



The Right Reverend Dr Peter Stuart
 Administrator of the
 Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

5 February 2013

The Rev'd Dr Keith Joseph
 PO Box 239
 KURRI KURRI NSW 2327

Dear Fr Keith,

I was very pleased to meet with you just before Christmas to discuss the Synod Committee charged with the responsibility of reviewing the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012 of which you have been appointed the Chair and the Convenor.

I welcome ongoing review of such ordinances and you have been given a good committee with a wide range of experience. I have discussed with John Cleary his workload and the various demands on his office. The Royal Commission, the Election Synod and preparation for the Charities Commission represent three significant matters which have the potential to create additional demand. I have decided to withdraw John's nomination to the committee. He will still be available to you as a resource. I will leave the position vacant at this stage.

It is my understanding that the Committee has been appointed to review the Ordinance and, as such, its operational procedures would not involve surveys, focus groups or consultations across the Diocese. Rather the Committee should focus on the content of the Ordinance and comparable Ordinances in Australia and overseas. The Committee may need to address related ordinances such as the Clergy Discipline Ordinance and various General Synod Canons which relate to discipline and order. It will be helpful for the Committee to talk with those involved in designing the Ordinance, such as Mr Garth Blake, and those who implement the provisions of the Ordinance such as the Chair of the Professional Standards Committee and the Professional Standards Director. The Committee has not been set up to review past practice and should, as far as is practical, avoid discussion of particular cases.

I am very conscious of the context in which this review is taking place. At Synod we set the reporting date as Synod 2014 to ensure that the next Bishop has time to settle into his or her ministry before needing to address the outcome of the review. Since the Synod, a Royal Commission has been called which will address aspects of past and existing practices in churches and make recommendations.

You have foreshadowed that the Committee may wish to propose amendments to or alternatives to the existing Ordinance and asked what the process should be. Should the committee form this mind it should report this to the Diocesan Council by April 2014 in order that the Diocesan Council might approve circulation of an Interim report and authorise a consultation across the Diocese on the recommendations.

I was grateful for our wide-ranging conversation and affirm that both the Professional Standard Protocols and the code of conduct known as Faithfulness in Service as documents which gain their authority from the Ordinance form a legitimate part of the Committee's work. I advise that a revised form of the protocols will be considered by the Diocesan Council in February or March. We discussed the fact that some members of the Synod want to debate the stance on adult consensual sexual expression as enunciated in Faithfulness In Service. My recommendation to the Committee would be that if it forms a view that there is sufficient merit in having such a debate that the Committee recommends the process that will be sustaining of our common life as a Diocese rather than focus on the content of such debate.

I commend the Committee in its work. I am happy to meet with the Committee from time to time both as Administrator and as a person with experience in some of these matters in other Dioceses.

Yours sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Stuart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bishop Peter Stuart
Administrator