

ACBC MEETING - December 1992

ACBC SPECIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

1. Visit of Father Brian Lucas to the United States and Canada.

Father Lucas will give a brief report and answer questions.

2. Draft Statement on Child Sexual Abuse

The statement is being considered by the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes and is presented for adoption. If it is not satisfactory, the Special Issues Committee wishes to be responsible for its amendment.

3. Establishment of a Therapy Centre/Programme in Australia.

A sub-committee is investigating the establishment of a therapy programme in Australia. It is the view of the Committee that the prognosis for offenders to be returned to any form of active ministry at a parish level is not good.

4. Charter for the Special Issues Pool.

It is the recommendation of the ACLRI that the Charter for the Pool for Special Issues be put on hold for the present.

5. Status and Structure of Resource Groups.

It is suggested that some consideration be given to the role of the State Conferences of Leaders of Religious Institutes when State Special Issues Resource Groups are being established.

The Special Issues Resource Groups in each State are not necessarily investigative bodies, but rather are there to provide advice to Bishops and Major Superiors.

For this reason, article 6.4.2 of the Protocol is now to read:

"The accused may bring the matter to the attention of a competent ecclesial authority who shall immediately refer the accusation to the relevant Special Issues Resource Group. The tendency of the accused to minimise or deny involvement should be taken into account. "

It has been agreed that a Handbook should now be drawn up by the Special Issues Committee to assist Special Issues Resource Groups to carry out their duties and responsibilities. So that this project can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, it has been decided to hold a meeting of Contact Persons in Melbourne from 4-5 March 1993.

6. Distribution of the Protocol.

It is the recommendation of the Special Issues Committee that the Protocol should now be given to key personnel in Dioceses, e.g. seminary staff, personal advisory boards, vicars for clergy.

Arrangements should also be made for the inservice formation of such personnel.

7. Protocol for Church Workers.

Attention is presently being given to the preparation of a Protocol for Lay Church Workers. The industrial relations implications call for careful drafting of the Protocol.