



End of Year Report: 2011

Overview of Investigation Cases 2000 – 2011

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www.safeplaceservices.org.au



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Precursors to SPS ...

- The *Adventist Family Study* (Strahan, 1995), and *Valuegenesis* study (Hughes, 1993) of Adventist youth, both found rates of abuse within the Adventist Church that were similar to prevalence rates reported in other Australian-based studies.
- In 1998 the *Sydney Adventist Hospital Christian Centre for Bioethics* convened a conference on *Sexual Abuse within the Church* for employers and laity within the denomination across Australia and New Zealand. A keynote speaker was Ray Wyre, a specialist in paedophilia from the UK who made submissions to the *Royal Commission into the NSW Police Force* (see Justice Wood, 1997, volume 5, *The Paedophile Inquiry*).
- After the Bioethics conference, an *Abuse and Harassment Committee* was established to propose a model for the Church's response. Adventist Support commenced operation in 2000 and changed its name to Safe Place Services (SPS) in 2007. A Domestic Violence taskforce was also established, which operated from 1999 until 2010 when it became part of the Family Ministry portfolio of the Church's departments.



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Original Aims of SPS...

- To provide a central point-of-contact across all levels of the Church organization for:
 1. Information and advice on sexual abuse and harassment .
 2. Complaints alleging sexual harassment (of adults) and sexual abuse (of children) by Church workers (employees and volunteers) to be submitted and investigated.
 3. Training and resourcing of both employees and laity.
 4. Support for victims of sexual harassment and abuse ensuring that the Church responds in a responsible manner.
 5. Review the Church's handling of matters, as necessary, including providing advice and recommendations on improvements to systems and processes.



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Limitations to this Report

- This overview is prepared to give feedback to key stakeholders, interested parties and individuals on the activities and outcomes of investigations by Safe Place Services.
- The data will be updated on an annual basis as part of the commitment by Safe Place Services to transparency and accountability about investigative activities and outcomes, and to contribute to awareness of issues the Church as an organization is responding to through Safe Place Services.
- The data should be used cautiously if making generalizations about abuse or misconduct in the Church's settings, as it simply reflects the allegations which have come forward for investigation.
- This report does not report on the training, risk advice, informal allegation responses, and support activities of Safe Place Services.

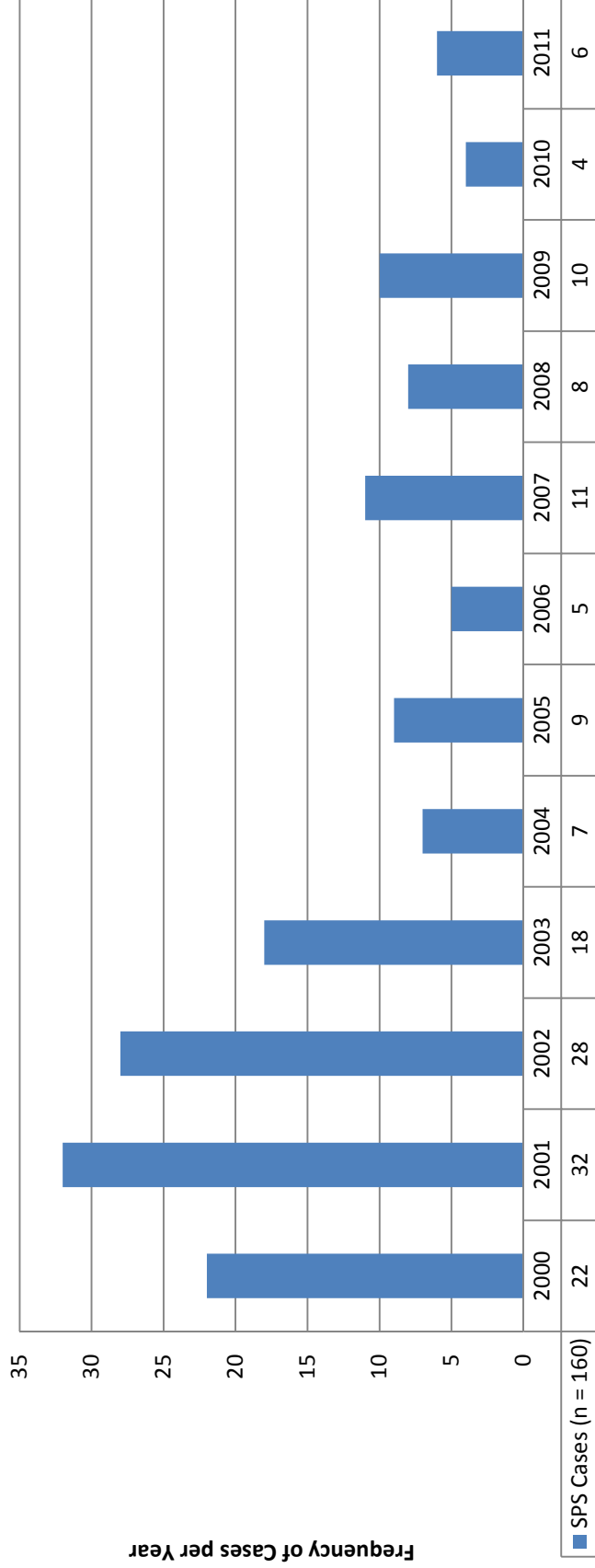


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Number of Cases Investigated Each Year

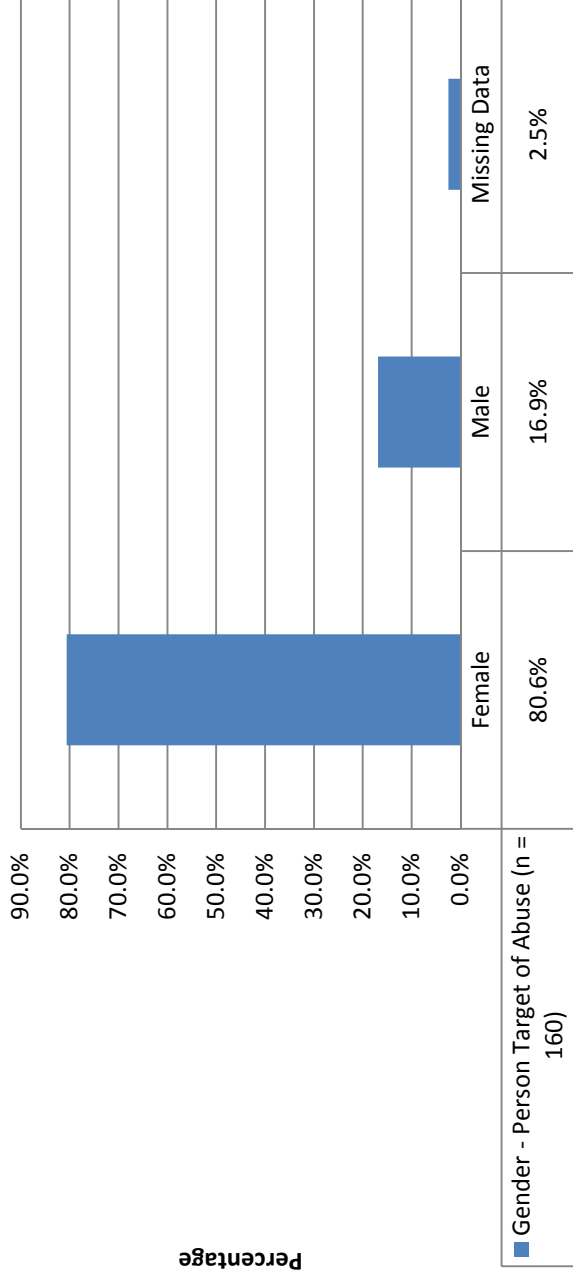
SPS Cases (n = 160)





Gender of primary victim/target of alleged abuse

Gender - Person Target of Abuse (n = 160)

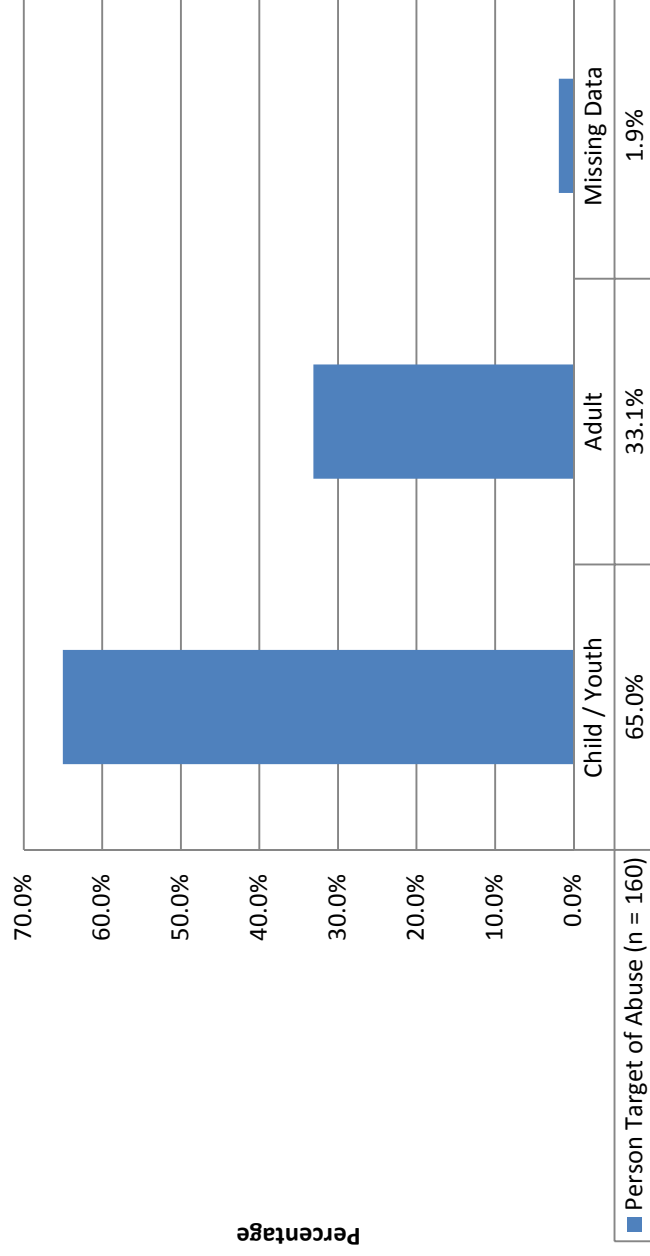




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Primary Target of Abuse: Children & Adults

Person Target of Abuse (n = 160)

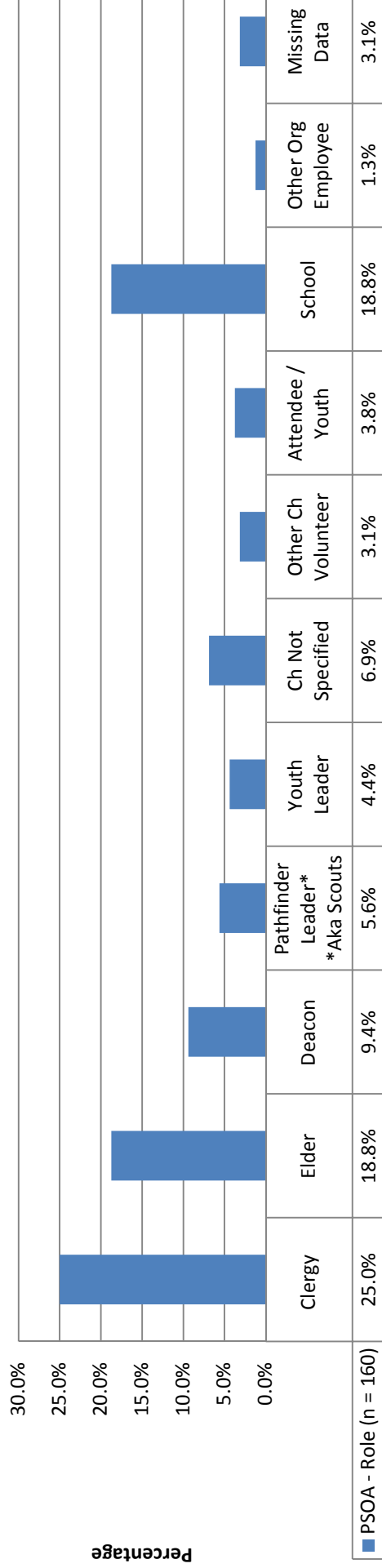


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Role of Person Subject of Allegation (PSOA)

PSOA - Role (n = 160)

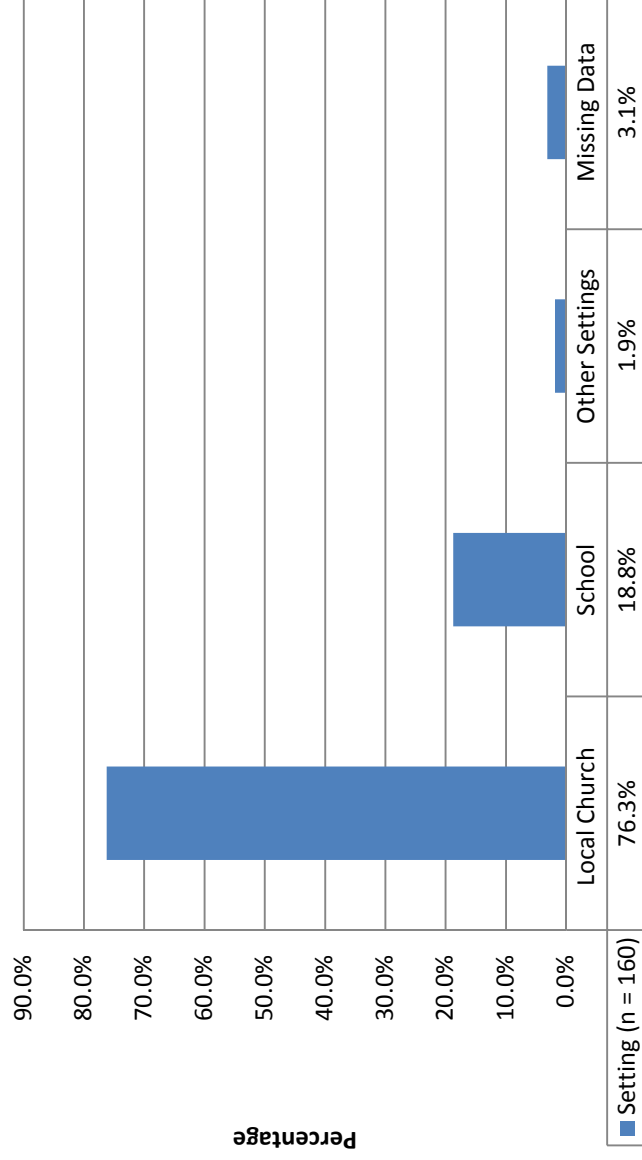


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Context of Alleged Abuse

Setting (n = 160)



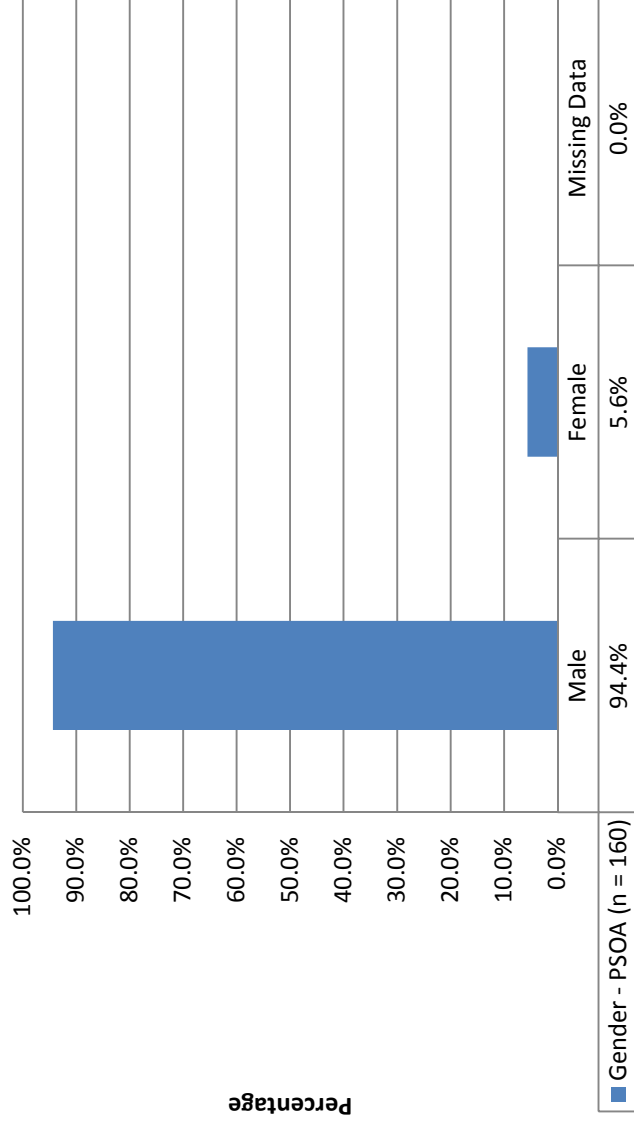
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Gender – Person Subject of Allegation (PSOA)

Gender - PSOA (n = 160)



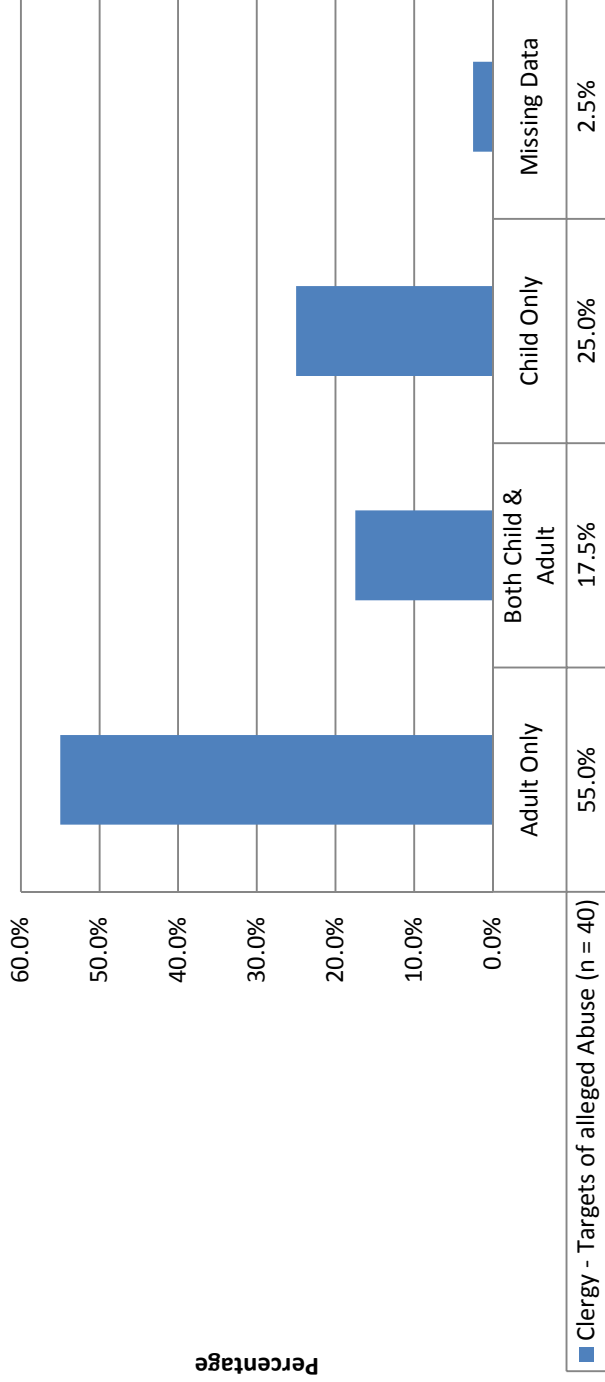
Note also: Average age of a PSOA when an allegation is made = 50.9 years



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Targets of alleged Clergy abuse: Adults & Children

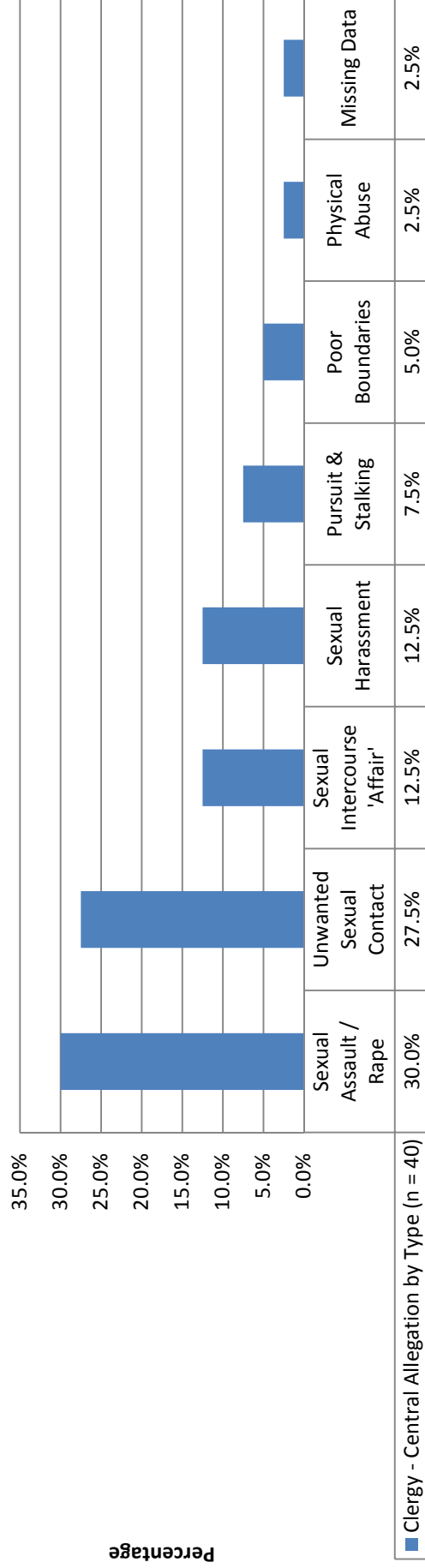
Clergy - Targets of alleged Abuse (n = 40)





Nature of Central Allegations about Clergy

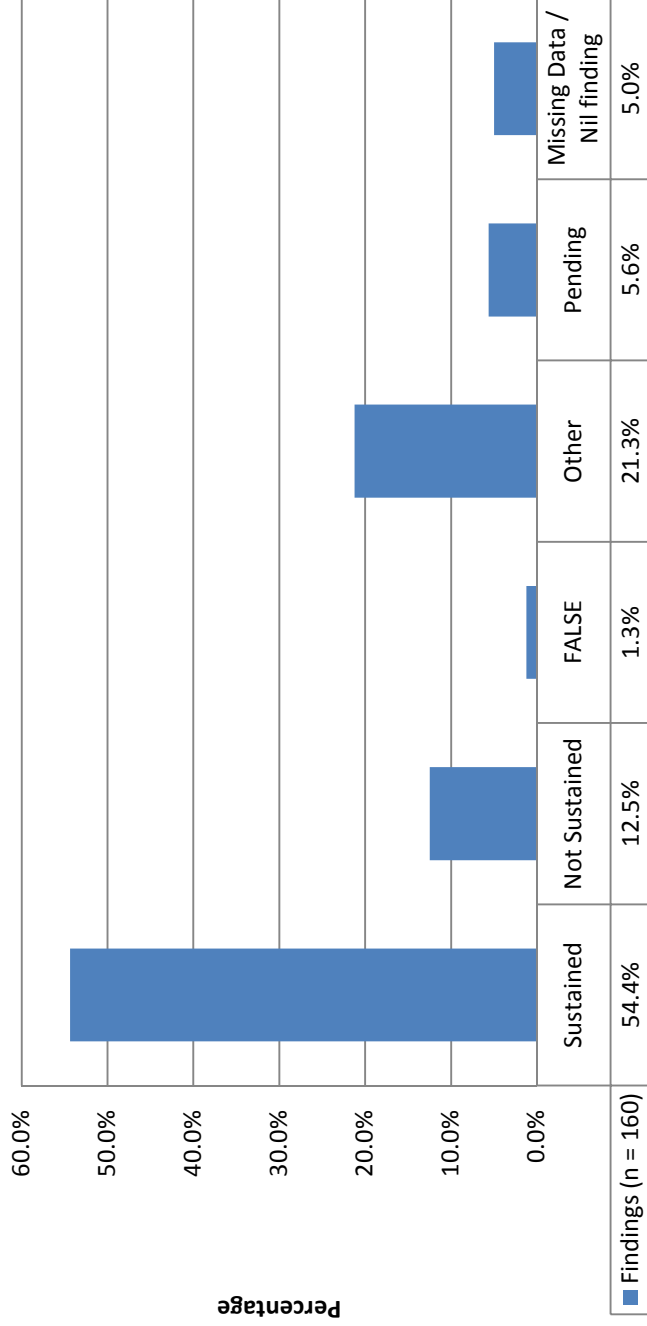
Clergy - Central Allegation by Type (n = 40)





Investigation Results: Adjudication Findings

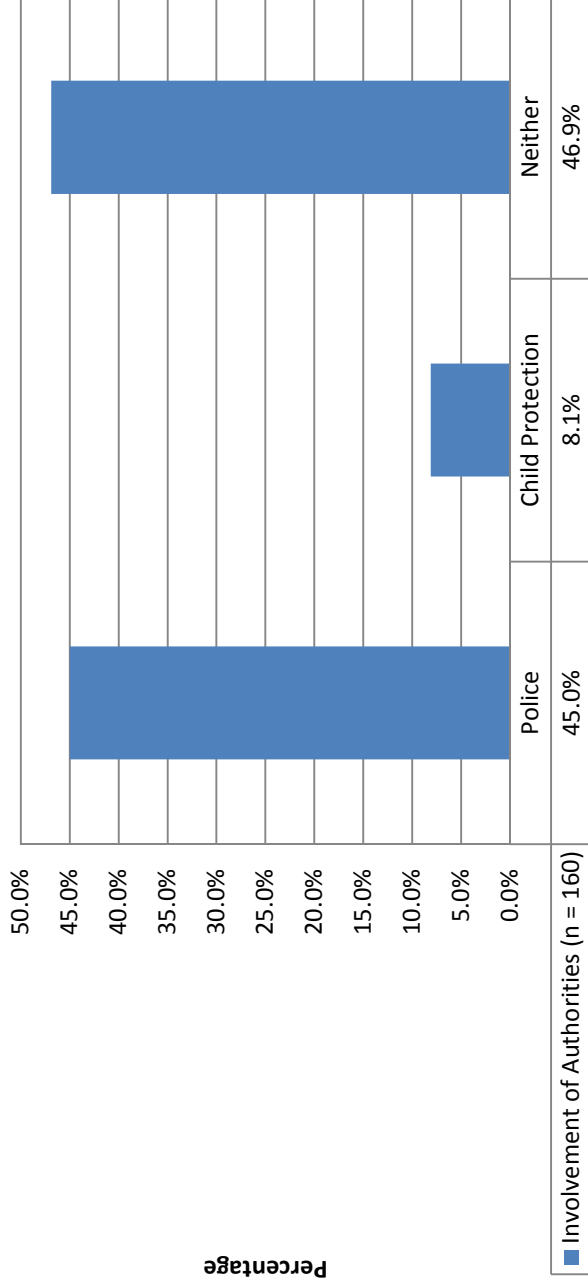
Findings (n = 160)





Involvement of Police & Child Protection Agencies

Involvement of Authorities (n = 160)

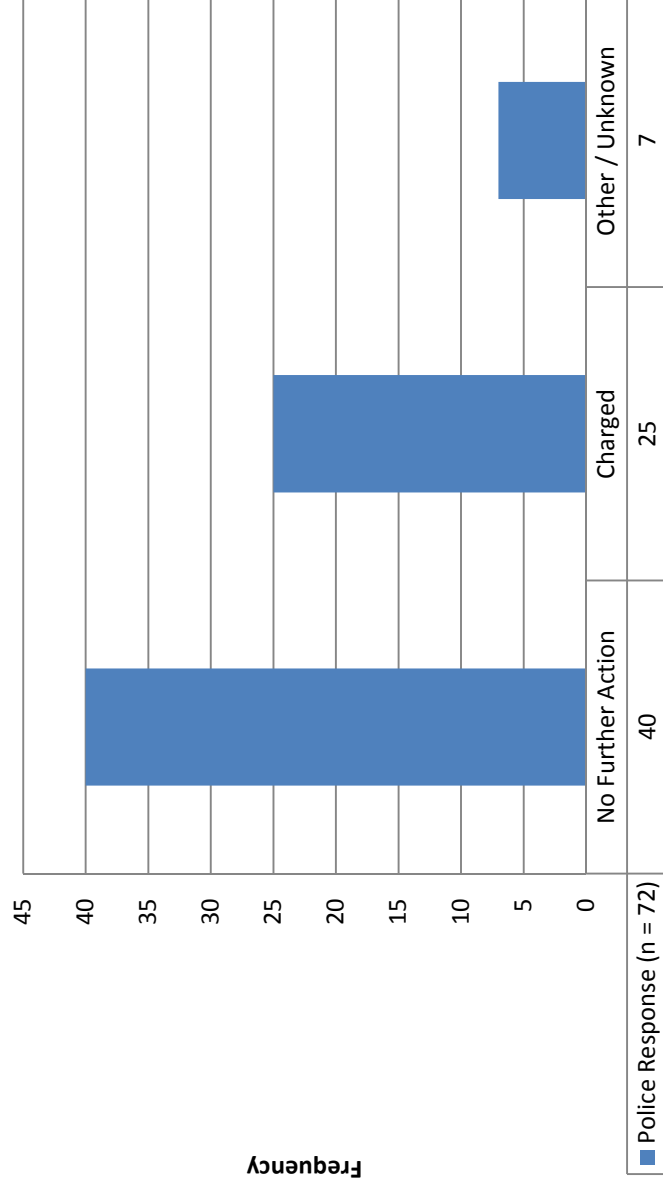


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Responses by Police

Police Response (n = 72)



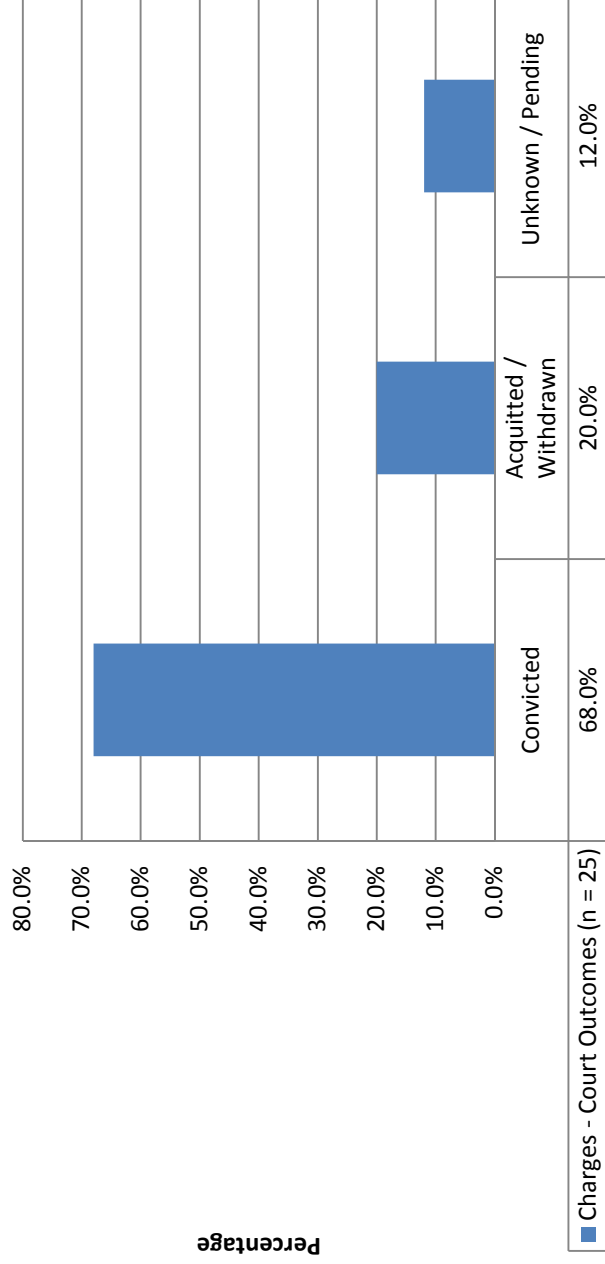
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Results of Charges by Police

Charges - Court Outcomes (n = 25)



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Key points from overview

- 160 cases have been investigated in the period 2000 – 2011
- The number of cases investigated each year has declined since 2003
- The most frequently investigated people subject of allegations are clergy (pastors, ministers & interns), followed by local Church elders then school staff
- The most reported setting of abuse is local Church environments (76.3%)
- Most reported targets of abuse are female (80.6%), compared to males (16.9%) [note: missing data 2.5%]
- Most reported targets of abuse are children (65%), compared to adults (33.1%) [note: missing data 1.9%].
- Clergy are reported to target children in 45.5% of cases [note: children ‘only’ in 25% of cases and ‘adults *and* children’ in 17.5% of cases].
- Most reported people subject of allegations are male (94.4%)
- Findings on allegations are as follows: sustained (54.4%); not sustained (12.5%); and false (1.3%); with other outcomes making up the remainder (31.8% e.g. pending, missing, nil findings).
- Of 72 cases referred for Police involvement, charges were laid in 25 instances with Court convictions in 68% of these cases. In addition to cases where charges were laid, five (5) applications for AVOs were successful.



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Implications & potential issues ...

- Children and adult females are 'at risk' in cases reported to SPS, thus local Churches should 'safeguard' intentionally.
- People in positions of relative 'power' (e.g. clergy, then local Church elders etc.) have been most frequently reported to Safe Place Services, compared to other denominational employees and other categories of local Church volunteers.
- The mix of female/male targets of alleged abuse is not typical of the experience of other denominational Investigative Units such as in the Anglican and Catholic faith contexts, where approximately 75% of alleged victims who come forward are male (see e.g. Parkinson et al. 2009).
- Males may be reluctant to come forward to report abuse in a 'conservative' Protestant culture that promotes heterosexual marriage.
- Local Churches should be aware of the reality of abuse, of anyone, within their community of faith
- It is hard for people to seek help or disclose abuse in an atmosphere that promotes 'happy family' or 'abuse would not happen here.'
- Males are the most frequent reported people subject of allegations, signalling that gendered violence based on patriarchy, male role, and entitlement may be an issue within the Church.
- Reporting situations to Police might be more effective than is commonly perceived and is strongly recommended by Safe Place Services.



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References

- Hughes, O. (1993). *Valuegenesis: Study 1 Core Report*. Sydney: South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists.
- Parkinson, P., Oates, K. & Jayakody, A. (2009, May). *Study of Reported Child Sexual Abuse in the Anglican Church*. Retrieved from <http://www.adelaide.anglican.com.au/reports.htm>
- Strahan, B. with Craig, B. (1995). *Marriage, Family and Religion*. Sydney: Adventist Institute of Family Relations.
- Wood, Justice. (1997). *Report of the Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service: The Paedophile Inquiry, Volume 5*. Retrieved from <http://www.pic.nsw.gov.au/Publications.aspx>

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- SPS supports -

enditnow

Adventists Say No to Violence Against Women

www.enditnow.org



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