

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE**DIOCESE OF GRAFTON**

Bishop in Council Report November 14th 2013

The PSC met at Woolgoolga on October 24 with a focus on reviewing the draft Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme in response to the debate at the Bishop in Council meeting of September 26th. The meeting also spent considerable time auditing the files of 6 claimants from the North Coast Children's Home who had previously been refused a financial settlement from the Diocese. Since that meeting there has been considerable activity related to response and preparation for the Royal Commission public hearings and ongoing auditing of files related to the NCCH. I draw the following matters to the attention of members:

1. The Professional Standards Committee made 4 recommendations to the Administrator in regard to settling outstanding claims. The acceptance of these recommendations is bound up with the acceptance by Bishop in Council of a Pastoral Care and Financial Assistance Scheme (PCAS). The PSC is waiting to examine further documentation to enable it to finalise the 2 other outstanding claims.
2. The PSC discussed extensively the draft PCAS, the outcome of which was a further draft emailed to members of Bishop in Council. Unfortunately the schedule of Financial Assistance was not attached to the email which created some confusion in members' deliberations.
3. On behalf of the PSC, the Chair will investigate the files of the original 41 claimants to advise the Committee as to whether any further action is required. Further action would focus on personal apologies and any manifest inadequacy in the original financial settlement.
4. The Professional Standards Director reported that he had initial contact with one further alleged victim of abuse from the NCCH

Since the last meeting of the PSC there have been a number of further developments:

1. Heather McKinnon, our newest member, resigned acknowledging her inability to commit to the current workload of the PSC and indicating that she had underestimated the time commitment currently required. There is a difficulty in recruiting new members of the Committee given the pressures it is currently under. When Collen Pritchard formally resigns at the end of the year the PSC will have 4 remaining members, one of who is unable to attend face to face meetings. There has not been the time to focus on the membership needs but they will need to be addressed.
2. The Chair is working 2 days per week specifically on Professional Standards matters and at the request of the Administrator is 'on call' to provide assistance and advice in the intensive phase of preparation for the public hearings.
3. The response and input of Bishop in Council members to the latest draft of the PCAS requires ongoing work in shaping this document. This is the subject of a separate paper which is in your meeting papers.
5. No date has been set for the next meeting of the PSC. There is unlikely to be a meeting until after the conclusion of the Royal Commission public hearings. There is regular email contact between members.

David Hanger

PSC Chair