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**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DIOCESE OF GRAFTON**

Bishop in Council Report August 1st 2013

The PSC met on July 18 to begin the task of responding to B in C resolutions and the pressing needs arising out of the NCCH. Archdeacon Greg Ezzy, Archdeacon Gail Hagon and Ms Anne Hywood attended some of the meeting to meet the Professional Standards Director personally and to brief the PSC on matters at hand. The following is a detailed summary of the meeting:

- ❖ The current membership is Canon David Hanger (chair), Rev Lenore Moules, Mr Collen Pritchard, Ms Aniko Cripps-Clarke, Mr Michael Elliott (PSD). Discussion took place about expanding the membership and currently 2 others have been approached to join the committee. If they agree, the quality of the committee will be enhanced by the addition of further legal and social work expertise.
- ❖ The committee was briefed on the Diocesan response to the Royal Commission
- ❖ In response to the following resolution, *That Bishop in Council appoints the Professional Standards Committee (ensuring there is someone with legal training) to establish a Working Group to undertake an audit of sexual abuse claims in the Diocese, with the power to co-opt and the terms of reference to be handled by the Senior Leadership Team. The Committee should be assisted by the Diocesan Compliance Officers, Mrs Sue McLachlan,* the PSC will meet on August 8 to begin this audit to ensure that every claim on file has been dealt with in accordance with the protocols and in a manner that reflects our values as a Christian church. The PSC anticipates this will be both a mammoth and draining task and would appreciate your prayers.
- ❖ In response to the following resolution, *That Bishop-in-Council asks the Professional Standards Committee to review existing pastoral care and assistance schemes for responding to sexual abuse claims, operating both within and outside the Anglican Church, and to develop a scheme to operate within the Diocese of Grafton which is consistent with the principles adopted by General Synod Standing Committee in 2009. The Committee should present a draft scheme to the Bishop-in-Council meeting on 22 August 2013,* the PSC has begun to investigate existing schemes in the Australian church with the view to shaping a comprehensive policy and package for recommendation to BinC. We are hopeful of presenting a progress report to the next meeting of BinC mindful of the urgency of the task and the importance of getting the package right. The current lack of a policy and package is hampering our ability to respond to immediate needs for support, particularly to the latest group of victims from the NCCH, who suffered through the inadequate responses made in their initial contact with the Diocese. Mindful of this the PSC decided, on compassionate grounds, to recommend to the Administrator an immediate payment of \$5000 to one of those victims with the possibility of similar payments being made in the future.
- ❖ The PSC is also concerned to ensure that the Diocese has in place a functioning Professional Standards Board as required by the Professional Standards Ordinance.
- ❖ The PSC identified the need to develop a consistent approach to dealing with serious complaints of psychological and physical abuse which currently sit outside the Professional Standards protocol which only deals with sexual abuse. The PSC recommends to BinC that all complaints received in relation to abuse at the North Coast Children's Home should be handled in accordance with the Professional Standards protocol, including complaints of psychological and physical abuse in addition to complaints of sexual abuse. The PSC will continue to develop a policy position on dealing with other claims of physical and psychological abuse in the future.
- ❖ The PSC provided input to the framing of a Diocesan apology being drafted for circulation in major newspaper outlets.
- ❖ After the Senior Leadership team left the meeting, the PSD briefed the PSC on current matters before it. He also made clear to the PSC that we ought to be in no doubt about the horrific nature of the physical, psychological and sexual abuse that has occurred at the NCCH in the past which has been brought to light through the victims who have come forward.
- ❖ Finally, as a personal observation, I was impressed by the diligence, compassion and expertise of Michael Elliott, the Professional Standards Director and believe we are being well served by him.

David Hanger

PSC Chair