

ACBC PLENARY MEETING 15 April - 24 April 1996

BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

MOTIONS**PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES**

- 1 That the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) revise and complete its statement of principles concerning sexual abuse by priests and religious.
- 2 That the PSC revise and complete its document setting out the procedures to be followed when allegations of sexual abuse are made.
- 3 That, in revising these two documents, the PSC do all in its power to bring into harmony all the needs of victims and all the concerns expressed in the legal opinion of Mr Frank Costigan QC in relation to church bodies defending themselves before civil courts.
- 4 That if, after every effort has been made to harmonise the needs of victims and the concerns expressed in the legal opinion, there remain areas where the two cannot be reconciled, the PSC favour the needs of victims, even at the cost of some weakening of the defences of church bodies before the civil courts.
- 5
 - A. That the two completed documents be presented to each diocese and religious institute in Australia to be adapted to its own use and published in its own name.

OR

- B. That Conference authorise the PSC to publish the two documents in its own name.

OR

- C. That Conference authorise the PSC to publish the two documents in the name of Conference.

OR

- D. That the PSC submit the completed documents to both ACBC and ACLRI for approval.

THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS AND COMMUNITIES

- 6 That dioceses and religious institutes engage professional and independent persons to make case studies of how incidents of sexual abuse within the diocese or institute have been handled and how well or badly the needs of victims have been met.
- 7 That dioceses and religious institutes engage professional and independent persons to make a study of how an incident of sexual abuse has been handled in relation to the community in which it occurred, what lessons might be learned, what effects both the abuse and the church body's response have had on the community, and what the church body might now do to assist the community.
- 8 That dioceses and religious institutes keep the PSC informed of their progress in relation to motions 6 and 7 and eventually send a copy of the reports to the PSC.

A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS

- 9 That a committee be established to prepare one or more Codes of Conduct covering all clergy and religious in Australia.
- 10 That the ACBC and ACCC each nominate one member, and the ACLRI and the NCP each nominate two members to this committee.
- 11 That the committee seek to involve all clergy and religious in Australia in the process of producing the Code or Codes of Conduct.
- 12 That the committee seek the advice of victims of sexual abuse by priests or religious in preparing the Code or Codes of Conduct.

FACTORS LEADING TO SEXUAL ABUSE IN THE CHURCH

- 13 That the ACSWC and Centacare Sydney be asked to coordinate a study of those factors peculiar to the Catholic Church which might lead to sexual abuse by priests, religious or other church workers.
- 14 That the study include a review of the relevant literature, interviews with experts around the country and interviews with those offenders who are willing to assist.

MEETING OF LEADERS AND VICTIMS

- 15 That the Centacare office in each diocese be asked to arrange and moderate meetings in which bishops and leaders of religious institutes might listen to the stories, hurts, concerns and needs of victims.

That these meetings be repeated as often as those concerned believe this to be opportune.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

- 16 That the PSC be enabled to employ a full time Executive Officer to coordinate the work of all the above projects and to assist the PSC in carrying out its mandate.

FUNDING

- 17 That the ACBC and ACLRI provide funding to enable all the above projects to proceed immediately and with a sense of urgency.
- (Motions 1-5 come under the present budget of the PSC.
 - 6 - 8 and 15 would be paid for by each diocese or institute.
 - 9 - 12 will involve costs (say \$20,000)
 - 13 - 14 will cost the same as the project on treatment (say \$60,000)
 - 16 will depend on whether the E.O. is a priest or religious or layperson and on where the person will work, but say \$55,000 p.a. for a priest or religious, \$80,000 p.a. for a layperson.

TREATMENT PROGRAM

- 18 - 23 That the ACBC approve the six recommendations set out on pp. 5-6 of the report on "A National Treatment Program for Priests and Religious with Psycho-sexual Disorders" and approve the funding to implement the program.

PASTORAL LETTER

- 24 That the ACBC produce a pastoral letter addressed to the Catholic people of Australia and detailing the steps the ACBC is taking to respond to the fact of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church in Australia.
- 25 That this letter include a statement of affirmation and support for priests and religious in Australia in their continuing pastoral work.