

REPORT ON MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING OF THE
BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
HELD AT SAINT PAUL'S NATIONAL SEMINARY, KENSINGTON, N.S.W.,
ON TUESDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER, 1994, AT 11.30 A.M.

1. PRESENT: Most Reverend Kevin Manning, Chairman,
 Most Reverend Peter Connors, Secretary,
 Most Reverend Geoffrey Robinson.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE REPORT ON THE MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE
MEETINGS OF THE BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL
STANDARDS HELD ON 14TH NOVEMBER, 1994.

It was agreed that the Report prepared by the Secretary was a faithful record of the matters which were discussed during the meeting held on 14th November, 1994.

3. MATTERS RAISED BY C.C.I.

- 3.1 Use of Questionnaires completed by Bishops and held by the
Secretary of the B.C.P.S.

Bishop Connors reported that he had been asked by Mr. Laurie Rolls of C.C.I. to hand over the questionnaires which had been completed by Bishops during the first two years of the Special Issues Cover provided by C.C.I. Bishop Connors has now been given to understand that all the Bishops of Australia have given written permission for the disclosure of this documentation to C.C.I.

- 3.2 Disposition of Balance of Funds in the Pool

It was decided that this matter should be treated under item 4.3.

- 3.3 Replies by Bishops to Questionnaire forwarded by Solicitors
acting on behalf of Alleged Victims of Sexual Assault.

The Archdiocese of Melbourne has been asked to supply written answers to a questionnaire drawn up by Solicitors acting on behalf of a prospective client in a case of sexual assault by a Catholic Priest. The Bishops are to be strongly recommended to reply in a similar manner if and when they receive questionnaires seeking such information.

Bishop Connors is to discuss the situation with the Solicitors who act on behalf of the Archdiocese of Melbourne to ascertain whether there are any objections to making such material available to other Dioceses.

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3.4 Lack of Insurance Cover for Schools who do not have Public Liability Insurance with C.C.I.

It was agreed that C.C.I. should inform the Bishops of the situation which prevails when schools take out insurance cover with another Company.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORT

4.1 Report on the Establishment of a Therapy Centre

The Sub-committee which will investigate the establishment of a Therapy Centre has not met since the previous meeting of the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards.

4.2 Report on the preparation of the Draft Document "The Catholic Church's Principles in relation to Sexual Abuse and Professional Misconduct".

It was agreed that the Bishops be invited to provide comments and advice on the Draft Document "The Catholic Church's Principles in relation to Sexual Abuse and Professional Misconduct", which had been forwarded to them prior to their coming to Sydney for the November, 1994, meeting of the A.C.B.C.

4.3 Appointment of Chief Executive Officer

The Bishops will be informed at the November, 1994, Meeting of the A.C.B.C. that a job description is being prepared for the appointment of an Executive Officer of the Bishops' Committee for Professional Standards.

5. RESPONSE TO THE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS VIOLATIONS IN THE MEDIA.

The Senate of Priests of the Diocese of Ballarat in a letter to their Bishop have asked that this Committee give attention to making an adequate response to the adverse publicity which the Catholic Church is receiving at the present time concerning cases of sexual assault and professional misconduct by its personnel.

On several occasions this Committee has sought advice from experts in media and public relations, but it seems that little can be done to redress the situation so long as new cases are given publicity. It seems that "good news" concerning the clergy is not regarded as being news by the public media.

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