

From The Bishop of Newcastle

16 February 2010

Text:

Dear Secretary

I am responding to the letter I received from Audrey Clark in regard to the motion from the recent Annual General Meeting of Cathedral parishioners.

The matter of complaints against clergy in relation to allegations of professional standards violations is highly confidential. This confidentiality that is to be expected in matters of justice and in their consequential investigation safeguards the status of the complainant and the respondents (those against whom the serious complaints are made).

The process involved in matters of alleged violations of professional standards by clergy and lay workers is external to the Bishop of the Diocese. This is to ensure transparency and integrity given that the Bishop has to deliver the final judgement in regard to the determinations (if any) of the Professional Standards Board of the Diocese.

The process is managed by the Director of Professional Standards. In the matter that was raised at the Cathedral congregation's annual meeting I have obtained senior legal advice that affirms that the process as managed by the Director of Professional Standards is in compliance with the Professional Standards Ordinance.

It would be most inappropriate for me given the nature of the allegations against the respondents and the fact that the investigation is at present being conducted by the New South Wales police to make any further comment. I have sought to act scrupulously in this matter so as in no way to prejudice either the process or the outcome and bring unintentional harm to anyone involved.

I sincerely suggest that those concerned about this matter offer prayer for all involved. This will be the most pastoral way of helping those who were the subjects of concern in the motions that were passed at the Cathedral annual meeting.

Grace and Peace

Dr Brian Farran

Bishop of Newcastle