

Safe Ministry Board and Professional Standards Unit Annual Report 2021 – 2022

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

Introduction

1. This report is provided under the *Safe Ministry Board Ordinance 2001 (cl 17)* and the *Ministry Standards Ordinance 2017 (cl 86)* for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 (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 Board 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. The Ordinance was under review during the reporting period with the support of the Board.
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 Tom Hargreaves, the Rev Gary O'Brien, the Rev Paul Sampson, Dr Ruth Shatford AM, Ms Beth Teuben (appointed 20 December 2021) and Mrs Jenny Yung (resigned 9 March 2022).
5. The SMB met 8 times in the reporting period.

Professional Standards Unit (PSU)

6. There was change in the PSU team during the reporting period with Mrs Annelie Singh resigning as Personal Assistant to the Director and the Unit's Administrator in March 2022 after 15 years. Annelie made a significant contribution to the work of the PSU over the years and will be greatly missed. Ms Rosemary Angus was appointed to the newly created role of PSU Team Administrator and commenced on 6 June 2022.
7. The PSU team consists of Mr Lachlan Bryant as Director of Professional Standards, Mr Stephen Coleman as Assistant Director of Professional Standards, Mrs Belinda Burn as PSU Chaplain, Mrs Stacie Pakula as Legal Officer/Executive Assistant to the Director, Ms Rosemary Angus as PSU Team Administrator, 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, Ms Elenne Ford as Dispute Resolution Consultant and Mr Austin Irwin and Ms Naomie Nguyen as Legal Assistants.
8. 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.
9. 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*).

10. 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.
11. 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**), a National Register check and a "Safe Ministry Check," also referred to in this context as the Confidential Lifestyle Questionnaire (**CLQ**), which is now mandatory for all church workers being licensed or authorised for ministry. (See paragraphs 21-26 below for further information about Screening of clergy and other church workers.) The PSU provides ongoing support and advice to office holders, parishes and organisations in this regard.
12. Anglicare administers responses to historic child abuse claims for both the Church of England Homes Committee and Sydney Anglican Home Mission Society Council. 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, or other Out of Home Care services, who have complained of abuse or mistreatment during their time at these Homes and placements. The Case Manager, Mrs Angela Ferguson, works from Anglicare's Telopea office, alongside the Rev Dr Andrew Ford, Executive General Manager Mission and Partnerships.

Archbishop's Meetings with Survivors

13. Throughout the reporting period Archbishop Kanishka Raffel made himself available to meet with complainants, to listen to them and relate to them pastorally and provide an apology on behalf of the Diocese as appropriate. There was one of these meetings during the reporting period.
14. 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 Website and Blueprint Policy Documents

15. The [Safe Ministry website](#) and the Safe Ministry Blueprint 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.

The Working With Children Check

16. 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.
17. 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.

The NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme

18. 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*.

19. On 28 February 2020 the PSU issued a Circular for Parishes which provided a summary of the new requirements of the Scheme and the 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. The circular is available [here](#).
20. Members of the clergy and church workers should ensure that they are both familiar and compliant with the reporting requirements of the Scheme 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. There were a small number of these matters that the PSU dealt with during the reporting period.

Screening of Lay Church Workers

21. 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.
22. 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.
23. See the *Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020* heading below for details about the Safe Ministry Check that must be completed by all volunteers in youth or children's ministry from 1 January 2021 onwards.

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

24. All candidates for ordination by the Archbishop are required to complete a comprehensive screening and disclosure through the Confidential Lifestyle Questionnaire (**CLQ**). This is administered by Ministry Training and Development (**MT&D**) in consultation with the PSU. The CLQ was updated following the introduction of the *Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020*.
25. 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.
26. 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 CLQ with the applicable Regional Bishop or his representative.

Safe Ministry Training – Safe Ministry Essentials/Refresher

27. The *Safe Ministry Essentials* course remains the mandated safe ministry training for the Diocese for all adult persons working with children or youth, followed by the *Safe Ministry Refresher* course every 3 years. These courses are available online (*Essentials Online* and *Refresher Online* respectively).
28. The Diocese is a member of the National Council of Churches' Safe Church Program (formerly the Safe Church Training Agreement). There are 36 independent churches and other dioceses who are signatories to the Safe Church Training Agreement across Australia.

29. A significant revision of the Safe Ministry online courses (including information about the *Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020*, the Child Safe Standards, and updated scenarios) was made available in July 2021.
30. The numbers of people who enrolled in online safe ministry training over the reporting period are as follows:

Online Safe Ministry Training	
Essentials	2,287
Essentials – Non-Anglican	325
Sub Total	2,612
Refresher	2,570
Refresher – Non-Anglican	208
Sub Total	2,778
Grand Total	5,390

31. The current costs charged for online training for Anglicans are \$20 for Essentials and \$15 for Refresher, and \$30 for Essentials and \$25 for Refresher for non-Anglicans.
32. Due to COVID-19 restrictions during the reporting period, there was limited opportunity for face-to-face training and planning these events became more challenging. All of our planned face-to-face training events for September and November 2021 were cancelled.
33. Face-to-face training was offered at 17 locations across the Diocese in the first half of 2022. 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	46
Refresher	124
Total	170

34. 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.
35. For more information please visit the [Safe Ministry training website](#).
36. Apart from the website, the key contacts for safe ministry training inquiries are:
- Mrs Brenda Sheppard, Safe Ministry Training Administrator: brenda@safeministry.org.au.
 - Mrs Kylie Williams, Safe Ministry Training Consultant: kylie@safeministry.org.au.

Training of Ministry/Ordination Candidates, Clergy and Authorised Lay Ministers

37. 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.
38. All licensed clergy and authorised lay ministers in the Diocese 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.

Safe Ministry for Junior Leaders Online Course

39. Our Safe Ministry Junior Leaders course, for junior leaders in youth and children's ministry aged between 13 and 17, was completed by 34 junior leaders from parishes across the Diocese during the reporting period. There were 154 junior leader enrollments during the reporting period where the course is in progress.
40. 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, involving a Training Mentor, while the course is being conducted. The Junior Leaders Group Management System introduced during the last reporting period has been highly successful in helping Training Mentors manage the registration process and to track participants' progress through the course. There are now 260 of these groups in place in parishes across the Diocese (some parishes have multiple groups).
41. Following the introduction of the *Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020*, the Junior Leaders Online Course is mandatory for all leaders in youth and children's ministry aged between 13 and 17 years.
42. The course is offered free of charge and is only available to those ministering in the Diocese of Sydney. Follow this [link](#) for more information.

Domestic Abuse Awareness, Response and Prevention Training Course

43. The Know Domestic Abuse online course was launched at Synod in October 2019 by the PSU Chaplain and Ms Lynda Dunstan, Anglicare Domestic Violence Advisor. Resources and awareness raising packs for responding to domestic abuse were provided to each church in the Diocese to coincide with the launch.
44. 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. The course will help clergy and church workers to understand and comply with the Sydney Diocese's *Responding to Domestic Abuse: Policy and Good Practice Guidelines*. The course is available free of charge.
45. There have been 161 enrolments in the course during the reporting period.
46. See this [link](#) for more information about the course.
47. For resources to help raise awareness of domestic abuse, visit the [Know Domestic Abuse website](#).

Translation of Materials and Resources

48. 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)
49. To access these materials visit [here](#) (for Faithfulness in Service) and [here](#) for domestic abuse materials.

Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020

50. The *Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020* introduced the new Safe Ministry Assessment and consolidated existing requirements for safe ministry to children in the Diocese of Sydney. The Assessment involves the completion of the Safe Ministry Check by all volunteers engaging in ministry to children, including junior leaders aged 13-17, from 1 January 2021.
51. The PSU has implemented an online system to help Parishes with the administration of the Safe Ministry Assessment process along with resources to help equip Rectors and their Authorised Delegates to consider and assess applications. Since the online adult volunteer SMC form was launched more than 8,000 people have completed and submitted forms. The requirements of the *Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020* appear to be widely understood by ministers and SMRs and there is a general level of compliance.
52. For more information see the [Safe Ministry website](#).

Safe Ministry Representatives (SMRs)

53. Since 2008 it has been mandatory for each parish to nominate an SMR. 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 service in supporting, resourcing and equipping SMRs in their role.
54. As at the time of writing, the Registry has been notified of 287 SMRs appointed by parishes (including ENC churches). This is pleasing, however 4 of those parishes have the Rector acting as the SMR, which is not ideal. We are following up these 4 parishes to seek for this to be rectified.
55. During the reporting period:
 - (a) four Zoom training sessions were run, aimed at new or recently appointed SMR's called "SMR 101 workshops";
 - (b) two Zoom workshops were run for SMRs and ministers around implementing secure, long term storage strategies for Safe Ministry Records;
 - (c) one Zoom workshop was run for parishes interested in using Backblaze cloud backup software for their local Safe Ministry Records;
 - (d) three parish-based audits were undertaken with an SMR and their Rector; and
 - (e) the use of PSU's centralised safe ministry database Safe Ministry Records Online (SaMRO) (which has been available to parishes through the Safe Ministry website from early 2016) has increased slightly, and at the end of the reporting period 99 parishes were using it as well as 31 parishes from another diocese in regional NSW.

Communication with Parishes

56. 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.
57. Inquiries about the requirements of the *Safe Ministry to Children Ordinance 2020* continued throughout the reporting period but this has reduced down now to a few inquiries a week.
58. Frontline, a safe ministry podcast, 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 [Safe Ministry website](#).
59. In late 2020 we started a closed Facebook Group just for SMRs. It currently has 107 members and is another useful channel of information and discussion. In more than a few cases, it has acted as a 'self-help' group with more experienced SMR's helping newer ones with advice and information.

Care of Survivors of Abuse and Complainants

60. 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.

Domestic Abuse

61. 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 were payments made to one ministry spouse through the Fund.
62. During reporting period, the PSU Chaplain, Belinda Burn, together with the Anglicare Domestic Violence Advisor, Lynda Dunstan and Archdeacon Kara Hartley, presented at six seminars for Ministry Wives, one including Moore College Women, on the topic of Domestic Abuse. These seminars were well attended by Ministry Wives from across the Diocese.

Hope and Healing Service

63. The Hope and Healing service (formerly 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. Unfortunately, it was cancelled during the reporting period due to COVID restrictions but was rescheduled to occur just after the end of the reporting period in July 2022.

Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme

64. 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 designed to be different to litigation, which can be a protracted and harrowing process for survivors. The Scheme includes a mechanism for external assessment if necessary.
65. 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).
66. Between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022 there were no payments under the Diocesan scheme and three payments were funded under the SAHMS scheme.
67. 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

68. 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. 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 which have opted in to the Scheme.

69. The PSU provides information, advice and support services to the Sydney Anglican National Redress Scheme Corporation, which is the entity through which the Diocese of Sydney has opted into the NRS as part of the National Anglican Participating Group.
70. For more information about the NRS visit <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/> or call **1800 737 377**.
71. For more information about the National Anglican Participating Group visit this [link](#).
72. Opting into the NRS does not preclude the operation of the Diocesan Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme which continues to operate as another 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

73. 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). Reports can also be submitted via the [Safe Ministry website](#). 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.
74. 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.
75. There are now seven Contact Persons servicing the Diocese. Five of them are spread across regions: Ms Jane Thomas (Illawarra), Ms Nicky Lock (Northern Beaches), Ms Rosemary Royer (Northern Suburbs), Mr Rob Carroll (Southern Suburbs) and Ms Sandy Morrison (appointed 5 October 2021) (Western Suburbs). Two of the Contact Persons, Ms Sarah Piper (appointed 5 October 2021) and Mr Richard Elms are not fixed to any one regional area.
76. The Contact Persons meet four times a year with the Director and Chaplain for training and coordination of their roles.

Ministry Standards Ordinance

77. 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.
78. 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 has not already made that report.
79. 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.

80. 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.
81. 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.
82. 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

83. The Director received 15 new complaints under the Ordinance during the reporting period.
84. The Director made one complaint under the Ordinance in his own right under clause 9 during the reporting period.
85. The Professional Standards Committee met 7 times and considered 22 matters in the reporting period.
86. No matters were referred to the Professional Standards Board during the reporting period.

The Professional Standards Committee

87. 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.
88. This Committee meets as required and is currently scheduled to meet every second month.

Adjudicator

89. One matter concerning an unpaid lay respondent was referred to an Adjudicator for determination during the reporting period.

Dispute Resolution Consultant

90. Ms Elenne Ford, in her capacity as Dispute Resolution Consultant has been a welcome 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 are required in this important area.

Parish Support Teams

91. 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.
92. Since 2007 Pastor Tim Dyer of John Mark Ministries has trained volunteers for our PSTs. There are currently 11 trained PST consultants.
93. There was one new PST deployed during the reporting period for a new matter.

The Professional Standards Unit Oversight Committee

94. 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.
95. There are five members of PSUOC and the Acting Chair of the Committee is Ms Nicola Warwick-Mayo.
96. PSUOC is required to meet a minimum of three times a year.

Cooperation with NSW Government Agencies and Other Churches

97. The Professional Standards Interdenominational Network (PSIDN) continues to provide a helpful forum to discuss common issues and topics relevant to safeguarding across Christian denominations and provides valuable relationship building opportunities that facilitate cooperation across denominations. The Network includes ongoing attendance by representatives of NSW Police and the Office of the Children's Guardian. Highlights during the reporting period included attendance and a presentation by the Children's Guardian, Janet Schorer, on the Child Safe Scheme and presentations from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice about the Joint Child Protection Response Program and the Information Access and Exchange Unit. Other agenda items included: peer-to-peer sexual behaviour, investigating and managing serious allegations in the absence of cooperation from the victim, changes to NSW Consent laws and vicarious trauma and its impact upon professional standards personnel.
98. The National Network of Directors of Professional Standards from Anglican Dioceses across Australia meets together each quarter. These meetings are still mainly held online due to COVID-19 restrictions. 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.

Royal Commission recommendations and Child Safe Standards

99. The PSU and SMB are continuing to monitor and implement several key Royal Commission Recommendations. Particular areas for ongoing consideration include age-appropriate protective behaviours training for children, professional supervision (or 'pastoral consultation') for pastoral ministry staff and ongoing professional development for pastoral ministry staff.

100. The Child Safe Standards are now enshrined in legislation under the Child Safe Scheme as the primary framework to guide child safe practice for child safe organisations. This means that child safe organisations (which include religious organisations who engage in work with children) are required to implement the Child Safe Standards through systems, policies and processes. In line with Standard 9 the Safe Ministry Board and PSU will continue to review existing policy and processes to ensure that implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.

Finances

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

New Safe Ministry Board

102. The Standing Committee is bringing a proposal to Synod in September 2022 to amend the *Safe Ministry Board Ordinance 2001* in order for the SMB and PSUOC to be combined to become one entity. If the Synod adopts the proposal, a new Safe Ministry Board will be constituted, which will bring the current SMB arrangements to an end after 21 years. We are thankful to all those who have served on the existing SMB since its inception and the consistent and unwavering efforts of the SMB to develop, promote and enhance safe ministry policy and practices across the Diocese over the years. We are also thankful for the leadership and direction provided by PSUOC since 2015. We look forward to the improvements and renewal envisaged in the revised and updated governance arrangements proposed by the Standing Committee.

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

THE REV DR KEITH CONDIE
Chair
Safe Ministry Board

21 July 2022

LACHLAN BRYANT
Director
Professional Standards Unit

21 July 2022