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File Location: _____

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Details:

File note by John Cleary dated 20/5/14
relating to Discussions arising at the
Bishops Ministry Team meeting 20/5/14

Topics : LAWRENCE
CULTURE
ROYAL COMMISSION

File Note – Discussions arising at the Bishops Ministry Team Meeting 20/5/14

Topic of the Royal Commission was discussed including media strategy, dealing with the practicalities of responding to the summons as well as addressing the clergy about the summons and update on the royal commission

Those in attendance

Bishop Greg Thompson, Bishop Peter Stuart, Archdeacon Arthur Copeman, Archdeacon Sonia Roulston, The Very Reverend Stephen Williams ('WILLIAMS'), Mr John Cleary and Mrs Linda Wilson.

The following comments were made by WILLIAMS during the discussion with respect to professional standards

- That there was an "elephant" in the room
- When asked what the "elephant" was, he replied that there were several years of mistrust relating to the professional standards process (I assumed he was referring to the Stuart, Lawrence, Hoare, Duncan, COJ, Gumbley, Goyette matters in particular as they went to Professional standards board hearings). I took process to mean the Director of Professional Standards (in particular) was misusing the process, but also the Board and Committee)
- He outlined that it was a "bad day" out at Toronto a couple of years ago when a professional development day was organised by Bishop Brian Farran (the then Bishop of Newcastle) for Clergy a few years ago. This was because the "wrong" people presented and that the clergy were "lectured" to.
- He outlined that the day was also not well received because it ended with the announcement of the board recommendations relating to several clergy.
- He said there was tremendous "angst" at that day with clergy as the announcements related to the board recommendations to depose several of their "heroes" from holy orders
- He outlined that these matters are "still unresolved" amongst clergy.
- WILLIAMS advised that the "raising of the profile of the complainant/victim" was gradually occurring (I remembered when the ordinance changes were being made by the Diocesan council over the past few years that WILLIAMS was very vocal in trying to protect the rights of the RESPONDENT)

I was disappointed with WILLIAMS view as he clearly has not changes his views on the Professional Standards Director, including wanting clergy to address "the problem" with the Bishop and "vent" their concerns. It is clear that he still would like the Director terminated and has no confidence in professional standards despite the policy changes, against advice, which weakened the processes. WILLIAMS is an influential, senior cleric in the diocese and would appear to speak for many clergy. Clearly, he indicates that there is little or no progress with accepting the Professional Standards processes/decisions in recent years.

I raised with the group that the culture must change and there needs to be a reporting culture established. Linda Wilson spoke about risk & compliance practices in the banking culture which I thought were excellent points but felt the finer details were lost upon others at the meeting.

Bishop Thompson agreed that the clergy culture must change and suggested the topic be again raised at the upcoming clergy professional development day on the 28/5/14. He advised that clergy were leaders in their parishes and must lead the way. They could be assisted by standard form of words to respond to questions raised by parishioners about the royal commission.

John Cleary

20/5/14

