

ENCOMPASS AUSTRALASIA

In a Pastoral Letter issued in November 1996, the Bishops and Religious Leaders of the Catholic Church in Australia announced their intention to establish a national treatment program for clergy and religious.

Two Clinical psychologists of international standing, Drs Tony Robinson and Gerardine Taylor were recruited to head up a highly qualified team operating under the name of Encompass Australasia. Treatment programmes commenced in April 1997 and over the following eleven years over two hundred individual clients and many more attending group seminars and workshops, have benefited enormously from their participation in the programmes offered.

In recent years we have seen a decline in the number of clients being referred by Church Authorities and it has become clear that it is no longer practicable to maintain the structure of the treatment programmes in their present form. Accordingly the Australian Bishops' Conference and the Conference of Religious of Australia commissioned two eminent persons to review the clinical and the financial models of Encompass. Those reviews have been completed.

The clinical review expresses nothing but the highest praise for the treatment programmes but concludes that in the light of current experience it is impracticable to maintain them in their present form. Alternatives have been suggested whereby Church Authorities can continue to meet the demands they have made upon themselves to continue to provide treatment for clergy and religious. The review of the financial model also concluded that a much less costly method of delivering the required services must be identified.

The reviews have been submitted to the presidents of the ACBC and the CRA and directions as to their implementation are awaited. Meanwhile, conscious of the current financial status of the company and of the advice given by the Reviewers, the Board of Encompass Australasia has concluded that the delivery of services in their present form, under the corporate structure currently in place, will be discontinued on 30th June 2008.

An alternative structure for the delivery of programmes is being developed that is expected to meet the approval of the Bishops and Religious Leaders. While the recommendations are being considered every consideration is being given to clients presently under treatment and those participating in the Continuing Care programme.