

Safe Ministry Board and Professional Standards Unit Annual Report 2014-2015

(A report from the Safe Ministry Board and Professional Standards Unit.)

Introduction

1. This report is provided under the Safe Ministry Ordinance 2001 (cl 17) and the Discipline Ordinance 2006 (cl 104) for the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (reporting period).
2. The Diocese of Sydney has taken a multi-faceted approach to the issue of safe ministry and child protection. Broadly speaking the policy objectives are –
 - (a) to exercise careful selection and screening of all clergy and church workers;
 - (b) to provide clear requirements and expectations of behaviour through a Code of Conduct called Faithfulness in Service;
 - (c) to provide regular and comprehensive training and support of all clergy and church workers;
 - (d) to make a timely and caring response to all who are affected by abuse; and
 - (e) to enact just procedures to deal with respondents and persons of risk.

Safe Ministry Board

3. The Safe Ministry Board (SMB) was established under the Safe Ministry Ordinance 2001. The SMB is tasked with ensuring that safe ministry, child protection and child abuse issues are properly dealt with throughout the Diocese. This includes development and review of practices and policies in these areas. The functions of the Board are defined in clauses 5 and 6 of the Ordinance.
4. The members of the Safe Ministry Board (SMB) over the reporting period were: the Rev Dr Keith Condie (Chair), Dr Tim Channon, Mrs Sarah Clancy (resigned November 2014), Ms Stephanie Cole, the Rev David Coy (resigned November 2014), the Rev Steven Layson, the Rev David Mears, the Rev Chris Moroney (resigned November 2014), the Rev Gary O'Brien, the Rev Janine Steele, Dr Ruth Shatford AM, Mr Alex Trevena and Mrs Kylie Williams.
5. The SMB has met 8 times in the reporting period.

Professional Standards Unit (PSU)

6. There have been significant changes to the PSU team over the reporting period.
7. Kerrie Newmarch finished in the role of PSU Chaplain on 11 June 2015. The PSU and the SMB are deeply appreciative to Kerrie for her contribution to the work of safe ministry in the Diocese. She fulfilled the responsibilities of her chaplaincy role with great warmth, empathy and skill. Moreover, her teaching abilities have brought significant benefit to ongoing training in safe ministry for those preparing for or already involved in ministry.
8. Catherine Wynn Jones has been appointed PSU Chaplain (formal title Manager, Pastoral Support and Education) to commence in late August 2015.
9. Stephanie Menear joined the PSU team on 11 December 2014 (initially working 5 days a week and then 3 days from 2 February 2015) in the newly created position of Manager, Legal Support.
10. Neil Atwood continues to serve as Safe Ministry Representative Liaison Officer, Annelie Singh as Personal Assistant and the Unit's Administrator and Lachlan Bryant as Director.
11. In practice much of the work of the PSU derives from the Safe Ministry Board, which has the overall responsibility to encourage all parishes and other units of the Diocese to be child protection aware, compliant and responsive.
12. The Director has overall responsibility for the PSU and is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the complaints and discipline procedure for clergy and church workers (Discipline Ordinance 2006) and the National Register (National Register Canon 2007 Adopting Ordinance 2008).
13. When the PSU receives a complaint alleging abuse by a member of the clergy or church worker, the Chaplain follows up and provides a caring response to complainants and victims of abuse. The Chaplain provides pastoral support and coordinates the provision of counselling in each case. The Chaplain works closely with the PSU Contact Persons.
14. The PSU undertakes screening of all clergy appointments on behalf of the Archbishop. The screening includes a Working With Children Check through the Office of the Children's Guardian (**OCG**) and a National Register check. The PSU provides ongoing support and advice to office holders, parishes and organisations in this regard.

15. Anglicare's Case Manager for Pastoral Care and Assistance for Care Leavers provides a pastoral and caring response to former residents of the Church of England Homes and Sydney Anglican Mission Society Homes, who have complained of abuse or mistreatment during their time at the Homes. Nicky Horton commenced in this role on 20 October 2014 and works from Anglicare's Parramatta offices, with the Rev Dr Andrew Ford, Director of Pastoral Care and Theology.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission)

16. This is the subject of a separate report to the Synod. Only limited information will be provided in this Report.

17. The Royal Commission commenced in 2013 with a stated minimum duration of 3 years. The Royal Commission has been charged with examining the sexual abuse of children in the context of institutions throughout Australia including churches and their agencies.

18. The Royal Commission presents an important opportunity for the Diocese to review both past and current practices from a 'best practice' perspective.

19. A Steering Committee was appointed by Standing Committee in December 2012 to oversee the response of the Diocese to the Royal Commission and to provide the Director of the PSU with a point of reference for undertaking this work.

20. Additional funding for resources to respond to the Royal Commission has been allocated which is being administered by the Steering Committee.

21. PSU files relevant to the Royal Commission and PSU policies are being comprehensively reviewed as part of the preparations for the Royal Commission and significant work is required as a result. Professor Patrick Parkinson has been assisting with the policy review work.

22. The PSU is therefore under increased pressure to keep up to date with existing work whilst carefully managing the work required in response to the Royal Commission.

23. The Royal Commission released its Interim Report on 30 June 2014. In the Interim Report, the Royal Commission confirmed that –

- (a) it requires a further 2 years (until the end of 2017) to complete its work;
- (b) it was too early for the Royal Commission to make any substantial recommendations; although recommendations concerning redress and civil litigation are expected shortly;
- (c) only 70 public hearings will be able to be completed within the time it has allowed;
- (d) of the (28) public hearings held to date themes include repeated abuse, multiple perpetrators, barriers to reporting abuse and adults that have systematically failed to protect children; and
- (e) of the cases reported to the Commission at that time –
 - 90% of perpetrators were male,
 - on average it took 22 years for victims to report abuse, with men taking longer than women,
 - on average female victims were 9 years old when they were abused,
 - on average male victims were 10 years old when they were abused.

Review of the Safe Ministry Ordinance 2001

24. In 2014 the SMB considered the Safe Ministry Ordinance 2001 and formed the view that that some parts of the Ordinance have either never been used or have become outdated. The Ordinance has been referred to the Standing Committee for review, and a review Committee has been appointed.

Website

25. The existing safe ministry website¹ provides access to all current policies and documents related to safe ministry, child protection and professional standards. The website provides links to other important online resources such as the New Working with Children Check, the NSW Department of Family and Community Services webpage, counselling services, and contact information for other dioceses and other denominations.

26. Since the website was established in 2006 it has become outdated. Work on a new PSU website and safe ministry logo is underway. The new website will be: safeministry.org.au It is envisioned that this website will be easy to navigate, have easy to find, simplified safe ministry documents and other resources, and a special section for Safe Ministry Representatives (SMRs) with resources (including resources shared by SMRs themselves).

Archbishop's Meetings with Survivors

27. Throughout the reporting period the Archbishop has continued to make himself available to listen to complainants and relate to them pastorally. This usually includes the making of an appropriate apology on behalf of the Church. During the reporting period there were 8 apology meetings with survivors and their family members in PSU matters and 6 apology meetings with Care Leavers.

28. These meetings are of immense value in almost all cases and survivors are appreciative of the effort taken by the Archbishop and the PSU Chaplain to arrange them.

Screening of Lay Workers

29. All paid lay church workers in the Diocese are required to apply for the Archbishop's licence. This involves their completing a comprehensive screening and disclosure Lifestyle Questionnaire with the applicable Regional Bishop or his representative.

30. All workers in 'child-related' employment (including licensed ministers and unpaid volunteers) must undertake a Working With Children Check. In addition, it is recommended that parishes seek full disclosure of any relevant history and fully complete reference checks with prior supervisors or employers.

31. Persons with a criminal conviction for an offence listed in Schedule 2 of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (including serious sexual offences and certain other offences involving children) cannot be appointed or elected as wardens, parish councilors, parish nominators or Safe Ministry Representatives.

The New Working With Children Check

32. The New Working With Children Check (WWCC) commenced on 15 June 2013.

33. Important features of the new check include: clearances must be obtained by both paid employees and volunteers in child-related work; clearances will remain valid for 5 years; regular crosschecking with NSW police records will be undertaken; any matters of concern will result in the OCG imposing a bar; and the same clearance may be used for multiple employers.

34. All parishes are required to be registered for the new WWCC.

35. The phase in period for the WWCC in the religious sector was completed on 31 March 2015, and all parishes and organisations in the Diocese are required to be fully compliant.

36. The new WWCC requirements are –

- (a) for all clergy working in the Diocese to obtain a WWCC clearance and for the parish (or the applicable organisation) to verify those clearances, (note: the Registry and the parish are both required to verify clearances of those with an Archbishop's licence); and
- (b) for all other persons who are in child-related work in parishes (or organisations), whether employed or voluntary, to obtain a WWCC clearance and for the parish (or the applicable organisation) to verify those clearances.

37. Some exemptions to the new WWCC apply. In many cases careful thought is required before an exemption is relied upon. Penalties apply for non-compliance with the requirements of the new Check.

38. Shortly after 31 March 2015 the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) advised that they were undertaking an audit of the Diocese's compliance with the new WWCC concerning volunteers in child-related work. This was similar to the audit that the OCG conducted in 2014 for WWCC compliance among all clergy and other paid workers in child-related work in the Diocese. A coordinated and sustained effort by the Registry and the PSU ensured all parishes were followed up for the information required for the audit by the end of May 2015. We are yet to be advised of the outcome of this audit.

39. Almost 14,000 workers obtained WWCC clearances across all parishes in the Diocese by the end of May 2015.

40. The PSU is assisting parishes with the implementation of the new WWCC and those with responsibility for these matters are encouraged to contact us as needed. More information about the new WWCC may be found by contacting Neil Atwood (nta@sydney.anglican.asn.au) or viewing the safe ministry website or the OCG WWCC website –

<http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/Working-with-children/working-with-children-check>)

Screening of Ministry/Ordination Candidates, Clergy and Paid Lay Ministers

41. All candidates for ordination by the Archbishop are required to complete a comprehensive screening and disclosure questionnaire. This is administered by Ministry Training and Development (MT&D).

42. Ordination/ministry candidates undergo extensive assessment and screening by way of reference-checking, general psychological testing, interviews, chaplaincy supervision reports and Moore College reports. A PSU record check and National Register check are also undertaken. The Discipline Ordinance 2006 provides a mechanism for pre-ordination disclosure and consideration of prior sexual misconduct or abuse.

Training of Volunteer Lay Children's and Youth Workers – Safe Ministry Essentials

43. The Diocese is a member of the National Council of Churches' Safe Church Training Agreement. There are 38 independent churches and other dioceses who are members of the Safe Church Training Agreement across Australia.

44. The Safe Ministry Essentials course remains the mandated safe ministry training for the Diocese. During the reporting period the SMB endorsed the inclusion of protecting vulnerable adults in the training. This has resulted in a shift away from the exclusive focus on ministry to children that characterised the training previously, and appears to have been well received by training participants so far. The SMB considers this to be an important step towards a more holistic approach to safe ministry in parishes across the Diocese.

45. Youthworks continues to update the Safe Ministry Essentials course materials and facilitates the delivery of the training across the Diocese.

46. A Video to assist in the provision of the training that was produced in 2013 to replace the Behind Closed Doors video has started to be used in Safe Ministry Training.

47. The SMB conducted a survey of all SMRs during the first quarter of 2015 concerning Safe Ministry Training. The survey requested feedback on experiences at the local level concerning –

- the understanding of requirements for safe ministry training
- the perceived level of compliance with and support for those requirements (including any obstacles hindering compliance), and
- the content, delivery and accessibility of Safe Ministry Training.

48. The SMB noted strong support among survey respondents for an online component of the training as well as an online facility for the administration of safe ministry requirements at a parish level. Greater flexibility for Local Safe Ministry Trainers was also supported. The SMB is still considering these findings and what further work should be completed in these areas.

49. The SMB and PSU are thankful to Youthworks for their efforts in safe ministry training.

Training of Ministry/Ordination Candidates and Clergy

50. Eight Safe Ministry Modules have been developed and are being taught through Moore College, Ministry Training and Development, and Youthworks College as part of their courses and programs.

51. Following the change to the Parish Administration Ordinance 2008 in 2013 requiring ministers in the Diocese to complete Safe Ministry Training once every three years, the SMB decided to include this training as part of the Diocesan triennial Faithfulness in Service Seminars conducted in June 2014. This allowed those ministers and licensed church workers who came to the Faithfulness in Service Seminars to fulfil all safe ministry training requirements for the next three years by attending the one day.

Safe Ministry Representatives

52. The role of SMRs in parishes continues to be pivotal in ensuring parishes comply with safe ministry requirements. The Safe Ministry Representative Liaison Officer (SMRLO) plays an invaluable role in supporting, resourcing and equipping SMRs in their role himself.

53. The PSU provides support and assistance to SMRs by telephone and email. There continues to be a significant level of direct enquiry from parishes and support given to them, particularly around the requirements of the New Working With Children Check.

54. Since 2008 it has been mandatory for each parish to nominate an SMR.

55. As at time of writing, around 200 parishes have provided current SMR details to the Registry. That leaves about 70 parishes (out of 270) as not having an SMR according to the Registry. However, the real number is probably closer to 8-10 as our inquiries show that a number of these churches have functioning SMRs, but have not returned the appropriate paperwork notifying the Registry of the appointment, or the Rector of the parish is fulfilling the role.

56. In early 2015 changes were made to the Parish Administration Ordinance 2008 making it a prerequisite for each person appointed as the SMR for their parish to obtain a WWCC clearance which must then be verified by the parish. The Registrar was also given powers to require parishes to provide safe ministry records to the registry, and the Director was given power to remove an SMR from office for example if they do not hold a current WWCC clearance.

57. During the reporting period –

- (a) four large training sessions were held for SMRs at strategic locations across the Diocese at Wollongong, Seven Hills, Newtown and Bowral;
- (b) three parish-based audit/training sessions undertaken with new SMR's and their Rectors; and
- (c) practical guidelines have been prepared to resource parishes in the following areas –
 - Developing local safe ministry policies in your church,
 - Overseas students as church workers,
 - Safe ministry record keeping.

58. Key messages for parishes are –

- (a) there is no requirement for the SMR to be appointed at the AGM but this should be done as soon as possible thereafter, and the Registry promptly notified of the appointment;
- (b) an SMR must have a WWCC clearance as a pre-requisite for the role which must be verified by the parish;
- (c) parishes must verify the clearances of SRE teachers that they have “employed” or authorised; and
- (d) parishes must keep their safe ministry records up to date to help keep volunteers up to date with their training.

59. Effective communication with parishes remains the single biggest issue in ensuring compliance with safe ministry requirements at the parish level. When parishes were being contacted about the OCG audit concerning the WWCC problem, for example, emails were often not opened or not actioned. Even letters to Rectors were either ignored or not processed promptly by Rectors or office staff. Poor communications between the parishes and the Registry (as indicated by the large number of parishes with no SMR listed in the Registry) has also been an issue.

60. Further important work is now being done, for example looking at whether online training for SMRs is able to be developed and whether a suitable basic record keeping database with supporting software is able to be made available to parishes to assist with meeting their obligations in this area.

The Taskforce on Resisting Pornography

61. The Taskforce on Resisting Pornography was established by the PSU in early 2013.

62. Members of the Taskforce include: the Rev Marshall Ballantine-Jones (Youthworks), Mr Lachlan Bryant (PSU Director), Mr John Burns (Senior School Counsellor and psychologist, Shore School), the Rev Dr Keith Condie (Dean of Students Moore Theological College), the Rev Patrick Jones (youth minister, Castle Hill), Mrs Nicky Lock (counsellor and Diocesan Contact Person), the Rev Gary O'Brien (MT&D), Mr Greg Powell (psychologist), and Dr Patricia Weerakoon (sexologist).

63. The Rev Marshall Ballantine-Jones was appointed Chairman of the Taskforce from 2015.

64. Although its work is only in its initial stages the Taskforce will be looking at the impact pornography has on the church and what can be done about this. A particular need that has already been identified is for better education for those in our churches on this topic.

65. In 2014 the Taskforce commissioned a survey of ministers, chaplains and licensed lay church workers across the Diocese concerning attitudes to pornography use among other related matters. The Episcopal Team has considered the survey results and further research has been commended, particularly towards effective practical measures to help to respond to the problem. An important step in beginning to raise awareness for church leaders in the Diocese was the almost exclusive focus on this topic in the afternoon sessions at each of the 2014 Faithfulness in Service Seminars.

Safe Ministry Guidelines and Other Advice

66. The PSU continues to receive inquiries about child protection and safe ministry issues from clergy and church workers in parishes. Such calls or emails are received on a daily basis with each staff member receiving at least half a dozen inquiries per week and sometimes many more than this.

Care of Survivors of Abuse and Complainants

67. It is the role of the PSU Chaplain to care for complainants and survivors of abuse by clergy and church workers. The complaints process can be long and difficult for survivors and the Chaplain provides pastoral care and support to them throughout. This important role supplements counselling and other emergency assistance which are provided to survivors from PSU funds. A caring response is the first important step along the road of healing for survivors of abuse.

Tears and Hope Service

68. Tears and Hope is a church service held each year for survivors of abuse, hosted by Ed Vaughan (rector of St John's Darlinghurst) with the assistance of the PSU Chaplain. In 2014 it was held on 3 November. Keynote speakers included Archbishop Glenn Davies and Prue Gregory, Acting Principal Lawyer from Knowmore, a free legal service providing information to people about the Royal Commission.

Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme

69. The Diocesan Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme has been established to provide financial assistance to survivors of abuse to meet their needs which arise from abuse or misconduct by clergy or church workers. The Scheme is an alternative to litigation which can be a protracted and harrowing process for survivors. The Scheme includes a mechanism for external assessment if necessary.

70. Currently there are two identical schemes, one for matters that fall within the Diocesan responsibility and one for Care Leavers matters that are the responsibility of Anglicare.

71. Between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015 there were 12 payments under the Diocesan scheme and 10 payments were funded under the Anglicare scheme.

Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Complaints Protocol

72. Since 1996 the Diocese has used an established protocol for receiving complaints and allegations of child abuse or sexual misconduct by clergy or church workers. All Contact Persons are trained counsellors who may be contacted through an abuse report line (1800 774 945 or reportabuse@sydney.anglican.asn.au). The Contact Persons provide information and support to callers as they consider their options. The Contact Persons can then assist in the documenting and reporting of allegations or complaints of abuse or misconduct.

73. Any complainant identifying possible criminal behaviour is encouraged to make a report to the NSW Police. The Contact Person or another appropriate person from the PSU is able to assist the person in reporting the matter to the Police.

74. The five Contact Persons are Margaret Fuller (Illawarra), Nicky Lock (Northern Beaches), Sue Kreicers (Northern Suburbs), Richard Elms (Western Suburbs) and Rob Carroll (Southern Suburbs).

75. The Contact Persons meet four times a year with the Director and Chaplain for training and coordination of their roles.

Discipline Ordinance

76. The process for complaints regarding misconduct or child abuse by clergy or church workers is governed by the Discipline Ordinance 2006. The specific offences covered in the Ordinance are: child abuse, sexual abuse, unchastity, drunkenness, neglect of ministerial duty, non-payment of just debts, disgraceful conduct, conviction of a serious criminal offence, failure to report suspected child abuse and lastly inappropriate pastoral conduct involving a child (introduced by amendments made to the Ordinance by Synod in 2014).

77. Where a complaint is received by the PSU that includes an allegation of criminal behaviour a report is made to the NSW Police if the complainant is not able to make that report.

78. The Director receives complaints against clergy and church workers of the Diocese and administers the complaints process under the *Discipline Ordinance 2006*. Primarily complaints involve child sexual abuse or adult sexual misconduct. Each matter usually involves a Contact Person taking an initial report and complaint if applicable and offering counselling to the alleged victim. The PSU then receives the report and a file is opened. The Chaplain contacts the complainant and remains in touch with them throughout. If the complaint is properly made under the Ordinance the Director serves the complaint on the Respondent.

79. If the Respondent is a member of clergy or paid church worker they are offered counselling, a support person and payment of pre-approved legal costs should they require advice in responding. Depending on the response an investigation is conducted and the matter then proceeds to the Professional Standards Committee for review and recommendations. Unresolved matters can be referred to a Tribunal.

80. If the Respondent is an unpaid lay church worker they are offered counselling and a support person. Depending on the response an investigation is conducted and it is then referred to an Adjudicator for recommendations and final determination. Unpaid lay respondents are responsible for their own legal costs if they require legal advice or representation.

81. The strongest sanction available for lay persons is a prohibition order that prevents a respondent from engaging in ministry or being appointed to any role in the church. A member of the clergy may be deposed from Holy Orders. There are also conciliation provisions, lesser sanctions and other recommendations available in appropriate circumstances. The Archbishop or relevant church authority (in the case of an unlicensed lay person) considers the final recommendations and takes action as may be required. The Archbishop is entitled to enquire as to progress of matters and the Director is obliged to keep him informed.

Complaints

82. The Director received 5 new complaints under the Discipline Ordinance during the reporting period.

83. The Professional Standards Committee met 8 times and considered 13 matters in the reporting period.

84. Two matters were before the Disciplinary Tribunal during the reporting period.

The Professional Standards Committee

85. There are five members of the Professional Standards Committee. Under the provisions of the Discipline Ordinance 2006, the Committee's function is to consider complaints and make recommendations to the Archbishop concerning these matters.

86. This Committee meets as required and is currently scheduled to meet every second month.

Adjudicator

87. Two matters concerning unpaid lay respondents were referred to an Adjudicator for determination during the reporting period.

Parish Recovery Teams

88. Parish Recovery Teams (PRTs) are generally available to assist parishes where allegations of abuse or misconduct by clergy or church workers have arisen. A PRT works in a parish to deal with the complex pastoral issues that arise once these matters come to light. PRTs aid those members of the parish who are affected and work towards the healing of the parish as a whole.

89. In 2007 a group of nine volunteers for our PRTs was trained by Pastor Tim Dyer of John Mark Ministries. From 2010 to 2012 a new team of nine volunteers were trained.

90. Due to numbers of Parish Recovery Team consultants being unable to continue with PRT work, due to health and other reasons, a new team of 14 have been trained throughout 2014 and 2015.

91. No PRT was deployed during the reporting period for a new matter.

Cooperation with NSW Government Agencies and Other Churches

92. The NSW Police Child Protection and Joint Investigation Squad Advisory Council meets together several times a year and the Director of the PSU continues to be a member of this Council.

93. There have been a number of meetings with representatives from the NSW Ombudsman's Office to discuss whether the application of the Ombudsman Act NSW 1974 does or could include misconduct of certain 'employees' in the Diocese where the conduct is directed towards children. If the Act applies, such matters would need to be reported to the NSW Ombudsman's Office which would provide a level of oversight and/or review in those cases. At the time of preparing this report, although work has begun on these matters, a final position has yet to be reached.

94. The Diocese continues to work together with other denominations in areas of safe ministry. One example of this collaborative approach is the National Council of Churches Safe Churches Sydney group. This group meets occasionally to focus on developing initiatives for churches in the area of child protection. The PSU Chaplain attends these meetings as the PSU representative.

95. The National Network of Directors of Professional Standards from Anglican Dioceses across Australia meets together each quarter. The Director of the PSU continues to be an active member of the Network. The Network meetings are crucial for continuing cooperation and communication between Professional Standards Directors across the nation. The value of the Network is the depth of experience concerning professional standards matters across the group as a whole. This also means the Network is well positioned to make important contributions to developments and initiatives in these areas and to work towards maintaining best practice in processes across Dioceses.

Manager, Legal Support

96. Since commencing in the position in December 2014, the Manager, Legal Support, under the supervision of the Director, has been working on the following (among other things) –

- (a) policy development in response to Professor Parkinson's review of the child protection policies of the Diocese in 2014;
- (b) processing and administration of Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme claims and implementing recommendations from a review of the Scheme in 2013 for improvements to the way the Scheme is explained and communicated to claimants;
- (c) updating and drafting documents and materials for the new safe ministry website; and
- (d) facilitating the re-branding of safe ministry for the purposes of the website and generally.

97. The Manager, Legal Support has been undertaking important work that existing PSU staff have not been able to attend to because of other competing work priorities. The assistance of the Manager, Legal Support has been invaluable to the PSU, and subject to availability of funding it is intended to make the role full-time at the start of 2016.

Finance

98. The SMB receives accounting reports on a monthly basis. PSU accounts are reported in the Synod Funds reports provided to members of Synod.

99. In December 2013 the Standing Committee resolved "that tribunals and other proper work of the PSU should not be abandoned because of lack of funding."

100. In 2013 the Standing Committee agreed to fund Tribunal matters from contingencies, which therefore removes these rather unpredictable and expensive costs from the ordinary operating budget of the PSU. This is a significant step towards greater certainty for the funding of the work of the PSU and has assisted with budgeting.

101. In February 2015 the SMB passed the following resolution –

"The [SMB] asks that the Chairman and Director approach the relevant authorities to request that the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) be funded completely and adequately. The level of funding at the end of 2014 did not put the PSU in a financially sustainable position for 2015 and indeed the future.

The SMB has the responsibility to encourage parishes and other Diocesan organisations to be child protection and vulnerable adult aware, compliant and responsive. The SMB relies primarily on the PSU to do the day-to-day work of implementing its policy agenda and to administer the Discipline Ordinance and provide appropriate support and care for those who have been subjected to abuse.

A thorough review of the PSU in 2007 acknowledged that the unit was not adequately funded. It recommended that further staff be employed to enable the PSU to more adequately fulfil its disciplinary and support roles and to be more actively involved in matters of training, support and compliance that are so necessary in creating a culture that minimises the risk of child abuse. Furthermore, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has placed significant extra demands upon the PSU."

102. A report coauthored by Chair of the Safe Ministry Board and Director of Professional Standards was sent to the Diocesan Resources Committee in relation to the matter putting the case for the PSU to be adequately funded into the future.

103. In the report it was recommended that the Diocesan Resources Committee recommend to Standing Committee that PSU costs be fully recoverable under the annual Parish Cost Recovery charge.

104. In the coming years it is crucial for the PSU to be adequately funded and resourced in order for the Unit to do its work properly and effectively.

Conclusion

105. As we approach the end of the third year since the Royal Commission was established, it is critical that the important work conducted by the PSU in preparation for and in response to the Royal Commission is completed thoroughly and effectively. It also is vital for the PSU to be fully and adequately resourced for the years to come.

On behalf of the Safe Ministry Board and Professional Standards Unit.

THE REV DR KEITH CONDIE

Chair

Safe Ministry Board

7 July 2015

LACHLAN BRYANT

Director

Professional Standards Unit

7 July 2015

ⁱ The existing website: www.psu.anglican.asn.au and www.sydneyanglicansafeministry.com.au will be redirected to the new safe ministry website when it goes live, projected to be around the end of the third quarter of 2015.