

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
STANDING COMMITTEE OF GENERAL SYNOD

REPORT

SCGS MEETING DATED:	15-17 November 2013
SCGS AGENDA ITEM:	12.1

FROM NAME:	The General Secretary
FROM GROUP:	General Synod Office
AREA:	Professional Standards
SUBJECT:	National Register
DATE OF REPORT:	16 October 2013
MOTION:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report of the General Secretary dated 16 October 2013 be received. 2. That the General Secretary be requested to report on progress to the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

REPORT**1. Introduction**

The meeting of the Standing Committee in April 2013 was informed that not all the information notified to the National Register had been verified but I believed that 80% or 85% had been verified. It was not known how much new Information was yet to be notified.

The Standing Committee passed the following resolution:

That the General Secretary be requested to identify any dioceses that are likely not to have completed the notification and verification of matters relevant to the National Register and seek the assistance of any relevant Bishop or Metropolitan or other appropriate person to complete those processes.

The material which follows outlines the steps taken and the current state of the National Register.

I should point out as background that, for purposes of entering Information on the National Register, the process distinguishes between “persons” and “incidents”. This enables the

Information about a person to be brought up-to-date as it becomes available for individual or subsequent different incidents. Hence, the statistical information below addresses persons and incidents separately. Entry of persons is of more significance than entry of the detail of events for authorised persons seeking reports from the National Register because it is the matching of names which provides the relevant alert for managing risk in personnel appointments.

I should also point out that it will not be necessary to perform a separate verification process for new Information notified after the National Register upgrade is complete.

2. Steps Taken

Before the April 2013 meeting of the Standing Committee, the National Register Officer had a regular routine of contacting Directors of Professional Standards to follow up verifications. This was intensified after the April meeting.

In July, I attended one of the regular quarterly meetings of the Directors of Professional Standards. In that meeting, the Directors informed me that their vastly increased workload by reason of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and difficulties they had in operating the current National Register software was causing delay with verifications. Also, their review of documents in preparation for Royal Commission had brought to light new Information requiring notification.

At the same meeting in July, I repeated a suggestion I have made to the Directors in the past that they use the caution system for which provision is made in sections 8(3) and (4) of the National Register Canon. This system enables name and minimal other information (gender, date of birth, address and type of event) to be entered promptly, with all other necessary detail to be provided within, in effect, the following three months. The National Register Officer has offered to assist. Neither my suggestion nor the offer of assistance has been taken up at this stage.

After the July meeting, I set in train a process for the National Register Officer to assist Directors of Professional Standards to complete outstanding verifications. Assistance was provided in the form of training. The National Register Officer observed that the users' difficulties seemed to stem more from failure to follow the user manual than from the acknowledged non-intuitiveness of the application software. As a result of this process, all persons notified to the National Register have been verified and about half the incidents unverified in April have been verified. This process also led to new incidents being notified. The result is that there are currently 29 unverified incidents on the National Register.

In the past, I have asked the original project manager and successive National Register Officers to make enquiries as to the amount of Information that the Directors of Professional Standards had yet to notify. The responses have been difficult to interpret. The enquiries which the National Register Officer has made since July have yielded, for the first time, responses to have enabled an estimate to be made. The Directors have not been able to provide precise information but have given estimates which total in a range from 110 to 180 shared between four Directors of Professional Standards covering nine dioceses. Four Directors of Professional Standards have reported that they have no further persons to notify. Three Directors of Professional Standards have not responded. The estimate of a range of 125-185 new persons to be notified is very elastic and suggests that much historical material has been discovered since the Royal Commission Working Group suggested that a thorough review of all records be undertaken. I instructed the National Register Officer to offer assistance to the Directors of Professional Standards. So far, the offer has not been taken up.

I have therefore written to those Directors of Professional Standards who have notified Information which remains unverified and those who have provided an estimate of new persons to be notified. I have confirmed the availability of the caution system and the offer of the National Register Officer's assistance. I have sent copies of those letters to the Bishops and Administrators of the Dioceses for which those Directors of Professional Standards act and have requested those Bishops and Administrators to assist in accelerating the process.

I anticipate that one of the responses to this approach will be to the effect that the National Register software is difficult to operate. As I have said above, although the current system is not intuitive, it is manageable when the user manual is followed. After the completion of the National Register upgrade, the data entry process will be simplified.

3. Statistical Information

3.1 Persons on the National Register as at 25 April 2013

Number of persons on Register as at 25 April 2013	Number of persons unverified as at 25 April 2013	Number of those persons verified as at 16 October 2013	Number of persons unverified as at 16 October 2013
128	13	13	0

3.2 Person Notifications since 25 April 2013

Number of person notifications since 25 April 2013	Number of those person notifications verified since 25 April 2013	Number of persons unverified as at 16 October 2013	Total number of persons verified as at 16 October 2013
1	1	0	129

3.3 Incidents on the National Register as at 25 April 2013

Number of incidents on the Register as at 25 April 2013	Number of incidents unverified as at 25 April 2013	Number of those incidents verified as at 16 October 2013	Number of those incidents unverified as at 16 October 2013
273	36	17	19

3.4 Incident Notifications since 25 April 2013

Number of incident notifications since 25 April 2013	Number of those incident notifications verified as at 16 October 2013	Number of incidents notified since 25 April 2013 remaining unverified	Total incidents unverified as at 16 October 2013
12	2	10	29

3.5 Total Incidents Unverified as at 16 October 2013

There remain 29 unverified incidents on the National Register.

Of the 29 unverified incidents:

11 are to be verified by the Director of Professional Standards for Victoria. 6 of those incidents were notified in September 2013.

14 are to be verified by the Director of Professional Standards for Sydney.

4 are to be verified by the Director of Professional Standards for Perth. They were notified in September 2013.

3.6 Number of Requests for Information

It is interesting to note that the rate of requests for information from the National Register in 2013 is about twice the rate for 2012.

Number of requests for information 1 January 2013 – 16 October 2013	Number of requests for Information 1 January 2012 – 31 December 2012	Increase in number of requests in 2013
2,644	1,535	1,109

4. National Register Upgrade Project

During 2013 the Functional Requirement Specification (FRS) has been developed in consultation with the Directors of Professional Standards and the Professional Standards Commission.

Initial user testing of the development software has taken place. Changes incorporated as a result of the testing were demonstrated to the Directors of Professional Standards Network meeting in Canberra on 21 February 2013. Further design changes were discussed and agreed with the Directors of Professional Standards during the meeting. Subsequent modifications and developments have been tested with individual Directors. The application software is nearing completion.

An IT security review is currently in progress. The completion date for the project is dependent on the outcome of the review. Project completion is anticipated in February 2014.