

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DIOCESE OF GRAFTON

Paper for Bishop in Council November 14th 2013

The purpose of this paper is to provide background information to enable Bishop in Council to respond to Professional Standards matters on the agenda.

1. A recent search of Bishop in Council papers and minutes (Nov 2005) has uncovered a report from the then Chair of the PSC recommending the adoption of the Diocese of Sydney Pastoral Care and Assistance Package which included a Schedule of Financial Assistance capped at \$75,000. The meeting subsequently passed the following resolution. "That the Diocese of Grafton become part of the Sydney Diocesan care and assistance appraisal programme." This resolution was carried. There is no evidence of this resolution being rescinded. Although I consider the resolution is poorly worded it seems to me that the Diocese already has a Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme (PCAS) in place without realising it. Despite this there is little evidence that it is a document that has guided Diocesan leadership and the PSC in their decision making since Nov 2005. There are two implications that follow from of this discovery:
 - the Bishop/Administrator already has the authority to approve or reject recommendations of settlement from the Professional Standards Committee within the upper limit of \$75,000
 - the current work of the PSC in drafting a PCAS has been a fruitless exercise unless it is considered that the draft PCAS is a more appropriate document for our purposes.
2. Arising from this it is my opinion that Bishop in Council has two potential courses of action:
 - do nothing so that the Sydney Diocesan package remains our own
 - rescind the Nov 2005 resolution and adopt the current draft (as is, or amended) as our PCAS

It is the recommendation of the PSC that Bishop in Council adopt the second course of action for the following reasons:

- the Sydney document is too wordy and contains layers of response that are beyond our ability to provide
 - our document is shaped by the content of documents from a number of Diocese
 - the PSC is committed to having a document that is personal, sufficiently informing and of such a calibre that it invites claimants to engage with the Diocese with hope and confidence that they will be cared for and listened to. We believe the latest draft achieves that.
3. It is the recommendation of the PSC that Bishop in Council makes a clear decision that provides certainty for the PSC as it continues to serve the Diocese in these matters. There is a pastoral urgency that is paramount in settling those claims that were previously ignored by the Diocese.
 4. With regard to the latest draft Pastoral Care and Financial Assistance Scheme attached to this report. I make the following comments:
 - i. This latest draft has only been emailed to other members of the PSC in a similar time framework to you receiving it due to the time constraints we are all under at this time. I have discussed the changes with the Professional Standards Director. I take full responsibility for the alterations made. The alterations are in response to the feedback received from B in C members arising from the recent 'flying minute'. In summary the changes are:
 - removal of the requirement of a confidentiality agreement at the beginning of the process
 - editing to overcome the inconsistency of language in the second section with regard to the interchangeable use of 'claimant' and 'you'
 - the decision was taken to ensure that the second section be clearly personal in character and so the personal pronoun has been used throughout it
 - small changes in the introduction and first section to clarify that allegations against clergy are covered; to clarify what law is referred to in the last bullet point; the addition of the phrase '*by conducting an investigation into the allegations*'

2.

- ii. The document before you is both our policy document and the public document available to claimants and others through the Diocesan website.
- iii. It is important for me to emphasise once again that this is a 'living' document that the PSC will continue to monitor and amend if necessary in the light of its reception and use. This is the experience of other Diocese whose documents have been in use for a number of years.
- iv. The use of this document requires the appointment of a number of people such as a Pastoral Support Worker and independent panel members
- v. One matter raised in B in C discussions was the definition of 'church worker'. This term is defined in both Faithfulness in Service and the Professional Standards Ordinance 2004

David Hanger

PSC Chair