notify another adult of the meeting ahead of time,
 - meet in a public place, or in a home, where other adults are present and visible, and
 - to the extent practicable, avoid being alone with a child under 18 in a motor vehicle. If such a situation is unavoidable, inform another adult of the trip and the reason for it.
- c. Pastoral leaders should notify the Ministry Standards Manager of any child protection related matters within their church or approved ministry.

SECTION C. PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR

PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR STANDARDS

1. Pastoral leaders must be truthful and honest.
2. Pastoral leaders must not knowingly represent other's work as their own and must acknowledge sources appropriately.
3. Pastoral leaders must not condone or participate in domestic or family violence. This includes physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, spiritual or other types of abuse or intimidating behaviour, carried out by a partner, carer, or family member to control, dominate or instil fear.
4. Pastoral leaders who experience addictive forms of behaviour must seek professional help at the earliest opportunity and seek appropriate support (e.g., pastoral supervisor, mentor or specialist counsellor).
5. Pastoral leaders must refrain from any communication that may needlessly damage the reputation of pastoral colleagues. They must refrain from gossip, slander, and other communication (both written and spoken) that is false, degrading or defamatory to another person, church or organisation's character or reputation.
6. Pastoral leaders must always act lawfully, unless to do so would clearly contravene Christian principles or good conscience.
 - 6.1 Pastoral leaders must inform the Baptist Association's Associate Director - Operations, or Director of Ministries of any matter which may lead to criminal charges or legal claim against the Minister, Association or Church.
 - 6.2 Pastoral leaders must not encourage others to break the law except in instances where that may be required by Christian principles or good conscience.
 - 6.3 Pastoral leaders who engage in acts of civil disobedience must not behave in a violent or harmful manner.
7. Pastoral leaders must not be abusive or significantly disrespectful in their interaction with others while using social media or other online communication. Interacting with people online requires the same respectful approach as interacting in person, and therefore this Code of Ethics and Conduct applies to all online environments.

PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES

- a. Pastoral leaders should act with integrity and in ways that maintain the trust of the community. The nature of ministry requires pastoral leaders to be godly, healthy, and humble examples to others. Pastoral leaders should be an example of Christ-like behaviour to the members of both the church and the community.

Family relationships

- b. Pastoral leaders should fulfill their responsibilities of love and care for their spouses and families. They should allow adequate time to fulfill their family responsibilities.
- c. Pastoral leaders should encourage their loved ones to grow in faith and where possible provide their family members with access to appropriate pastoral care.
- d. Pastoral leaders should respect the rights of their family members to privacy and ideally refrain from making public references to them without first seeking their permission.
- e. The role of a pastoral leader's spouse should not be assumed to be that of a church employee or unpaid leader unless such an 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).

Personal care

- f. Pastoral leaders should seek to maintain their own physical and mental health. This includes avoiding the misuse of alcohol and other drugs.

Obeying the law

- g. 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. They should promote adherence to the law within the sphere of their ministerial responsibilities.
- h. Pastoral leaders who intend to break the law or engage in civil disobedience should be prepared to face the consequences of their actions. Pastoral leaders should not coerce others to join them in acts of civil disobedience or law breaking but should recognise and respect the right of individuals to make free choices. In calling for or encouraging such actions, they should make clear the possible consequences.

Spiritual Formation

- i. Pastoral leaders should prioritise their ongoing spiritual development and care, including:
 - engaging in connection to God in appropriate and fruitful ways for them, including reading the Bible, spending time in prayer and other spiritual disciplines,
 - worshiping and gathering in Christian community, and
 - being prepared to discuss struggles in their faith with an appropriate person with a level of suitable accountability.

SECTION D. SEXUAL CONDUCT

SEXUAL CONDUCT STANDARDS

1. Pastoral leaders must not engage in a sexual relationship with anyone other than their spouse in a legally recognised marriage, and as defined in the Position Statement on Marriage in the Constitution of the Baptist Association of NSW & ACT. Any pastoral leader who is unmarried must remain celibate.
2. Pastoral leaders must refrain from sexual abuse or sexual harassment.
3. Pastoral leaders must not sexualise a pastoral or professional relationship. Sexualisation includes sexual interaction, consensual or otherwise, with a person within their ministerial care. Such interaction may include unwarranted or inappropriate questioning of another's sexual history.
4. Pastoral leaders who experience addictive forms of behaviour in accessing pornographic material must seek professional help at the earliest opportunity (e.g., pastoral supervisor, mentor or specialist counsellor), and make every effort to address this behaviour.
5. Pastoral leaders must refrain from personally engaging in the production and distribution of pornographic material.
6. Pastoral leaders must not produce, distribute, or possess child abuse material.

SEXUAL CONDUCT GUIDELINES

- a. In the event of a single pastor engaging in a romantic relationship with a member of their congregation, suitable accountability should be maintained.
- b. Pastoral leaders should seek to be above reproach, avoiding situations where they are vulnerable to temptation or where their conduct may be construed as a breach of the standards of sexual conduct in this Code.
- c. Pastoral leaders should promote and model healthy sexual relationships and conduct by always speaking of any partner with respect and not objectifying them to others.
- d. Pastoral leaders in their public teaching should identify that control and coercion in relationships is ungodly and not consistent with the fruit of the Spirit.
- e. Pastoral leaders should not access any type of pornographic material. Pastoral leaders should recognise the harms of pornography to sexual health and relationships. Pastoral leaders should communicate these risks to their congregations where appropriate.

SECTION E. FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

FINANCIAL INTEGRITY STANDARDS

1. Pastoral leaders must maintain integrity and exercise faithful stewardship in managing finances.
2. Pastoral leaders must not seek material gain for themselves or their families from a pastoral relationship, beyond recognised fees, stipends, and entitlements.
3. Pastoral leaders must not use church funds, accounts, or resources for private advantage.
4. Pastoral leaders must refrain from direct involvement in the collection, counting and handling of money received by the church, without appropriate accountability under the oversight of the church leadership.

FINANCIAL INTEGRITY GUIDELINES

- a. Pastoral leaders should manage their personal finances ethically and wisely. 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.
- b. Pastoral leaders should consider the intent and value of any gift, and the possibility of being compromised or influenced by such a gift. Where pastoral leaders accept a gift to satisfy cultural traditions, they should consider using the gift for the benefit of the wider community of faith.
- c. Pastoral leaders should exercise caution concerning the acceptance of gifts as a result of their ministry ensuring they are accountable, and gifts are appropriately disclosed. It is recommended that pastoral leaders disclose any gifts they receive with a value above \$500, or recurring gifts with a total value exceeding \$500, to their church leadership to ensure appropriate accountability.
- d. Pastoral leaders should be an example by seeking to live within their means and practising generosity.
- e. Pastoral leaders should avoid participating in artificial tax minimisation schemes and claiming unwarranted expense deductions.
- f. Pastoral leaders may supplement their stipend through other employment. They should discuss with the church how such employment might impact the pastoral leader's ministry and seek to reach agreement on how to minimise and manage any potential impact. Pastoral leaders should not take employment that threatens their integrity or damages the reputation of the Church.
- g. Pastoral leaders should ensure that reimbursements for ministry related expenses are supported by appropriate documentation.
- h. Pastoral leaders should encourage churches to implement generally accepted accounting practices and internal controls, including pastoral salary package arrangements.
- i. Pastoral leaders should not authorise payments from the church to themselves or family members.
- j. At the conclusion of a ministry, pastoral leaders should return any properties or material belonging to the church, unless by arrangement with the church leadership.
- k. Pastors and their families should show due respect in the use and maintenance of any church provided accommodation, especially long-term use of a manse.
- l. Pastoral leaders should not usually charge church members for pastoral services.
- m. Where pastoral leaders receive payments for ministry conducted within the usual bounds of their work, these should be passed on to the Church, unless by arrangement with the church leadership.

Affirmation and Consent by Pastors:

I agree to:

- abide by the standards outlined in this *Code of Ethics and Conduct*.
- familiarise myself with the guidelines in this *Code of Ethics and Conduct* and consider how the guidelines might be applied to my ministry practice.
- participate in and cooperate with any investigation process in accordance with the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT *Procedures for Handling Allegations*, understanding that choosing not to do so could result in the removal of my name from the list of Accredited or Recognised Ministers.
- comply with any disciplinary or restorative processes required by the Pastoral Standards Committee following any substantiated complaint, understanding that choosing not to do so could result in the removal of my name from the list of Accredited or Recognised Ministers.

Name:

Signature:

Date: