

ACBC PLENARY MEETING 6 – 14 MAY 2002

## **BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

### **REPORT**

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#### **1. TOWARDS HEALING AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS RESOURCE GROUPS: -**

Over recent months Professional Standards Resource Groups have received an increased number of people coming forward with allegations of abuse. It would seem that the increased media coverage has contributed to this response. The interview with the Governor General, where it came across that a church person was attributing blame to the victim, caused a great deal of distress. In a number of cases this brought to the surface again the feelings of guilt that have been carried by many who were abused as children or as young people. Some had the confidence to come back and talk about this and this is seen as a small but encouraging sign for the Towards Healing process.

Another trend would be the growing number of current cases, especially through the schools, where people are coming forward earlier and where matters can be referred to the police and/or child protection agencies and dealt with at the time of the abuse.

#### **2. 4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION OF EPISCOPAL COMMITTEES ON CHILD PROTECTION**

The Leeds consultation is the 4<sup>th</sup> to be held between (mainly) English-speaking Bishops' Conferences, following those held in Chicago, Dundrum and Rome. The programme includes

The aftermath of abuse in Institutions: –  
Mr. Gerry Kelly(Canada) and Fr. Frank Buckley (Ireland)

Understanding Offending Behaviour and Assessing Risk: -  
Led by Mr. Donald Findlaker of the Wolvercote Clinic (UK)

The recent CDF Letter (De Delictis Gravioribus) and other canonical issues: -  
Bishop Geoffrey Robinson (Australia) and Mgr. John Dolan (Ireland)

Legal Liabilities: -  
Mr. Mark Chopko (USA) and Mrs. Francesca Quint (UK)

Archbishop Philip Wilson will present a case study in order to focus on the issues involved in responding to abuse.

### **3. POST CUSTODIAL CARE OF OFFENDERS**

The National Committee for Professional Standards continues to research this matter.

The paper prepared by Bishop Geoffrey Robinson entitled 'The Possibility of a New Assignment to Ministry for a Priest Guilty of a Sexual Offence' has been distributed prior to this meeting.

'A Memorandum Of Understanding regarding the Terms and Conditions of the Continuing Presence and Work of X in the Diocese/Religious Institute of Y' is nearing completion. This is proposed in order to provide a structured approach to the on-going supervision of those who have offended. It will be imperative that all the steps in the process are observed and are carefully documented.

### **4. REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENTS FROM ROME**

A document entitled 'Towards Healing and the CDF Document of 18<sup>th</sup> May 2001' has been prepared and copies are available with this report.

This response may be revised in the future in the light of the current developments in Rome in response to the situation in America.

### **5. MANDATE OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS MAY 2002**

The National Committee for Professional Standards has reviewed the original 9-point plan and proposes the enclosed mandate for consideration by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.

**MOTION: -**

**THAT CONFERENCE ENDORSE A REVISED MANDATE FOR THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS.**

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DIRECTORS OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The National Committee for Professional Standards has endorsed two proposals presented by the Directors of Professional Standards and presents them to the Bishops.

An enclosed note sets out the proposals and the manner in which they need to be handled.

## 7. INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY

The questionnaires and documentation for the Review of *Integrity in Ministry*, A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy and Religious in Australia, have been distributed to all Dioceses and Religious Congregations. The time-line of the end of May is proving a little tight in some places and an extension until 24 June has been approved.

It is hoped that the Review process will also have the effect of providing the opportunity for Priests and Religious to become more familiar with the document and with the principles and standards contained in the document.

The following motion has been accepted by the ACBC at the Conference in November and the motion will be put to ACLRI in June at the Conference: -

- *That all persons employed or appointed to voluntary positions in the Catholic Church in Australia should be covered by some form of Code of Conduct.*

The next steps would be to: -

- i) Contact John Ryan, the Executive Officer of the Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations (ACCER).
- ii) Establish a process to work with the Education, Health and Social Welfare sectors while understanding the complexities of Industrial Law and Union expectations.
- iii) Establish contact with other groups such as Pastoral Workers, Diocesan or Parish employees and volunteers within church parishes and agencies where Codes of Conduct are needed and explore ways forward.

The role of the National Committee for Professional Standards might be to provide some general Guidelines which could then be adapted by the specific groups as Codes of Conduct.

## 8. NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FORMATION

The National Conference on Formation

**Ministry in the New Century**

**Challenges for Formation**

is to be held at the Lidcombe Catholic Club, Sydney

**on Tuesday 16 July, Wednesday 17 July and Thursday 18 July 2002.**

Brother Sean Sammon, the keynote speaker,

Father David Cappo is the facilitator.

Expressions of Interest have been received from about 200 people and Registration Forms are currently being distributed.

Four bulletins addressing each of the four strands of the Conference viz.: -

- a) Pastoring those in our Care
- b) Ministerial Standards and Appraisal
- c) Initial Intake Procedures
- d) Adult Growth in Adult Systems

are being distributed in these months prior to the Conference.

## 9. UPDATE ON THE OPERATION OF ENCOMPASS AUSTRALASIA.

Encompass continues to operate within the Wesley Hospital environment and to provide assessment and then both treatment and prevention programs to men and women a number of whom are self-referees.

Encompass made a submission about the seizure of documents by the police which aimed to protect the privacy and the records of clinicians. The particular case has concluded satisfactorily and protocols for the keeping of records are being revised in accord with the Privacy Act.

**+E. Collins**  
**Secretary**  
**7 May 2002**