
Safe Ministry Board and Professional Standards Unit Annual Report for 2010

(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)* and covers the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010.

2. The Diocese of Sydney exercises a multi-faceted approach to the issue of safe ministry and child protection. Broadly speaking the policy objectives are –

- (a) careful selection and screening of all clergy and church workers;
- (b) clear statement of requirements and expectations through a Code of Conduct called *Faithfulness in Service*;
- (c) regular and comprehensive training and support of all clergy and church workers;
- (d) timely and caring response to all who are affected by abuse; and
- (e) just procedures to deal with respondents and persons of risk.

Safe Ministry Board

3. The Safe Ministry Board, established under the *Safe Ministry Ordinance 2001*, has the dedicated policy task of ensuring that safe ministry and child abuse issues are dealt with comprehensively and in an ongoing way throughout the Diocese. The Board's functions are defined in clauses 5 and 6 of the Ordinance.

4. Members of the Board are: Rev Keith Condie (Chair), Rev Mark Charleston (resigned December 2009), Mrs Sarah Clancy, Ms Stephanie Cole, Rev Patrick Collins, Rev Andrew Heron, Rev Steven Layson, Rev Christopher Moroney, Deaconess Pattie Mutton, Rev Janine Steele, Dr Ruth Shatford AM, and Mrs Kylie Williams.

Professional Standards Unit

5. Currently, the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) is staffed by Annelie Singh who serves as a Personal Assistant and the Unit's Administrator. Jenni Woodhouse is the Unit's Chaplain to victims and survivors (of abuse). Glenn Murray has been the Director Professional Standards since August 2009.

6. The PSU provides the secretarial and administrative support to the Safe Ministry Board, which has the overall responsibility throughout the Diocese to ensure that all parishes and other units of the Diocese are child protection aware, compliant and responsive.

7. The Director has operational responsibility for the complaints and discipline procedure (*Discipline Ordinance 2006*) in relation to clergy and church workers and is the CEO of the Safe Ministry Board. This position now also has line responsibility for the work being done with Care Leavers.

8. The Chaplain maintains contact with, and supports, persons who have disclosed abuse by a member of the clergy or by a church worker and co-ordinates the provision of counselling as required. The Chaplain also has responsibility for the operation and co-ordination of the PSU Contact Persons and for much of the reporting year has provided pastoral support to Care Leavers.

9. The PSU undertakes screening of all clergy appointments on behalf of the Archbishop. It provides ongoing support and advice to office holders, parishes and organisations in this regard.

10. Commencing in June 2010 the PSU began screening all licence applications through the Anglican Church's National Register. This screening process is additional to that provided to the PSU by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People who provide national criminal and NSW employment record screening for child-related offences.

11. Since October 2009 the PSU has been augmented with a part-time Care Leavers researcher and administrator who works on Anglicare's behalf assisting with persons who were in orphanages or the care of the Church of England in the late 1900s. This group of people have become known as *Care Leavers*. Some of this group of people claim they were abused while in care. Anglicare sought and obtained the Diocese's approval to place a resource in the PSU that could best handle these enquiries and complaints.

12. At the time this Report was being completed, the functions of this position have been reformed into a pastoral care role as well as research and administration and a two year contract is being filled. This role will be known as a *Pastoral Case Manager* and will report through the Director to Anglicare. Anglicare fully funds this position and its costs so that parish funds are not directly used for this purpose.

Website

13. The safe ministry website www.psu.anglican.asn.au is maintained to enable ready access to all current policies and documents related to safe ministry, child protection and professional standards. The website is cross-linked to other important relevant

resources such as the NSW Commission for Children and Young Persons Working with Children Check, the Department of Community Services, counselling services, other dioceses and other denominations.

Archbishop's Meetings with Victims

14. Throughout 2009 - 2010 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 personal apology on behalf of the Church.

15. Significantly, this role is of immense value in almost all cases and victims are appreciative of the effort taken by the Archbishop and the PSU Chaplain to take this step.

Screening of Lay Workers

16. Parishes obtain prohibited employment declarations for all child-related workers (including unpaid volunteers) and directly undertake working with children screening checks for those who are paid. Parishes are advised to also seek full disclosure of any relevant history and to fully complete reference checks with prior supervisors or employers.

17. In addition to secular legislative requirements, prohibited persons under the NSW State legislation (those convicted of serious sexual offences) cannot be appointed or elected as wardens, parish councillors, Synod representatives or parish nominators.

18. The Safe Ministry Board has considered the adoption of extra-legislative screening of persons in volunteer children's ministry positions by the administering of comprehensive screening and disclosure questionnaires as recommended by the General Synod in 2004 and again in 2009. This is the last major recommendation which has not been fully adopted by the Diocese of Sydney. The Board considers that a way forward may be to conduct a pilot program with several parishes to ascertain just how possible such screening is and what resource issues arise.

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

19. All candidates for ordination, all clergy being authorised or licensed in Sydney for the first time and all paid lay ministers being licensed by the Archbishop continue to be required to complete a comprehensive screening and disclosure questionnaire based on the document recommended by the General Synod. This is administered by the Executive Assistants and Regional Bishops.

20. Ordination/ministry candidates also continue to undergo extensive assessment and screening by way of reference-checking,

general psychological testing, interviews, chaplaincy supervision reports and college reports. This process is administered by the staff of Ministry Training and Development. The *Discipline Ordinance 2006* provides a mechanism for pre-ordination disclosure and consideration of prior sexual misconduct or child abuse. There have been no such disclosures in the reporting period.

21. The General Synod *National Register Canon 2007* applies to the Diocese of Sydney. As required by that Canon, the *General Synod – National Register Canon 2007 Adopting Ordinance 2008* clarified in what circumstances the Diocese will have access to the National Register and disclose information from it. As yet, extension of this facility to parish workers has not occurred.

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

22. The Diocese has become a member of the National Council of Churches’ Safe Church Training Agreement. The *Safe Ministry Essentials* kit has been fully assessed against agreed national training standards and is accredited under the Agreement.

23. This *Safe Ministry Essentials* course remains the mandated safe ministry training for the Diocese. Many volunteers undertook their three-year training update in 2009. Progress has been made in training and validating local trainers who in turn can train others in parishes using the kit.

24. Youthworks significantly reviewed and amended the *Safe Ministry Essentials* course so as to reflect significant changes in NSW Community Services’ (formerly Department of Community Services) legislation. This was issued to all accredited trainers as a DVD format, in early 2010. Thanks to Youthworks’ careful planning, this reissue occurred at the same time that the reporting changes became effective under NSW legislation.

Training of Ministry/Ordination Candidates & Clergy

25. The Safe Ministry Board commissioned a sub-group to undertake a comprehensive survey of the content of all safe ministry training and to develop a diocesan-wide approach to such training. The modules have been developed and are being trialled by Moore College, Ministry Training and Development and Youthworks’ College in their courses and programs.

26. As this Report is being prepared, plans are in place for this whole 11 unit syllabus to be reviewed and upgraded for focus, content and adult education standards. Moore College has agreed to assist the Chaplain undertake this as a three-month project. It is anticipated that an on-line version will also be available and that this revised

program will be able to form the basis of an accredited safe ministry course for clergy and church workers.

27. The next round of triennial training for clergy is due in 2011.

Safe Ministry Representatives

28. From 2008, the notification of Parish Safe Ministry Representatives has been incorporated into the annual general meeting returns that are lodged with the Diocesan Registry. Parishes are asked to notify the appointment of a safe ministry representative as required under *Chapter 7 of Schedules 1 and 2 of the Parish Administration Ordinance 2008*.

29. The Board is considering how to better review and support safe ministry procedures and practices in parishes.

30. This report notes that Parish Safe Ministry Representative should be a person other than the minister in charge so as to provide a resource to the parish for this important role. The SMB and PSU did not intend for this to be an additional duty of the minister in charge.

31. PSU maintains and issues a Safe Ministry folder to each Safe Ministry Representative and each Minister in charge.

Safe Ministry Guidelines and Other Advice

32. The PSU continues to provide telephone and face-to-face assistance to clergy and church workers in parishes on child protection issues and safe ministry issues. Such calls or emails are received on a daily basis and average about four calls per week. At last check, some 203 parishes had contacted PSU for advice over the last few years.

Care of Victims and Complainants

33. As Chaplain, Jenni Woodhouse, cares for complainants and their families. This important role supplements counselling and other emergency assistance which is provided to victims from PSU funds. This level of care for victims and complainants holds an equal place in PSU's role for the Diocese so that this group of men and women are initially supported and cared for.

Care and Assistance Scheme

34. A care and assistance scheme is in place as an alternative to litigation to provide for financial assistance to victims to meet their needs which arise from clergy or church worker abuse or misconduct. It includes a mechanism for external assessment if necessary. This covers the uninsured aspect of claims.

35. Currently there are two identical schemes, one for matters that occurred within Diocesan responsibility, currently called Parish Care and Assistance and one for matters that occurred within the Anglicare responsibility, currently called Anglicare Care and Assistance.

36. Between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2010 there have been two payments under the Parish scheme, and four payments were funded under the Anglicare scheme.

Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Complaints Protocol

37. Since 1996, the Diocese has had in place a Protocol for receiving complaints and allegations of child abuse or sexual misconduct by clergy or church workers. Four independent Contact Persons, all trained counsellors, are available for people to contact. Through an abuse report line (**1800 77 49 45** or reportabuse@sydney.anglican.asn.au), the Contact Persons provide information and they support enquirers as they consider their options. They can then assist in the documenting and reporting of allegations or complaints of abuse or misconduct by members of the clergy or church workers.

38. Any complainant identifying possible criminal behaviour is encouraged to make a report to NSW Police and the Contact Person continues to assist this person through reporting the matter to Police.

39. The Contact Persons meet four times a year for training and coordination in their roles. In August 2009 the one-day professional development seminar for therapists who work with victims of church abuse entitled "*The Pain Within: Sexual Abuse in the Church*" was successfully conducted led by the PSU Chaplain. Thirty seven therapists attended and were challenged and encouraged by the material presented.

Discipline Ordinance

40. The handling of complaints that are received under the Protocol regarding sexual 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 and failure to report suspected child abuse.

41. Where a complaint is made directly to the PSU that contains an allegation including criminal behaviour, a report is made to NSW Police for their attention.

42. Complaints are accepted in writing, put to the respondent, and investigated under the direction of the Director of Professional Standards. The resulting evidence and responses are then put before the Professional Standards Committee for review. Where necessary they may be referred to a Tribunal and recommendations made to the Archbishop for action. For laypersons, the strongest sanction available is a prohibition 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 and lesser sanctions or actions available in appropriate circumstances. The Archbishop is outside of the procedure. He considers the final recommendations and implements "discipline". He is entitled to enquire as to progress of matters and the Director is obliged to keep him informed.

43. The Professional Standards Committee considered three matters in the reporting period.

44. The Board has amended its procedure for considering process complaints about the actions of the PSU. During the reporting period there was no such complaint.

The Professional Standards Committee

45. This Committee comprises six persons, at least one of whom is not an Anglican. Under the provision of the *Discipline Ordinance* the Committee's function is to review and recommend to the Archbishop on the complaints made to the PSU.

46. This Committee meets as necessary to consider all matters handled by the Director.

Parish Recovery Teams

47. A group of nine volunteers has been trained by Pastor Tim Dyer of John Mark Ministries and they are available to assist parishes where allegations of abuse or misconduct by clergy or church workers have arisen. They are able to work in parishes to deal with the complex pastoral issues that arise and aid personal and parish healing.

48. These volunteers attended four one-day training sessions during the reporting period. In March 2010 these nine volunteers received their certificates of accreditation after four years of training and work. Recently a new team of nine consultants began their training in conjunction with the existing team. This new team will work in conjunction with existing consultants to assist with training and experience.

49. In the reporting period two teams have been deployed.

Co-Operation with Department of Community Services, NSW Police and other Churches

50. The Diocese continues to work as closely as possible with sister churches. Currently a group comprising officers in similar roles, as PSU staff meet each quarter as the National Council of Churches *Safe Churches* Sydney group, This group is chaired by the PSU Chaplain, Jenni Woodhouse and seeks to clarify and advance initiatives of child protection together.

51. Each quarter the Director meets as part of the NSW Police Child Protection and Joint Investigation Squad Advisory Council. Here too the Anglican Church is able to work with other churches and secular groups with the Police Squad on child protection matters.

Conclusion

52. The Board has been well served by the former Director, Philip Gerber and the current Director, Glenn Murray and records its deep appreciation to them. Additionally, the Board and the Diocese are well served by PSU staff Annelie Singh and Jenni Woodhouse who have provided continuation of service over some years. The Board also records its appreciation of their work in this PSU's role in our Diocese.

For and on behalf of the Safe Ministry Board and Professional Standards Unit.

REV KEITH CONDIE
Chair
Safe Ministry Board

6 August 2010

GLENN MURRAY
Director
Professional Standards

6 August 2010