

# Safe Ministry Board and Professional Standards Unit Annual Report 2019-2020

(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 *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017 (cl 86)* for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 (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 the Diocesan Code of Conduct, *Faithfulness in Service*;
  - (c) to provide regular and comprehensive training and support for 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 the development and review of policies in these areas. The functions of the Board are defined in clauses 5 and 6 of the Ordinance.
4. The members of the SMB over the reporting period were: the Rev Dr Keith Condie (Chair), Dr Tim Channon, Ms Stephanie Cole, the Rev Steve Dinning, the Rev Steven Layson (resigned August 2019), the Rev Gary O'Brien, the Rev Paul Sampson, the Rev Janine Steele, Dr Ruth Shatford AM and Mrs Jenny Yung.
5. The SMB met 9 times in the reporting period.

## Professional Standards Unit (PSU)

6. There have been some changes to the PSU team over the reporting period.
7. The Rev Catherine Wynn Jones finished as PSU Chaplain (Manager, Pastoral Support and Education) after four and a half years in the role at the end of 2019. Cath's care and advocacy for survivors, pastoral concern for the welfare of those impacted by abuse in our churches, and her support of and contribution to the PSU team over her time in the role is greatly appreciated. We wish Cath well in her Navy Chaplaincy role.
8. Mrs Belinda Burn commenced in the PSU Chaplain role on 15 June 2020 after a thorough recruitment process.
9. Mrs Elenne Ford was engaged as Dispute Resolution Consultant for the PSU commencing 6 January 2020.
10. Mrs Stacie Pakula continues to serve as a Solicitor with the PSU, Mr Steve Coleman continues to serve as Assistant Director of Professional Standards, Mrs Kylie Williams as Training Consultant for Safe Ministry, Archdeacon Neil Atwood as Parish Consultant for Safe Ministry, Mrs Brenda Sheppard as Administrative and Safe Ministry Support, Mrs Annelie Singh as Personal Assistant to the Director and the Unit's Administrator and Mr 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 safe ministry and 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 procedures regarding clergy and church workers (*Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*) and the National Register (*General Synod National Register Canon 2007 Adopting Ordinance 2008*).
13. When the PSU receives a complaint alleging abuse by a member of the clergy or other church worker, the Chaplain follows this 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 Home Mission Society Homes, who have complained of abuse or mistreatment during their time at these Homes. The Case Manager, Ms Angela Ferguson, currently works from Anglicare's Telopea office, under the management of the Rev Dr Andrew Ford, General Manager Mission and Partnerships.

## **Archbishop's Meetings with Survivors**

16. 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.
17. These meetings are of immense value in almost all cases and survivors are appreciative of the effort made by the Archbishop and the PSU Chaplain to facilitate these apologies.

## **Safe Ministry Blueprint Policy Documents**

18. The SafeMinistry website and the Safe Ministry Journey policy model were launched at Synod in 2015 (Resolution 24/15). All parishes (Rectors, Wardens and Safe Ministry Representatives) are encouraged to adopt the Safe Ministry Blueprint policy documents if this has not been done already: <https://safeministry.org.au/blueprints/>.
19. In terms of the SafeMinistry website, during the reporting period there were an average of 4,000 unique visits per month.
20. New sections to the website were developed during the reporting period for Domestic and Family abuse, Partnering with parishes and the Safe Ministry Check.

## **Domestic Abuse**

21. In 2018 Synod passed the Sydney Diocese's *Responding to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Good Practice Guidelines*. That same year the Standing Committee established the Ministry Spouse Support Fund (MSSF). Over the reporting period there was one payment made to a ministry spouse who was an historical victim of domestic abuse.

22. In October 2019 we launched a one page microsite to accompany a promotional campaign against domestic abuse run by Anglicare and the PSU. To date this site has seen a total of over 8,600 unique visitors. The microsite is available here: [knowdomesticabuse.church](http://knowdomesticabuse.church).

## Expansion of the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme

23. In response to recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the NSW Government expanded the Reportable Conduct Scheme to include “faith based organisations” from 1 March 2020 under the *Children’s Guardian Act 2019*.
24. On 28 February 2020 the PSU issued a Circular for Parishes which provided a summary of the new requirements of the Scheme and the expected impact of them in the church context. The circular was emailed to all Licensed Ministers, Authorised Lay Ministers and Safe Ministry Representatives in the Diocese. It is available here: <https://safeministry.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Circular-to-Parishes-re-Reportable-Conduct-SMTCO-Mandatory-Reporting.pdf>.
25. Members of the clergy and church workers should ensure that they are both familiar and compliant with the new reporting requirements in their practice of ministry and seek advice or clarification from the PSU if they have any questions or inquiries about them or a particular situation in which they are uncertain whether the requirements apply.

## The onset of COVID-19 and its impact on our work

26. Issues created by COVID-19 since March 2020 have been many and varied.
- The need to cancel usual face-to-face training events, including safe ministry training and Faithfulness in Ministry conference for reasons of health and safety
  - Increased reliance on online training for safe ministry and greater provision for the extension of safe ministry training for those unable to undertake online training
  - Many ministries moving almost entirely online, resulting in increased risks in the online environment and making the formulation of new guidelines and policies for safe ministry necessary for these new contexts
  - Heightened anxiety, mental health needs and risk of abuse for many in the community including among the situations or persons where the PSU needs to engage
  - The effects of social isolation on staff working remotely, who are already more susceptible to vicarious trauma because of the inherent nature of much of the work of the PSU.
27. In response to the sudden lockdown of churches earlier this year, we developed a suite of resources to assist parishes to continue ministries online while adhering to good safe ministry practices. These included detailed recommendations on using Zoom/other video conferencing tools to run children’s or youth ministries online.
28. The PSU engaged in many email and phone conversations and consultations in the early days of the lockdown period. The COVID-19 web pages on the SafeMinistry website have been well used by our churches, and some of the resources downloaded for use in other locations.

## Screening of Lay Ministers

29. All paid lay church ministers in the Diocese are required to apply for the Archbishop’s authority. This involves their completing a comprehensive screening and disclosure through the Lifestyle Questionnaire with the applicable Regional Bishop or his representative.
30. All workers in ‘child-related’ employment (including licensed clergy or authorised lay ministers and unpaid volunteers) must have a Working With Children Check clearance. 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.
32. See the Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020 heading below for details about the new Safe Ministry Check that must be completed by all volunteers in youth or children's ministry by 1 January 2021.

### **The Working With Children Check**

33. In 2013 the NSW Government introduced laws that require all clergy and each person involved in child-related work in parishes (or organisations) to obtain a Working With Children Check (WWCC) number and to have this number verified online by the relevant parish or church authority. The *Parish Administration Ordinance 2008* was amended to authorise the Registrar to collect relevant details of persons involved in child-related work in parishes. Throughout the reporting period the Registrar has undertaken a progressive collection of this data from parishes and then verified the WWCC number for each person.
34. As the term of a person's WWCC number expires 5 years after it is issued, a significant number of WWCC numbers were renewed during the reporting period.

### **Screening of Ministry/Ordination Candidates, Clergy and Authorised Lay Ministers**

35. All candidates for ordination by the Archbishop are required to complete a comprehensive screening and disclosure through the Lifestyle Questionnaire. This is administered by Ministry Training and Development (**MT&D**) in consultation with the PSU. The Lifestyle Questionnaire is in the process of being updated following the introduction of the *Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020*.
36. 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 *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017* 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/Refresher**

37. The Diocese is a member of the National Council of Churches' Safe Church Training Agreement. There are 37 independent churches and other dioceses who are signatories to the Safe Church Training Agreement across Australia.
38. The *Safe Ministry Essentials* course remains the mandated safe ministry training for the Diocese followed by the *Safe Ministry Refresher* course every 3 years.
39. The PSU took on full responsibility for the delivery of Safe Ministry Training across the Diocese from Youthworks on 1 April 2017. This coincided with commencement of online safe ministry training for the Diocese. Both the *Safe Ministry Essentials* and the *Safe Ministry Refresher* courses are available online (*Essentials Online* and *Refresher Online* respectively).
40. In February 2017 the PSU set up a new website as the place to go for all safe ministry training needs in the Diocese (<https://safeministry.training>).
41. Over the reporting period the SafeMinistry Training website had on average 4,305 unique visits per month and almost 7,300 unique visitors in February 2020, the busiest month of the year for the website.

42. Apart from the website, the key contacts for safe ministry training inquiries are:
- Mrs Brenda Sheppard, Safe Ministry Training Administrator: [brenda@safeministry.org.au](mailto:brenda@safeministry.org.au).
  - Mrs Kylie Williams, Safe Ministry Training Consultant: [kylie@safeministry.org.au](mailto:kylie@safeministry.org.au).

## Online Safe Ministry Training

43. The numbers of people who completed online safe ministry training over the reporting period are as follows:

Online safe ministry training	
Essentials	2,197
Essentials-Non Anglican	474
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>2,671</b>
Refresher	2,958
Refresher-Non Anglican	141
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>3,099</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,770</b>

44. Costs charged for online training increased on 1 January 2020. The current costs for Anglicans are \$20 for Essentials and \$15 for Refresher, and \$30 for Essentials and \$25 for Refresher for non-Anglicans.
45. Face-to-face training was offered at 16 locations across the Diocese in November and March during the reporting period. The numbers of people who completed face-to-face safe ministry training during that time are as follows:

Face-to-face safe ministry training	
Essentials	114
Refresher	246
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>

46. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the face-to-face training events planned for April and June were cancelled.
47. Costs charged for face-to-face training are: \$50 for Essentials and \$25 for Refresher for Anglicans and \$60 for Essentials and \$30 for Refresher for non-Anglicans.
48. For more information please visit <https://safeministry.training>.

## Training of Ministry/Ordination Candidates and Clergy

49. Eight Safe Ministry Modules have been developed and are being taught through Moore College, MT&D and Youthworks College as part of their courses and programs.
50. The minister of a parish and any assistant minister licensed to the parish must have satisfactorily completed safe ministry training within the 3 years prior to their licence being issued and every 3 years thereafter, while the licence continues.
51. All licensed clergy and other church workers in the Diocese are required to attend Faithfulness in Ministry (formerly "Faithfulness in Service") training seminars once every three years which are organised and paid for by the Professional Standards Unit. This training has been run across the Diocese since 2005 and was scheduled for 2020 but was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

## Safe Ministry for Junior Leaders Online Course

52. Our Safe Ministry Junior Leaders course for junior leaders in youth and children's ministry aged between 13 and 17 was completed by 167 junior leaders from parishes across the Diocese during the reporting period.
53. The course has been carefully structured with age appropriate language and content. A prerequisite of the course is for parents and the Rector to authorise the junior leader's enrolment and for a support scaffold to be in place through their local parish consisting of a Training Mentor while the course is being conducted. During the reporting period we introduced the Junior Leaders Group Management System to help make this process easier for the Training Mentor to manage junior leaders from their parish undertaking the course. The Management System streamlines the registration process and allows reports to be generated to track participants' progress.
54. The course has been transformative for many of the participants. Feedback is received from every participant as part of the course design. The course has been very well received overall. Following the introduction of the *Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020*, the Junior Leaders Online Course will be mandatory for all leaders in youth and children's ministry aged between 13 and 17 years, commencing or continuing in such a role from 1 January 2021.
55. The course is offered free of charge to those ministering in the Diocese of Sydney. We are currently investigating the feasibility of opening the course up to other churches outside the Diocese.
56. For more information please visit <https://safeministry.training/junior-leaders-course/>.

## Domestic Abuse Awareness, Response and Prevention Training Course

57. The Know Domestic Abuse online course was launched at Synod in October 2019 by the PSU Chaplain and Ms Lynda Dunstan, Anglicare Domestic Violence Adviser. Resources and awareness raising packs for responding to domestic abuse were provided to each church in the Diocese to coincide with the launch.
58. Initially course registration was limited to persons in leadership positions in the Diocese of Sydney but with the onset of COVID-19 earlier this year and increased interest in completing the course, the course was opened up to anyone. It is available free of charge.
59. The SMB encourages all persons interested in undertaking the Know Domestic Abuse course to do so. The course is particularly pertinent for clergy and church workers as it provides practical training and awareness in the complex area of responding appropriately to domestic abuse and will help them to comply with the Sydney Diocese's *Responding to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Good Practice Guidelines*.
60. There have been 128 enrolments in the course since it was launched last year.
61. For more information about the course, please visit <https://courses.safeministry.training/know-domestic-abuse-course/>.
62. For resources to help raise awareness of domestic abuse, visit: [knowdomesticabuse.church](http://knowdomesticabuse.church)

## Translation of materials and resources

63. Over the last few years the PSU has been working on translating key safe ministry materials and resources into other language groups. So far this work has involved the following documents being translated into the following languages:
  - Faithfulness in Service code of conduct (Chinese)
  - Domestic Abuse – Flow Chart (Chinese, Korean, Arabic)
  - Domestic Abuse – An Expansive Description of Domestic Abuse (Chinese, Korean, Arabic)



- Domestic Abuse – Doctrine Commission on The Use and Misuse of Scripture with Regard to Domestic Abuse (Chinese, Korean, Arabic)
64. To access these materials visit: <https://safeministry.org.au/faithfulness-in-service-code-of-conduct/> and <https://safeministry.org.au/domestic-family-abuse/>.

## Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020

65. The *Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020* was passed by the Standing Committee at its meeting on 27 April 2020. The Ordinance is intended to consolidate, simplify and contextualise the requirements for safe ministry to children in the Diocese of Sydney. Until recently, the provisions relating to safe ministry requirements for parishes, clergy and those working with children were included in the *Parish Administration Ordinance 2008* but these provisions have been removed and consolidated into the new Ordinance.
66. The PSU has worked closely with a sub-committee of Standing Committee to develop new screening practices for volunteer church workers serving in ministry to children and youth. These new screening requirements are aligned with practices being implemented across the Anglican Church of Australia in response to recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. In particular the PSU has prepared new “Safe Ministry Check” forms that will be used as part of a Safe Ministry Assessment for all people aged 13 and above who are serving in ministry to children and youth. The PSU has also designed an online system to help Parishes with the administration of the new Safe Ministry Assessment process along with resources to help equip Rectors to consider and assess applications.
67. On 30 June 2020 a circular was emailed to all Licensed Ministers, Authorised Lay Ministers and Safe Ministry Representatives across the Diocese to advise them of the new screening requirements concerning volunteers engaging in ministry to children which come into effect from 1 January 2021. The circular provided updated information on this subject to what was communicated in the previous circular sent on 28 February 2020 and included links to new forms approved by Standing Committee and further resources to assist with the implementation of the new requirements. The circular pointed out the time limits for the completion of the new requirements and recommended that all Safe Ministry Assessments be completed by 4 December 2020 to allow for the Christmas holiday period.
68. For more information please visit: <https://safeministry.org.au/circular-new-safe-ministry-screening-requirements-2/>
69. The Safe Ministry Board Ordinance 2001 is being reviewed in the light of the new Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020 and other developments.

## Safe Ministry Representatives (SMRs)

70. The role of SMRs in parishes continues to be pivotal in ensuring parishes comply with safe ministry requirements. Archdeacon Neil Atwood, Parish Consultant for Safe Ministry, plays an invaluable role in supporting, resourcing and equipping SMRs in their role.
71. 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.
72. Since 2008 it has been mandatory for each parish to nominate an SMR.
73. As at the time of writing, the Registry has been notified of 279 SMRs appointed by parishes. This is an excellent result and indicates near total compliance. This leaves only two parishes that have either not appointed an SMR or have not notified the Registry that they have done so.
74. During the reporting period:
- (a) three parish-based audit/training sessions were undertaken with SMRs and their Rectors; and

- (b) the use of PSU's centralised safe ministry database Safe Ministry Records Online (SaMRO) (which has been available to parishes through the SafeMinistry website from early 2016) continues to increase, and at the end of the reporting period 62 parishes were using it and 30 parishes from another diocese in regional NSW.

## **Safe Ministry Guidelines and Other Advice**

- 75. The PSU continues to receive enquiries 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 staff members receiving at least a dozen enquiries per week and sometimes many more than this.

## **Frontline**

- 76. In May 2020 we launched Frontline – a safe ministry podcast. This is designed to be another channel of communication to our churches and church workers. Mainly aimed at SMRs and ministry staff, Frontline allows for more detailed and nuanced presentation of material – especially for complex matters like the new Safe Ministry Check. For more information please visit the SafeMinistry website.

## **Care of Survivors of Abuse and Complainants**

- 77. 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 to healing for survivors of abuse.

## **Tears and Hope Service**

- 78. Tears and Hope is a church service held each year for survivors of abuse on behalf of the Diocese at which the Archbishop regularly offers an apology. In 2019 it was held on 2 December and was hosted by St Barnabas Broadway for the first time, with the assistance of the PSU Chaplain. Dean Kanishka Raffel preached and the Archbishop also spoke. The service continues to be a significant event in the life of the Diocese.

## **Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme**

- 79. 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 other 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.
- 80. Currently there are two identical schemes, one for matters that fall largely within the responsibility of parishes and one for Care Leavers matters that are the responsibility of the Sydney Anglican Home Mission Society (**SAHMS**).
- 81. Between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020 there were four payments under the Diocesan scheme and six payments were funded under the SAHMS scheme.
- 82. The Diocesan Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme was reviewed following the release of the Royal Commission's Report on Redress and Civil Litigation on 14 September 2015 and an increased cap and updated assessment matrix have been incorporated into the Scheme.



## National Redress Scheme

83. The National Redress Scheme (NRS) is the Commonwealth Government's response to the Royal Commission's recommendations for redress to survivors of institutional child sexual abuse and has the necessary support of all state and territory governments. The NRS commenced on 1 July 2018 and will run for a period of 10 years. The NRS is administered by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services but the costs of redress are borne by the responsible institutions (if any) which have 'opted in' to the Scheme.
84. The PSU is providing information and advice to the Sydney Anglican National Redress Corporation, which is the entity through which the Diocese of Sydney has opted into the NRS, to support responses to NRS claims received.
85. For more information about the NRS: <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/> or call **1800 737 377**.
86. For more information about the National Anglican Participating Group visit: <https://anglican.org.au/our-work/national-redress-scheme/>.
87. Opting into the NRS does not preclude the operation of the Diocesan Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme which continues to operate as an alternative option for survivors who wish to engage with the Diocese directly about redress instead of going through the NRS.

## Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Complaints Protocol

88. 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](mailto:reportabuse@sydney.anglican.asn.au)). Reports can also be submitted via <https://safeministry.org.au/report-abuse/>. 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.
89. 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 complainant in reporting the matter to the Police.
90. The five Contact Persons are Ms Jane Thomas (Illawarra), Ms Nicky Lock (Northern Beaches), Ms Rosemary Royer (Northern Suburbs), Mr Richard Elms (Western Suburbs) and Mr Rob Carroll (Southern Suburbs).
91. The Contact Persons meet four times a year with the Director and Chaplain for training and coordination of their roles.

## Ministry Standards Ordinance

92. The *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017* commenced on 1 November 2017, replacing the *Discipline Ordinance 2006* for all complaints commenced after that date. The focus of the inquiry under the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017* is on whether the member of clergy or other church worker has engaged in misconduct that would call into question their fitness to hold or exercise an office, position or ministry in the Diocese. Misconduct under the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017* may include abuse against an adult or child, bullying, grooming, inappropriate pastoral conduct involving a child, failing to report a serious indictable offence, and process failure, that is, failing to report, deal with or investigate sexual abuse or child abuse in circumstances where that is required by the Ordinance. Misconduct also includes the matters specified in the Offences Ordinance such as unchastity, conviction of serious criminal offences and possession, production or distribution of child exploitation material.
93. 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.

94. The Director receives complaints against clergy and church workers of the Diocese and administers the complaints process under the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*. Each matter usually involves a Contact Person taking an initial complaint, making a report and, if applicable, 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 the process. If the complaint is properly made under the Ordinance, the Director serves the complaint on the Respondent. Mediation may be offered in certain cases, should it be considered suitable, such as in some matters involving allegations of bullying.
95. 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 the Professional Standards Board.
96. 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.
97. 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 the exercise of their Holy Orders. There are also lesser sanctions and other recommendations available in appropriate circumstances. The Archbishop or relevant church authority (in the case of an unauthorised 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**

98. The Director received 12 new complaints under the Ordinance during the reporting period.
99. The Director made two complaints under the Ordinance during the reporting period.
100. The Professional Standards Committee met six times and considered 17 matters in the reporting period.
101. No matters were referred to the Professional Standards Board during the reporting period.

## **The Professional Standards Committee**

102. There are five members of the Professional Standards Committee. Under the provisions of the Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017, the Committee's function is to consider complaints and make recommendations to the Archbishop concerning these matters.
103. This Committee meets as required and is currently scheduled to meet every second month.

## **Adjudicator**

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

## **Dispute Resolution Consultant**

105. Ms Elenne Ford, in her capacity as Dispute Resolution Consultant has been a very capable addition to the PSU team by helping to explore the resolution of disputes, and in appropriate cases,

allegations of bullying-type conduct that have made their way to the PSU. Elenne has assisted in reviewing the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017* and has made recommendations to the Ministry Standards Ordinance Review Committee to improve the way the Ordinance responds to such matters including provision of alternative pathways for resolution. Elenne has developed some resources for the PSU and is also considering what training and education needs that are required in this important area.

## Parish Support Teams

106. Parish Support Teams (PST) (formerly 'Parish Recovery Teams') are generally available to assist parishes where allegations of abuse or misconduct by clergy or church workers have arisen. A PST works in a parish to deal with the complex pastoral issues that arise once these matters come to light. PSTs aid those members of the parish who are affected and work towards the healing of the parish as a whole.
107. Since 2007 Pastor Tim Dyer of John Mark Ministries has trained volunteers for our PSTs. There are currently 14 trained PST consultants.
108. There were no new PSTs deployed during the reporting period for new matters.
109. Following the commencement of the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017*, a number of complaints alleging bullying-type conduct have been lodged with the PSU. Tim Dyer has been training the PSTs in understanding the dynamics of bullying.

## The Professional Standards Unit Oversight Committee

110. In November 2015, the Standing Committee approved of the establishment of a Professional Standards Unit Oversight Committee (PSUOC) which monitors the finances and operations of the PSU, and receives and considers complaints made about the PSU, among other things.
111. There are five members of PSUOC and the Chair of the Committee is Bishop Peter Lin.
112. PSUOC is required to meet a minimum of four times a year.

## Cooperation with NSW Government Agencies and Other Churches

113. The Professional Standards Interdenominational Network (PSIDN) meetings continue to provide a helpful forum to discuss issues of safeguarding and to build relationships with Professional Standards Personnel from other Christian organisations across NSW and the ACT. Meetings have been well attended with as many as 17 different organisations being represented over the course of the reporting period. A key legislative change that has impacted churches in the area of child protection during the reporting period is the expansion of the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme which brought churches and other religious organisations under the purview of the Scheme under the oversight of the Office of the Children's Guardian. Ms Elleker Cohen from the Office of the Children's Guardian has attended three meetings over the reporting period to provide updates and receive feedback in relation to the new scheme. Another key area of ongoing discussion for the PSIDN has been the National Redress Scheme. Organisations have been able to share their experience of managing requests for information under the scheme as well as the volume of applications and how matters have been determined. Sharing policy positions and practice is another key function of the PSIDN. This year the group has specifically discussed issues such as: the management of persons of Concern, psycho-sexual assessments and other screening tools, and the implementation of the Ten Child Safe Principles.
114. The National Network of Directors of Professional Standards from Anglican Dioceses across Australia meets together each quarter. The Director of the PSU attends these meetings regularly. 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.

115. Over the reporting period the PSU has received a number of requests from other Dioceses, churches and organisations to utilise our training, resources or other materials. Some of these have included the Diocese of Ballarat, the Province of South Australia (Dioceses of Adelaide, The Murray and Willochra), the Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn, the Presbyterian Church NSW/ACT and the Church of Confessing Anglicans Aotearoa New Zealand. We are pleased to be able to assist and support other churches and organisations in these important areas.
116. The US Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission and the Southern Baptist Convention Sexual Abuse Advisory Group organised a National Conference themed Caring Well: Equipping the Church to Confront the Abuse Crisis, which was held in Fort Worth, Texas from 3 to 5 October 2019. The Diocesan Registrar, Mr Doug Marr, and the Director of Professional Standards attended the conference on behalf of the Diocese of Sydney. The conference featured survivors, experts, pastors, and advocates and was designed to equip Christians on the subject of abuse and related issues to empower their churches in the process of becoming safe for survivors and safe from abuse. The conference was a major event in the life of the Southern Baptist Convention and in its journey to confront and deal with sexual abuse, including child sexual abuse, across many of its churches. It was a privilege to meet and network with various leaders and experts at the conference, to learn from them and their experiences and also share some of the knowledge and resources of the Diocese of Sydney to support them in their work. We also arranged to visit leaders of the Anglican Church in North America as part of the trip to establish connections and share some safe ministry resources from the Diocese of Sydney.

## **Finances**

117. The PSUOC receives and monitors accounting reports for the PSU. These accounts are included in the Synod Fund Reports provided to members of Synod.

## **Conclusion**

118. The PSU and the Safe Ministry Board are committed to ensuring that the Diocese continues to promote and adopt safe ministry practices, and to respond appropriately to cases of abuse in order to enable faithful and effective gospel ministry in every church community throughout the Diocese.

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

THE REV DR KEITH CONDIE

**Chair**

*Safe Ministry Board*

20 July 2020

LACHLAN BRYANT

**Director**

*Professional Standards Unit*

20 July 2020