

Minutes

St. Ann's Taskforce

Held at Cathedral Office 3/09/03

Present: Sue Cain, Monsignor David Cappel, Allan Dooley, Chris Rann, Joan Atkinson, Tony Fuller, Jane Swift, Anne Carolin.

Sue distributed the following documents:

- **Taskforce Minutes 27/08/03**
- **Working Party Minutes 1/09/03**
- **CCI Edmund Fernandez Correspondence**
- **Updated Action Plan**

Sue noted that the key issue to address at this meeting was the feasibility of the current timeline and the associated implications for everyone's workload.

Matters arising from the Working Party Minutes

Payments

Laurie Roles and Edmund Fernandez advised that there were significant disadvantages in making any monetary payment to the families in Category 3. It was acknowledged that CCI representatives were considering their advice within the context of the insurance practices rather than the unique circumstances of the former students at St. Ann's. Sue also pointed out that there were three former students in Category 3 who were deceased. Should payments be made in recognition of the effects on families the issue of payment to these families would need to be resolved. If payments were made to these 3 families then this would be paying secondary victims, the very issue pointed out by Edmund Fernandez.

Quantum Issues - Drawing on historical data Edmund advised that amounts of \$35 000 would be the mean for cases comparable to those in Category. Tony said that insurers would be concerned that more generous payments would lift the bar and created expectations with future claimants.

Edmund Fernandez acknowledged the difficulties associated with requiring further assessment of former students.

The consensus of the Working Party was that monetary payment to families in Category 3 was a less favourable option. It was felt that a pastoral gesture such as a meeting with the Archbishop would go further towards healing the hurt or disillusionment felt by those associated with events at St. Ann's. If the latter was the preferred response, the telephone help line may be the avenue for establishing which families would be seeking an interview with the Archbishop. From the current data many families in Category 3 have stated that they would not wish for any follow up.

The logistical issue of meeting with families was recognized but it was felt that the numbers choosing this option would be limited. However the offer itself may make a considerable difference.

Chris noted that the figures suggested by CCI did not reflect the Archbishop's attitude and would not constitute very poor PR. Joan said that the social cost to the church would be high and for some it could result in long-term alienation. People may feel that the church was unfeeling and giving more consideration to financial concerns rather than the plight and suffering of those affected by the abuse.

CCI acknowledge and reserve the right as insurers to take a commercial position rather than a pastoral position.

David said that the Archbishop was currently at the Bishop's Conference. He would be talking to the bishops about anticipated payments to families in the range of \$100,000 for families in Category 1. It was his opinion that a lesser amount would be counterproductive. He realizes that most of this will have to be borne by the diocese but it needed to be acknowledged that this group of people had the additional burden of a severe disability and therefore could expect to have greater protection in their community.

Laurie Rolls rang Sue to outline an alternative proposal to making payments to families. He suggested that a trust fund could be set up for the families. Families would be able to submit claims against the trust for counseling, medical and other associated costs. The interest on the capital would be used to service these claims.

The taskforce unanimously agreed that this option would not bring closure for families and might be the cause of further indignity for people already hurt by events at St. Ann's. It was likely to also pose complex administrative issues/delays that could be counterproductive to the spirit in which the payments and expression of sorrow were intended.

Tony emphasized the need to be disciplined about not making any public record of categories. It would give rise to enquiry and speculation about the determination of such categories. This could prompt families to dispute payments based on their perception of the criteria for such categories.

Allan said that it could be expected that some families may seek further recourse or clarification. It was probable that families would communicate with each other once they had received the Archbishop's letter.

David Cappel asked about the accuracy of the categories. Anne and Eileen are currently seeking clarification in relation to 9 cases, other than those in Category 1 and 3 were known with a reasonable degree of accuracy. There was a greater range of opportunity and margin of uncertainty within Category 2. Jane suggested that Category 2 could be split into two sub categories based on opportunity and unsupervised contact with Brian Perkins.

Other issue:

There are families who have stated that they do not wish for any further contact. The question of whether these families should be offered the opportunity to accept the

Archbishop's offer of payment was discussed. The taskforce felt that it would be worthwhile sending the letter and giving the families the choice of response.

Timeline. 22nd September

Sue asked the taskforce to consider the feasibility of the current time line (week of 22nd September) Her concerns were that if the timeline were extended that both the Archbishop and Tony would be away. Allan said that a longer timeline might escalate family tensions.

Archbishop Wilson will be away from 10/10 – 5/11

Tony Fuller will be away from 30/10 - 24/11

If the letters and payments were postponed until after this date the timing would clash with the busy Christmas and end of year preparation, as well as the reporting on the Archbishop's Enquiry.

Based upon the current timeline there was a period of three weeks to the date when letters would be sent to families. The issues that needed to be addressed to meet this deadline include.

1. Clarification of category information. Anne and Eileen would be meeting with Bernie Farrington this week to work through discrepancies in current data. The extent of this would only be known after their meeting. Anne said that they would report back to the Working Party Meeting on Monday. It was agreed that once this information was available there would be a think tank meeting to focus on streamlining Category 2 families for maximum accuracy.
2. Tony would work on the draft letter to families. He would revisit the wording relating to de-emphasizing secondary victims. Copies of the Archbishop's letter would also need to go out to parent advocates, Donald Craig, school principals, and the clergy.
3. Edmund and Angela will be following up the information from Centrelink.
4. Catholic Education will arrange the detail of setting up a help line and organize a roster that includes Eileen, Anne and Helen McPhee. A scripted response will be developed to ensure consistency in responding to enquiries. This would be open for extended hours for 3 days from 8 am to 10 pm. Allan said an 1800 number would be considered. The designated number would be diverted to a mobile number after hours. To avoid delays the calls would divert to Sylvia or Lenore after 3 rings.
5. Catholic Education to update and check the family address list. Chris Rann said that this could be checked against the Electoral Role, which should be available on line or in the State Library.

Allan suggested alternative Category descriptions.

Category 1 – students who were abused or probably abused.

Category 2 – students who were witnessed or probably witnessed abuse

Category 3 – students who were not abused and not present when abuse took place.

Anne Carolin