

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS  
HELD AT ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL PRESBYTERY, SYDNEY, N.S.W.,  
ON WEDNESDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 1996, AT 10.00 A.M.

1. PRESENT: Most Reverend Kevin Manning, Chairman,  
Most Reverend Geoffrey Robinson,  
Most Reverend Peter Connors, Secretary,  
Sister Helen Clarke, R.S.C.,  
Reverend Brian Gallagher, M.S.C.,  
Reverend Brian Lucas,  
Sister Angela Ryan, C.S.B.,  
Reverend John Usher,  
Sister Evelyn Woodward, R.S.J.

Mr. Chris O'Malley, Mr. Paul Serong and Mr. Laurie Rolls of Catholic Church Insurances Limited were also present at the meeting.

APOLOGY: Ms Myolene Carrick tendered an apology for being unable to attend the meeting.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS HELD ON 28TH NOVEMBER AND 18TH DECEMBER, 1995.

On the motion of Sister Evelyn Woodward, seconded Sister Angela Ryan, the Minutes of the Meetings of the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards, held on 28th November, and 18th December, 1995, were confirmed as being an accurate record of the decisions made on those occasions.

3. MATTERS RAISED BY C.C.I.

Mr. Rolls provided the Committee with information concerning the Counselling and Support Services (C.A.S.S.), which is an independent therapeutic and care service instituted in February, 1995, to provide confidential counselling assistance for any individual who has been caused damage, distress or harm by a person associated with the Catholic Church in Australia.

It was noted that the C.A.S.S. proposal, which is being sponsored by the Diocese of Ballarat is along the style of risk management and is not limited to providing counselling assistance for those who have been victims of sexual assault.

Mr. Rolls will provide information concerning those who are on the list of counsellors and who are recommended by C.A.S.S

Mr. Chris O'Malley provided the Committee with information concerning matters which are being dealt with at the present time by C.C.I.

Information which is being obtained by C.C.I. from its legal advisers will be made available to Bishops and Religious Leaders if and when they are in need of such information.

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4. REPORT ON 'SEXUAL ABUSE BY PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS: A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES'

The Committee was in receipt of a further draft prepared by Bishop Robinson, dated 1st February, 1996. The Committee was also provided with comments on the draft and further amendments to the draft prepared by Bishop Robinson in the light of the observations which he has received in more recent days.

Bishop Robinson stated that the description of 'sexual abuse' provided in the Protocol will now be included in the 'Principles' document.

It was also noted that the document cannot be written in what might be described as an episcopal style. It must show a genuine concern for victims and must be directed to the whole community and not merely to those who are members of the Catholic Church.

Considerable discussion took place concerning several matters which will almost certainly be of concern to the Bishops and the Religious Leaders.

It was therefore decided that the present draft and the amendments prepared by Bishop Robinson should now be examined by a lawyer selected by the officers of C.C.I., so that his advice can be made available to Bishop Robinson prior to 6th March, 1996.

After Bishop Robinson has considered the advice from the lawyer another draft will be circulated by Bishop Connors to the members of the Committee.

Bishop Robinson, Father Usher and Sister Angela Ryan will continue to monitor the drafting of the 'Principles' document. They very much wish to have a document which they can use at the forthcoming Conference on Sexual Exploitation by Health Professionals, Psychotherapists and Clergy, which is to be held in Sydney on the weekend of 13-14th April, 1996.

5. REPORT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A THERAPY CENTRE

Mr. Toby O'Connor and Mr. Bill Johnston provided the Committee with information concerning the programme structure and organisation which is being proposed for the Therapy Programme, which will be sponsored by the Bishops and Religious Leaders. Mr. Johnston provided information on the feedback which has been received from individual consultations which he had conducted around Australia.

Mr. O'Connor will continue to work on the project, which will be completed in time for presentation to the Bishops and Religious Leaders during the April 1996 Assembly of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference.

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Bishop Connors will arrange for a session of two hours to be devoted to the presentation of the Report concerning the establishment of the Therapy Programme.

Sister Helen Clarke, R.S.C., will arrange for funding to be forwarded to Father Usher from the A.C.L.R.I. for the research project presently underway.

6. REPORT ON THE PREPARATION OF THE DRAFT WORKING PAPER, 'REVISED PROTOCOL FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT'.

Father Brian Lucas tabled a draft working paper, dated 28th February, 1996, entitled 'Revised Protocol for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse'. He then assisted the Committee to walk through the draft and commented on several additions and alterations to the previous draft.

It was agreed that there is a need for a checklist to be provided for those who are to receive allegations of sexual assault by Catholic Church personnel.

Comments on the draft working paper are to be forwarded to Father Lucas as soon as possible.

Bishop Connors will arrange for the document to be examined by Father Ian Waters and Father Rodger Austin. It was noted that careful attention had been given to the paper presented by Father Ian Waters at the 1995 Conference of the Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand.

7. COMMENTS OF DR ROBERT GRANT ON THE DYNAMICS OF THE BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS.

Bishop Robinson provided the Committee with several comments which Dr Robert Grant had provided for Bishop Robinson in the light of his meeting with the Committee in December, 1995.

It is the view of Dr Robert Grant that the Committee is devoting too much time to lateral thinking and is slow to delegate responsibilities. Dr Grant would also emphasise the urgency of the situation which calls for a speedy response from the Catholic Church. Dr Grant is also of the view that the Committee itself needs much more support and pastoral care in the carrying out of its responsibilities.

One way of enhancing the effectiveness of the Committee's operations would be to appoint a full-time executive officer, as had been recommended at previous meetings of the Committee.

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8. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PREPARATION OF DOCUMENTS TARGETED AT SPECIFIC GROUPS.

By way of response to the concerns of Dr Robert Grant, Bishop Robinson tabled a draft of a suggested letter from Bishops and Religious Leaders to victims of sexual assault.

Sister Evelyn Woodward and Sister Angela Ryan will draft a letter directed to communities which have been affected by sexual abuse.

Sister Helen Clarke will attend to the drafting of a letter which will be directed towards priests and religious. Bishop Connors will take charge of the drafting of a letter directed towards offenders and will communicate with Father Brian Gallagher in the preparation of the draft.

These draft letters are to be forwarded to Bishop Robinson within the next three weeks.

9. DISCUSSION OF PRESENTATION TO BISHOPS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF A PROJECT ON IDENTIFYING AND REMEDYING THE CAUSES OF ABUSE.

To enable the Committee to act in a more expeditious manner in carrying out its Mandate, Father John Usher and Mr. Bill Johnston are to be asked to draft a document to assist Bishops and Religious Leaders in identifying and remedying the causes of abuse.

Bishop Robinson will make contact with Father Usher and Mr. Johnston concerning the preparation of such a document.

10. PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION BY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, PSYCHOTHERAPISTS AND CLERGY.

Bishop Robinson, Sister Angela Ryan and Father John Usher met on Tuesday, 27th February, to finalise their preparations for the forthcoming Conference on Sexual Exploitation by Health Professionals, Psychotherapists and Clergy, which is to be held in Sydney on 13th and 14th April, 1996. They emphasised that they are very much in need of a document which they can present to those who attend the workshop, which will spell out the attitude of the Catholic Church.

11. PREPARATIONS FOR THE MEETING OF ENGLISH SPEAKING EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES DEALING WITH CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE BY CLERGY.

Bishop Connors reported that he has not received any further communications from Father Thomas Bevan concerning the Conference, which is to take place at the headquarters of the Divine Word International in Techny, U.S.A., from 7th - 10th May, 1996. However, when such information does become available he will arrange for it to be distributed to Father Brian Lucas, Sister Angela Ryan and Mr. Laurie Rolls.

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It was also decided that the delegates to the Chicago Conference should meet at Saint Paul's National Seminary, Kensington, N.S.W., at 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 16th April, 1996, to discuss preparations for the Conference.

12. MANDATE FOR BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS.

Members of the Committee are asked to forward comments on the draft Mandate for the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards to Bishop Connors prior to Easter, 1996.

13. TERMS OF APPOINTMENT FOR MS MYOLENE CARRICK.

Ms Myolene Carrick has advised the Secretary that she is no longer the contact person for allegations of professional misconduct in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. Moreover, she is not a member of the Queensland Committee for Professional Standards.

The Committee is of the view that members of the Committee are not appointed to represent States or organisations. Hence, the situation of Ms Myolene Carrick does not debar her from membership on the Committee.

It was agreed that the term of appointment to the Committee should be in writing and should be for a period of three years.

Bishop Connors will now arrange for formal letters of appointment to be prepared for Sister Evelyn Woodward and Ms Myolene Carrick.

14. GENERAL BUSINESS.

Bishop Manning drew attention to the formation of groups of sex offenders who are using the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous to assist them in being faithful to the agreements which they have made during their course of therapy. Further information is to be obtained concerning these groups.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting of the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards is to be held at Saint Paul's National Seminary, Kensington, N.S.W., on Tuesday, 16th April, 1996, at 2.00 p.m.

Members of the Committee who wish to accept an invitation to lunch or dinner on that day are asked to notify Bishop Connors as soon as possible.

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