



13/11/2010

From the Bishop

To Members of Diocesan Council

Dear Diocesan Council Members,

In the discussion at the September 30th concerning the operation of Professional Standards processes within the Diocese there may have been given inadvertently impressions of concern. I wish to address some of these and reassure you of the integrity of the operations of Professional Standards within the Diocese.

The location of the Director of Professional Standards was raised as a concern. This is a matter that is considered carefully by every Diocese with some Dioceses incorporating the Director closely with the Diocesan Offices and some having the Director located at different offices.

The Director and his part-time administrative assistant are located in offices on the first floor of Bishop Housden House. A person wishing to see the Professional Standards Director can meet him without coming to reception as there is a waiting area on the first floor. The offices have separate locks which are not known to other Diocesan personnel. The computer system is separately firewalled.

Operationally, Diocesan Officers and I only see the DPS when by request in our offices. His location on the first floor is sufficiently disconnected from the third floor Diocesan Office to ensure that the DPS works independently and is able to offer confidential engagement with complainants and respondents.

The second issue raised was that the administrative assistant is related to a member of the Diocesan Office staff. This is correct.

However, this appointment was made by an interviewing panel that consisted of an external person well versed in professional standards matters. The other assurance is that the administrative staff person has signed a confidentiality agreement. I think these are sufficient guarantees of the independence of the operation of the Professional Standards Director.

The third issue related to the appointment of the Professional Standards Director. The Professional Standards Director has a contract with the Diocese and we must be careful to ensure that we always act as good employers.

As I indicated in answer to a question in Synod, The October 2007 Meeting of Diocesan Council carried this motion:

Director of Professional Standards

Moved Mr J Cleary Seconded Mr J Price

That the Diocesan Council authorizes the Diocesan Business Manager to make this Appointment.

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to the Secretary of the Department of Education. The letter discusses the need for a coordinated effort between the two departments to address the health care needs of students in higher education.

2. The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to the Secretary of the Department of Education. The report provides a detailed overview of the current state of health care services for students in higher education and identifies key areas for improvement.

3. The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Department of Education to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. The report provides a detailed overview of the current state of higher education and identifies key areas for improvement in the area of health care services for students.

4. The fourth part of the document is a joint report from the Secretaries of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education. The report provides a detailed overview of the current state of health care services for students in higher education and identifies key areas for improvement.

5. The fifth part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to the Secretary of the Department of Education. The letter discusses the need for a coordinated effort between the two departments to address the health care needs of students in higher education.

6. The sixth part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Education to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. The letter discusses the need for a coordinated effort between the two departments to address the health care needs of students in higher education.

7. The seventh part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to the Secretary of the Department of Education. The letter discusses the need for a coordinated effort between the two departments to address the health care needs of students in higher education.

8. The eighth part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Education to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. The letter discusses the need for a coordinated effort between the two departments to address the health care needs of students in higher education.

9. The ninth part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to the Secretary of the Department of Education. The letter discusses the need for a coordinated effort between the two departments to address the health care needs of students in higher education.

10. The tenth part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Education to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. The letter discusses the need for a coordinated effort between the two departments to address the health care needs of students in higher education.

Those present at that meeting of the Diocesan Council were:

The Bishop, Bishop Graeme Rutherford, His Hon Judge J Lincoln (Chancellor), Dean Graeme Lawrence, Mr J Cleary, Archdeacon Simpson, Canons S Benson, P Robertson, S Roulston, The Reverends H Bright, A Copeman, M Davies, B Pate, S Pullin, and Messers W Allen, A Green, J Helman, J Price, C Shevels and Mrs B Fenwick and Mrs R Brand.

The above members included the Chancellor, The Diocesan Solicitor, the Chair and Deputy Chair of Committees.

The recruitment process for the position of Director of Professional standards was thorough and comprised a panel consisting of the former Chair of the PSC, the clerical member of the PSC at the time, the former Professional Standards Director at the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and the Diocesan Business Manager. Three of these people were members of the Diocesan Council at the time.

Following the intensive recruitment campaign, they recommended the appointment of Michael to me. At the time, partnerships were also discussed with me with respect to a joint initiative with the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle under our covenant.

The issue of independence of the Professional Standards Director is crucial. The media scrutiny of the Diocesan practice of Professional Standards will only increase and become more interrogatory. This climate will not dissipate in the near future.

What we have now in practice overcomes the inadequacies of practice in the past. The previous practices were far too 'in-house'

The Diocesan Council in its oversight given to it by the Professional Standards Ordinance 2005 (as amended) has to be careful that it will not be perceived as compromising the integrity of the Professional Standards Ordinance and its proper practice. The experience of the Church is that we have needed to learn better how to respond to people who have been hurt within the midst of the Church. I know this because I have been the one to hear the stories and to apologize on behalf of the Diocese of Newcastle.