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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
HELD AT ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL PRESBYTERY, SYDNEY, N.S.W.,
ON TUESDAY, 15TH AUGUST, 1995, AT 10.00 A.M.

1. PRESENT: Most Reverend Geoffrey Robinson, Acting Chairman,
Most Reverend Peter Connors, Secretary,
Ms Myolene Carrick,
Sister Helen Clarke, R.S.C.,
Reverend Brian Lucas,
Sister Angela Ryan, C.S.B.,
Reverend John Usher,
Sister Evelyn Woodward, R.S.J.

Bishop Kevin Manning and Father Brian Gallagher, M.S.C., presented their apologies for being unable to attend the meeting.

Mr. Chris O'Malley and Mr. Laurie Rolls of Catholic Church Insurances Limited were also present at the meeting.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS HELD ON 6TH JUNE, 1995.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th June, 1995, were accepted as being a faithful record of decisions made and of matters discussed.

3. MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY C.C.I.

Mr. Chris O'Malley reported that until such time as the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards is able to appoint a Project Officer, Mr. Laurie Rolls will assist Bishops and Religious Leaders with Risk Management. Mr. Rolls will not deal with insurance matters, but will refer these issues to C.C.I.

C.C.I. possesses much resource material, which has been carefully collated and will be of much assistance to Mr. Rolls in carrying out this assignment.

Mr. O'Malley then gave a resume of the present situation concerning insurance cover provided by C.C.I. The ethical standards cover ceased on the 30th June, 1995.

The "statute of limitations" provisions vary from State to State and have serious implications for both alleged victims and for Bishops and Religious Leaders.

It was agreed that this matter should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards. A paper will be prepared by C.C.I., in consultation with Father Brian Lucas, to provide advice and assistance to Bishops and Religious Leaders on this matter.

It was also noted that some Bishops and Religious Leaders are making payments for the costs of counselling for alleged victims

in professional misconduct cases. This procedure also has serious implications.

Mr. Rolls sought further clarification concerning the title for his temporary assignment.

It was agreed that "Professional Standards Risk Management Services" would be an appropriate title. It was also agreed that it should be seen as providing support for the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards. It is really a recognition of an existing service and a very urgent need.

Mr. Rolls will deal with many matters, e.g. co-ordinating the drafting of press statements.

4. REPORT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A THERAPY CENTRE

The members were provided with a written report on the research project "Treatment of Priests and Religious with Psychosexual Disorders".

Bishop Robinson reported that he had also forwarded a letter to Bishops and Religious Leaders in which he has provided them with details concerning the research project.

Bishop Connors is to write to Father Michael McKenna, the Executive Secretary of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, seeking the allocation of a half day session at the November 1995 Assembly of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, when the findings of the research project will be made available. Arrangements will also be made for Religious Leaders to attend this session.

Sister Helen Clarke reported that she is still seeking funding from members of the A.C.L.R.I.

Bishop Connors tabled some comments of a Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry in Melbourne, concerning the type of therapy which should be made available for priests and religious with psychosexual disorders.

Further advice should be sought from this Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry.

5. REPORT ON THE PREPARATION OF THE DRAFT PRINCIPLES IN RELATION TO SEXUAL ABUSE AND PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT

The members were in receipt of a detailed response to the draft Principles document prepared by the Friends of Susanna.

Bishop Robinson has also obtained comments from Dr. Robert Grant, a consultant psychologist from the United States, who had spoken with Bishop Robinson before preparing his comments.

Bishop Robinson reported that Dr. Grant would be visiting Australia during the month of December and the members accepted the recommendation of Bishop Robinson that the Committee should

meet with Dr. Grant during his visit to Australia.

Discussion then took place concerning the comments which had been made by the Friends of Susanna, Dr. Grant and Leaders of Religious Institutes.

Bishop Robinson will make another draft of the "Principles" document and forward it to the members of the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards, to the Friends of Susanna, and eventually to the Bishops and Religious Leaders, for further consideration.

It was also agreed that the Procedures for dealing with allegations and which were approved in April 1992 should now be revised in the light of the "Principles".

Mr. Laurie Rolls will collect the various Protocols, which have been drawn up by Dioceses and Religious Institutes. Father Brian Lucas will then arrange for a revision of the Procedures, which will deal with all allegations against Catholic Church personnel.

6. MEETING OF BISHOPS AND STAFF OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES ON SEXUAL ABUSE

Bishop Connors provided a copy of a letter which he has forwarded to Bishop Kinney, the Chairman of the Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse in the United States of America, indicating the acceptance of the invitation to participate in a meeting of Bishops and Staff from English-speaking Bishops' Conferences on the issue of child sexual abuse by priests and religious.

It is anticipated that the meeting will take place during the first half of 1996.

No further action needs to be taken until a response is received from Bishop Kinney.

7. MANDATE FOR THE BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Bishop Connors tabled a draft of a proposed Mandate for the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards, which will require the endorsement of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Attention should be given to the drafting of a Code of Ethics for Professional Standards in all aspects.

The word "sexual" should be removed from Article 2. Allegations of physical assault or mistreatment of children are now being disclosed to Catholic Church authorities.

Article 3 should read as follows: To provide guidance, advice and assistance to State Resource Groups for Professional Standards.

Article 4 may call for qualification. Explicit mention should also be made of collaboration with the Bishops' Committee for Clergy and Religious.

It was agreed that there is need for regular meetings with representatives of the State Resource Groups for Professional Standards.

The members were invited to forward further comments on the draft Mandate to Bishop Connors.

8. POLICY AND PRACTICE RE SEXUAL MISCONDUCT OF CLERGY

Bishop Connors tabled a copy of a letter which he had forwarded to Father Rodger Austin, dated 7th July, 1995, seeking the services of Father Austin in drafting Procedures for dealing with allegations of professional misconduct. Father Austin was also asked to prepare Procedures when allegations are made against other Catholic Church personnel.

Because it now seems that one set of Procedures is required to deal with all forms of allegation against all Catholic Church personnel, Bishop Connors is to ask Father Austin to discontinue his response to the letter of 7th July and await the material which will be drafted by Father Brian Lucas.

9. REPORT ON MEETING WITH THE 'FRIENDS OF SUSANNA', HELD IN SYDNEY ON 24TH JUNE, 1995.

Bishop Robinson gave the members a brief report on the meeting which was held in Sydney on 24th June, 1995, with six members of the Friends of Susanna, five of whom are the victims of sexual assault by clergy.

10. FIRST AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCE ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION BY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, PSYCHOTHERAPISTS AND CLERGY

At the invitation of Bishop Manning, Bishop Robinson has prepared a five hundred word submission to the organisers of the 1st Australian and New Zealand Conference on Sexual Exploitation by Health Professionals, Psychotherapists and Clergy.

It was agreed that the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards should be pro-active in this matter.

11. GENERAL BUSINESS

Because allegations of physical abuse are now arising, it was agreed that C.C.I. should seek advice on this matter for distribution to all Bishops and Religious Leaders. It is important that Bishops and Religious Leaders should act in a uniform manner when dealing with such allegations.

11.1 Cases of Physical Abuse

Allegations of Physical Abuse and Assault are not being disclosed. It is important that Bishops and Religious Leaders act in a uniform manner when dealing with these allegations. C.C.I. will seek further information for distribution to all Bishops and

Religious Leaders.

11.2 Status of Reports of Matters discussed at Meetings of the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards

Mr. Paul Hoy of Purves, Clarke, Richards, Solicitors, has provided a legal opinion to Mr. Chris O'Malley of Catholic Church Insurances concerning the status of Reports of matters discussed at meetings of the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards and Minutes of such meetings.

It was agreed that careful attention should be given to the advice of Mr. Hoy in the preparation of such Reports and Minutes.

11.3 Paper prepared by Brother Alex McDonald, S.J.

Sister Helen Clarke tabled copies of a paper, which is about to be published, by Brother Alex McDonald, S.J., entitled "The Discovery of Child Abuse".

Father Bill Uren, S.J., the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits, has suggested that the members of the Committee should be aware of the contents of Brother McDonald's paper.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Bishop Connors will advise the members of the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards when a date is set for a meeting to be held prior to the November Assembly of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Bishop Robinson will arrange for the meeting with Dr. Robert Grant to be held on either Monday, 11th, or Monday, 18th December, 1995.

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