

Jean Sanders

REDACTED

RANKIN PARK .. 2287

December 6, 2001

The Right Reverend Roger Herft  
PO Box 817  
NEWCASTLE .. 2300

Dear Bishop Roger,

**Re: Diocesan Committee for Allegations of Sexual Misconduct, Harassment or Abuse.**

At the recent meeting of the above Committee on December 4 the following issues were considered:

**Contact People** – I requested a decision be made concerning the number of contact people to be available within the Diocese. It was decided that ideally there should be two contact people from each archdeaconry and that new appointments be lay members. Clergy committee members felt that the role of contact person presented difficulties for clergy as far as being seen to be acting impartially. It was also pointed out that clergy are represented by The Reverend Lu Piper and The Reverend Rosemary Gillham who have acted as contact people for some time. I will approach the Archdeacons as soon as possible to begin the process of appointing further contact people. Of course, once appropriate candidates for the positions are suggested I will forward names and relevant personal information to you for your consideration and possible approval.

**Police Checks of Contact People** – It was decided that contact people should be subject to a police check. I will write to those who are presently acting as contact people informing them of this decision, as well as The Registrar, to obtain procedural information. New appointments will also be made aware of the requirement of a police check into their background.

**Education Programme** – The present programme is ad hoc. I advised the meeting that the implementation of an appropriate initial and ongoing education programme for contact people should be a matter of priority and that the proposed programme include all aspects of mediation. I also feel that the present practice of giving a contact person the mediation programme information developed by Relationships Australia and requesting that they view 6-hours of video tapes covering the 4 day programme is educationally 'unsound'. I suggested, if possible, it would be better if a mediation programme specific to the needs of the Church could be developed and be a major component of training for all contact people. Mark Addison suggested that I contact Rhonda Murray at Samaritans as her professional background is in mediation. I will liase with Rhonda as soon as possible and hopefully, with her mediation skills and my professional background in adult education, we might be able to develop an appropriate programme. I am anxious to begin work on this project as I feel it is of utmost importance to have at least one team of competent impartial mediators in place within the Diocese.

**Licensing and Re-licensing of Contact People** – Members of the Committee expressed the opinion that it is unlikely that new appointments will be ready for licensing by July 2002, this is due to the length of time involved in appointing and training contact people. Present contact people are licensed to July 29, 2002. Would you please advise me of your decision concerning re-licensing, or alternately extending the license for those presently acting as contact people.

**Change of Name of Committee** – After discussion, it was decided that the name be changed to 'The Diocesan Committee for Allegations of Sexual Misconduct' (C.A.S.M.), *in toto*: The Diocesan Policy and Procedure Committee for Allegations of Sexual Misconduct. All members agreed that particularly, the word 'allegations' should be included. This matter is dependent on your permission to adopt the above name. I noted that in Minutes of the Committee Meeting that was held on October 6, 1998 - you requested advice concerning widening the focus of the Committee to deal with all forms of harassment and abuse. Unfortunately, at this time, we are constrained by lack of 'human resources'. Also, our legal advisor Robert Caddies felt there may be difficulties with regard to widening our brief. Is there a precedent within the Church of a lay committee dealing with wider issues as suggested? The matter of General Synod developing standard Australian wide protocols relating to sexual misconduct was also raised. Could you advise the Committee if there has been any consensus concerning this matter?

**Review of booklet 'Principles and Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Misconduct, Harassment or Abuse and pamphlet 'Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Abuse .. The Church's response'** - Members of the Committee will commence a review immediately. Once there is a consensus on changes required, suggestions will be forwarded to you for your consideration. As part of this review it was suggested by Committee Members that I contact Deirdre Anderson requesting a profile of cases managed by her (no names or places, just a general overview), as well as her thoughts and suggestions. Lyn Douglas has made a decision not to provide me with a profile of cases managed by her and Committee Members suggested I obtain relevant information from contact people (once again, I will not ask for specific details). It is thought that it is important that we try to obtain this information in an effort to evaluate performance with regard to the present policies and procedures. Would you advise me if you consider this action to be inappropriate.

In closing, I would like to express my admiration for the members of this particular Committee. Matters are dealt with in a co-operative, caring and supportive environment with all members participating equally, enabling decisions to be made that are appropriate and workable.

Sincerely



JEAN SANDERS - CHAIR