

**Catholic Education Centre**

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MEMO

TO:	MONSIGNOR DAVID CAPPO
FROM:	ALLAN DOOLEY
DATE:	16/10/02
SUBJECT:	PROGRESSING ST ANN'S SPECIAL SCHOOL MATTERS

Following further discussions between Tony Fuller, Liz Perry, Jane Swift, Eileen Young, (and later with Sue Cain) and me we have drafted the following notes for consideration at the Taskforce meeting next Wednesday. The notes are intended to provide a way forward in progressing some of the claims as quickly as we can in the hope of having some settlements before Christmas.

Current environment

- 16 statements to Professional Standards
- Police have interviewed 90 families and have divided these people into three groups, namely, most likely offended against, possibly offended against and probably not offended against
- In the first group for the police there are up to seven families, all but one of whom have lodged a statement with Professional Standards
- CCI is open to a plan on how to move forward whether it be a general plan for a group or individually
- At least one family is ready to move forward.

Our Aim

To move to settlement as soon as possible with those families in which abuse has most likely occurred. It is important that Towards Healing is followed and that those families we respond to are those who have made statements. In the case of any family where we know there has been a high probability of abuse we agreed we should encourage them to make a statement, albeit that this could be agreement by the family for us to access the police report.

Role of Professional Standards

The Director of Professional Standards is responsible for recommending to the Archbishop those families for which she (and in consultation with the Professional Standards Reference Group) concludes abuse has occurred. She is also responsible for establishing facilitation

processes (usually through a professional mediator) through which the Church and the family meet to arrange a mutually agreeable settlement.

It is proposed that Sue Cain as Director of Professional Standards consider recommending the six families (for whom the police believe abuse is most likely) be invited into the facilitation process without further need for evidence or assessment.

In doing so it is hoped that these families will authorise the police to provide Sue with their statement and that the psychologist/counsellor working with the person abused offer a report on needs the for that person.

Facilitation

It is recommended that the following facilitation process in Towards Healing be considered:

- A letter be sent to the six families indicating our wish to move forward for pastoral reasons without the need for further assessment or investigation. Settlement will involve facilitation which would be by a professional facilitator who is responsible to Sue Cain in this process. The family is able to have legal support for which reasonable costs will be paid by the Church. It is expected that facilitation will bring about agreement regarding a formal apology by the Archbishop personally to the family, an agreed amount in consideration of the needs of the abused person and an agreed amount for pain and suffering for the family;
- It is expected that the facilitator will meet with representatives of the Church and the family individually to familiarise themselves with the issues and parameters (including financial) each wishes to achieve through the facilitation and then will facilitate a meeting. At the end of the meeting any matters outstanding will be referred back to Sue Cain and the Archbishop;
- If agreement is reached the matter would then be referred to the solicitors to prepare the necessary documents and then a meeting with the Archbishop would take place in which the apology would be extended;
- In the past CCI have then required a further psychiatric assessment prior to financial settlement. It is intended we recommend to CCI that this be waived for this group of families and that we rely on a current assessment by a psychologist or psychiatrist together with the police assessment;
- Tony Fuller will prepare a draft letter to the parents for consideration at the meeting next Wednesday. This will then need to be checked with CCI. Tony will continue to work closely with CCI.

Families in Group 2.

We thought it was important to move forward with the most serious cases first. But it is anticipated that a similar process may be used for other families (of the 17 who have made statements to Professional Standards).

Families in Group 3

Most of these families have not made a statement to Professional Standards. We may need to consider this group further in due course.

PRINCIPAL CONSULTANTS' MEETING

The Catholic Education Office is excellent in its dealings with major incidents and crises. The centralised system works very well here and most of the time incidents are contained and handled extremely well, and the welfare of all concerned is taken into account with both school based and public responses.

But there is a lack of "good news" and promotional stories. And the public would be forgiven for thinking the only news that comes out of the Catholic Church is bad news. But the Catholic sector is more than sex abuse.

The Archbishop has asked that we put in a concerted effort to present good news stories and the logical source for these is our schools which are doing wonderful things. That is happening to a certain extent now both in the Messenger and Advertiser and on television but I'm sure there are more good news stories which don't see the light of day.

I would be happy for principals or principal consultants to run ideas past me and I'd be more than happy to help with Press Releases on good news stories as well. Otherwise we could promote the stories through the appropriate arm of the media. ie some would go well on Today Tonight while others might be more suitable for The Advertiser or radio. Some would be successful and others may only receive publicity on a smaller level, but I think that's OK. We would target the different media according to the audience we are trying to reach.

All positive news stories are "money in the bank" for the Catholic sector and for Catholic schools. They create a buffer zone during the bad times.

As I've said, I think our response to critical issues is excellent and necessarily centralised but having said that it would also be good to have more principals out there fronting the media. I believe there should be ongoing media training for principals in dealing with situations. They should be able to talk to the media. It is good for parents to see their principal out there tackling a situation.

And it is often better to be seen to be upfront rather than "smoothing things over" all the time.

Mgr David Cappelletti is an excellent example of this. ie David's appearance on the 7.30 Report after Archbishop Pell's resignation and his interview on Kevin Naughton's Drive Time ABC radio show.

In the first instance, Mgr Cappelletti's appearance was judged by Archbishop Wilson as a "turning point" on that particular day and his comments were used all day on radio the next day. It was a well-utilised opportunity to put the Catholic Church's side in a positive way and which deflected some of the criticism.

In the second instance, Kevin Naughton had a lawyer on his who who stated that it was impossible to sue the Catholic Church and sex abuse cases were useless because the Catholic Church was a monolith which couldn't be sued. David was then interviewed and Kevin Naughton thought he had him in a corner. However David Cappo said it's true things have been done badly in the past and we have to fix them. Kevin Naughton was "gobsmacked" according to one media expert who rang me later and the church was again put in a positive light, deflecting the criticism which is so widespread. The interview was quoted in the news service all day on radio and on the PM program that evening and Kevin Naughton was so grateful that he rang David's office and thanked him for his appearance. It seemed to be a turnaround in Kevin Naughton's previously antagonistic attitude towards the church.

I think we should be more accessible and out there on positive and even on negative issues when it's deemed to be appropriate. Sometimes the appropriate response to bad news is to lay low and not to encourage the frenzy. The corporate response works well in certain cases and other times the grassroots response is better.

Witness the results of the armed robbery at the State School canteen. The principal was out there with his sleeves rolled up and talking to the media, saying we're taking steps to ensure this can't happen again etc...

I leave these thoughts with you and welcome any input. But mostly I welcome the "good news stories" that I hope will come to me.