

Safe Ministry Board and Professional Standards Unit Annual Report 2015-2016

(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 114)* for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (reporting period).
2. The Diocese of Sydney has taken a multi-faceted approach to the issue of safe ministry and child protection. Broadly speaking the policy objectives are –
 - (a) to exercise careful selection and screening of all clergy and church workers;
 - (b) to provide clear requirements and expectations of behaviour through a Code of Conduct called *Faithfulness in Service*;
 - (c) to provide regular and comprehensive training and support of all clergy and church workers;
 - (d) to make a timely and caring response to all who are affected by abuse; and
 - (e) to enact just procedures to deal with respondents and persons of risk.

Safe Ministry Board

3. The Safe Ministry Board (“SMB”) was established under the *Safe Ministry Ordinance 2001*. The SMB is tasked with ensuring that safe ministry, child protection and child abuse issues are properly dealt with throughout the Diocese. This includes development and review of practices and policies in these areas. The functions of the Board are defined in clauses 5 and 6 of the Ordinance.
4. The members of the SMB over the reporting period were: the Rev Dr Keith Condie (Chair), Mrs Juliet Buckley, Dr Tim Channon, Ms Stephanie Cole, the Rev Steven Layson, the Rev David Mears, the Rev Gary O’Brien, the Rev Janine Steele, Dr Ruth Shatford AM, the Rev Jon Thorpe, Mr Alex Trevena and Mrs Kylie Williams (resigned December 2015).
5. The SMB has met 10 times in the reporting period.

Professional Standards Unit

6. There have been some changes to the Professional Standards Unit (“PSU”) team over the reporting period.
7. Catherine Wynn Jones was appointed PSU Chaplain (formal title Manager, Pastoral Support and Education) and commenced in late August 2015.
8. Stephanie Menear commenced working full time as Manager, Legal Support in February 2016, having worked in the role part-time prior to that date.
9. Neil Atwood continues to serve as Safe Ministry Representative Liaison Officer, Annelie Singh as Personal Assistant and the Unit’s Administrator, and Lachlan Bryant as Director.
10. In practice much of the work of the PSU derives from the Safe Ministry Board, which has the overall responsibility to encourage all parishes and other units of the Diocese to be child protection aware, compliant and responsive.
11. The Director has overall responsibility for the PSU and is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the complaints and discipline procedure for clergy and church workers (*Discipline Ordinance 2006*) and the National Register (*National Register Canon 2007 Adopting Ordinance 2008*).
12. When the PSU receives a complaint alleging abuse by a member of the clergy or church worker, the Chaplain follows up and provides a caring response to complainants and victims of abuse. The Chaplain provides pastoral support and coordinates the provision of counselling in each case. The Chaplain works closely with the PSU Contact Persons.
13. 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.
14. 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 the Homes. The Case Manager currently works from Anglicare’s Parramatta offices, with the Rev Dr Andrew Ford, General Manager Mission and Partnerships.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

15. This is the subject of a separate report to Synod. Only limited information will be provided in this Report.
16. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (“Royal Commission”) commenced in 2013 with a stated minimum duration of 3 years. The Royal Commission has been charged with examining the sexual abuse of children in the context of institutions throughout Australia including churches and their agencies.
17. The Royal Commission presents an important opportunity for the Diocese to review both past and current practices from a ‘best practice’ perspective.
18. A Steering Committee was appointed by Standing Committee in December 2012 to oversee the response of the Diocese to the Royal Commission and to provide the Director of the PSU with a point of reference for undertaking this work.
19. Additional funding for resources to respond to the Royal Commission has been allocated which is being administered by the Steering Committee.
20. PSU files relevant to the Royal Commission and PSU policies are being comprehensively reviewed as part of the preparations for the Royal Commission and significant work is required as a result.
21. The PSU is therefore under increased pressure to keep up to date with existing work whilst carefully managing the work required in response to the Royal Commission.
22. The Royal Commission released its Interim Report on 30 June 2014. In the Interim Report, the Royal Commission confirmed that it requires a further 2 years (until the end of 2017) to complete its work.
23. The Royal Commission has commissioned an Anglican data project which requires all Dioceses to provide information for all child sexual abuse complaints received between 1 January 1980 and 31 December 2015 to the Commission by the end of August 2016. The data project has resulted in further increased work for the PSU.
24. Registrations for private hearings will close on 30 September 2016. The Commission has advised that there will be no extensions of time for a private session after that date.
25. The Royal Commission has indicated that public hearings are unlikely to continue beyond the end of 2016, with the work of the Commission to be largely completed by the end of 2017. A reduced level of Royal Commission staff will continue to work during the first quarter of 2018 to finalise any outstanding matters not completed by the end of 2017.

Review of the Safe Ministry Ordinance 2001

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

Safe Ministry Policy Resolution 24/15

27. The SafeMinistry.org.au website and the Safe Ministry Journey policy model were launched at Synod in 2015. Synod passed the following motion (Resolution 24/15) –

Synod –

- (a) affirms the following diocesan Safe Ministry Policy Statement adopted by the Synod in Motion 18/04 –

“The Anglican Church of Australia is committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare and safety of all people, particularly within its own community. To ensure the safety of children and vulnerable people in our communities, the Church will –

- carefully recruit and train its clergy and church workers,
- adopt and encourage safe ministry practices by its clergy and church workers,
- respond promptly to each concern raised about the behaviour of its clergy and church workers,
- offer pastoral support to any person who has suffered abuse, and
- provide supervision of and pastoral accountability to any person known to have abused a child or another vulnerable person.”,

- (b) encourages all parishes and organisations that have not adopted the diocesan Safe Ministry Policy Statement to do so,
- (c) recognises the SafeMinistry.org.au website as an important access point for survivors of abuse in the Diocese of Sydney for seeking information and support and for reporting abuse,
- (d) commends the SafeMinistry.org.au website to parishes in the Diocese of Sydney for safe ministry support, information and resources,
- (e) recommends each parish adopt the Safe Ministry Journey policies for Parishes, and specifically the policy documents for those serving in the following roles –
 - (i) Ministers
 - (ii) Safe Ministry Representatives
 - (iii) Head of Youth Ministry
 - (iv) Youth Ministry Leaders
 - (v) Head of Children’s Ministry
 - (vi) Children’s Ministry Leaders.

28. Both the SafeMinistry.org.au website and the Safe Ministry Journey policy documents have been well received and are being fairly well utilised. A circular was sent to all parishes (Rectors, Wardens and Safe Ministry Representatives) (“SMRs”) on 26 February 2016 bringing the Synod motion to their attention and encouraging them to adopt the new Safe Ministry Journey policy documents: <http://safeministry.org.au/safe-ministry-policies-website-circular-february-2016/>.

29. In terms of the SafeMinistry.org.au website, over the first half of 2016 there were 51,483 pages accessed and 18,716 website visits. Many of these were repeat visitors (35.5%) with the remainder (64.5%) being new visitors. In June 2016 there were 305 pages accessed per day and 115 site visits per day.

30. The SMB encourages all parishes that have not yet accessed the SafeMinistry.org.au website and utilised the Safe Ministry Journey policy documents to do so as soon as possible.

Archbishop’s Meetings with Survivors

31. Throughout the reporting period the Archbishop has continued to make himself available to listen to complainants and relate to them pastorally. This usually includes the making of an appropriate apology on behalf of the Church. During the reporting period there were 5 apology meetings with survivors and their family members in PSU matters and one apology meeting with a Care Leaver.

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

Screening of Lay Workers

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

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

35. 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 SMRs.

The New Working With Children Check

36. The New Working With Children Check (“WWCC”) commenced on 15 June 2013.

37. Important features of the new check include –

- (a) clearances must be obtained by both paid employees and volunteers in child-related work;
- (b) clearances will remain valid for 5 years;
- (c) regular crosschecking with NSW police records will be undertaken;
- (d) any matters of concern will result in the OCG imposing a bar; and
- (e) the same clearance may be used for multiple employers.

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

39. The phase in period for the WWCC in the religious sector was completed on 31 March 2015, and all parishes and organisations in the Diocese are required to be fully compliant.
40. The new WWCC requirements are –
- (a) for all clergy working in the Diocese to obtain a WWCC clearance and for the parish (or the applicable organisation) to verify those clearances (note: the Registry and the parish are both required to verify clearances of those with an Archbishop's licence); and
 - (b) for all other persons who are in child-related work in parishes (or organisations), whether employed or voluntary, to obtain a WWCC clearance and for the parish (or the applicable organisation) to verify those clearances.
41. Some exemptions to the new WWCC apply. In many cases careful thought is required before an exemption is relied upon. Penalties apply for non-compliance with the requirements of the new Check.

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

42. All candidates for ordination by the Archbishop are required to complete a comprehensive screening and disclosure questionnaire. This is administered by Ministry Training and Development ("MT&D").
43. Ordination/ministry candidates undergo extensive assessment and screening by way of reference-checking, general psychological testing, interviews, chaplaincy supervision reports and Moore College reports. A PSU record check and National Register check are also undertaken. The *Discipline Ordinance 2006* provides a mechanism for pre-ordination disclosure and consideration of prior sexual misconduct or abuse.

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

44. The Diocese is a member of the National Council of Churches' Safe Church Training Agreement. There are 38 independent churches and other dioceses who are members of the Safe Church Training Agreement across Australia.
45. The *Safe Ministry Essentials* course remains the mandated safe ministry training for the Diocese.
46. Youthworks continues to update the *Safe Ministry Essentials* course materials and facilitates the delivery of the training across the Diocese.
47. On 15 June 2016 the PSU and the SMB entered into a Service Level Agreement with Youthworks for the provision and delivery of safe ministry training in the Diocese of Sydney. The Agreement sets out Key Performance Indicators for Youthworks and requires, among other things, Youthworks to report the following matters to the SMB by 30 June each year –

Statistical information including:

- Number of accredited Senior Trainers
- Number of accredited Local Safe Ministry Trainers
- Number of safe ministry training sessions run by Youthworks
- Number of persons trained by Senior Safe Ministry Trainers
- Cost charged by Youthworks for training (per participant and per training event)
- Any other costs charged by Youthworks for training

A detailed breakdown of costs of the Parish Cost Recovery ("PCR") safe ministry grant that includes the following –

- Staff costs/wages
- Trainers cost (including level of trainer, type of training and hours of training)
- Administration costs
- Costs of training materials

48. As the Agreement was only entered into recently, this data is not available as at the time of preparing this report. However the SMB anticipates this information will be able to form part of its annual report to Synod in future years.
49. The SMB is continuing work on whether online safe ministry training is feasible for safe ministry training across the Diocese. The SMB has considered a comprehensive online safe ministry training package that was launched by another denomination across Australia earlier this year. Discussions with that denomination as to whether the package may be utilised or adapted for our context are continuing. Affordability, quality, adaptability and sustainability are some of the key requirements for any online training package.
50. The SMB is also considering options for greater flexibility for Local Safe Ministry Trainers and will be making a decision on this important issue in the near future.

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

Training of Ministry/Ordination Candidates and Clergy

52. 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.

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

54. The SMB has decided that there will be **no** safe ministry training component at the 2017 Faithfulness in Service Seminars. Therefore, all clergy and other workers who relied upon attendance at the safe ministry training component at the 2014 Conference to maintain safe ministry training currency will need to undertake the Refresher course through the normal channels (through training run by a Local Safe Ministry Trainer at their local parish or during a Youthworks Training Week) **before** the Conference week in June 2017 in order to remain up to date in their training requirements.

55. The 2017 Faithfulness in Service Seminars are being organised for the week of 19 to 23 June 2017 with one being run in each of the five regions. The theme of the Conference is “Core Strength” and will focus on building resilience in attendees’ lives and ministry, and provide education on domestic violence and protective behaviours to help keep families and churches safe. For further information visit the SafeMinistry.org.au website or email fis@safeministry.org.au.

Safe Ministry Representatives

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

57. The PSU provides support and assistance to SMRs by telephone and email. There continues to be a significant level of direct enquiry from parishes and support given to them, particularly around the requirements of the new WWCC.

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

59. As at the time of writing, around 255 parishes have provided current SMR details to the Registry. That leaves about 15 parishes (out of 270) as not having an SMR according to the Registry. However, the real number is probably closer to 1 or 2 as a number of these churches have functioning SMRs, but the appropriate paperwork has not been returned notifying the Registry of the appointment.

60. In early 2015 changes were made to the *Parish Administration Ordinance 2008* making it a prerequisite for each person appointed as the SMR for their parish to obtain a WWCC clearance which must then be verified by the parish. The Registrar was also given powers to require parishes to provide safe ministry records to the Registry, and the Director was given power to remove an SMR from office, for example, if they do not hold a current WWCC clearance. The Registrar is making contact with a selection of parishes for the purposes of conducting an audit to check compliance with their WWCC requirements. Parishes are encouraged to ensure that their WWCC obligations are being met and to contact the SMRLO at neil@safeministry.org.au if further information or assistance is required in that regard.

61. During the reporting period –

- (a) three large training sessions were held for SMRs at strategic locations across the Diocese at Seven Hills, Lindfield and Bowral;
- (b) six parish-based audit/training sessions were undertaken with SMRs and their Rectors; and
- (c) safe ministry database record keeping software (based on a modified open source church management system called 'Jethro') has been developed and has been made available to parishes through the SafeMinistry.org.au website from early 2016. At the end of the reporting period three parishes were using the centralised database, with another eight parishes preparing their data to be included.

The Task Force on Resisting Pornography

62. The PSU called together a Task Force on Resisting Pornography in early 2013 to begin looking at the impact pornography has on the church and what can be done about this.

63. In June 2016 the Standing Committee received a report on the work of the Task Force and encouraged the Archbishop to set up a three year Task Force on Resisting Pornography to address this important issue.

64. The Rev Marshall Ballantine-Jones has been appointed the Chairman of the Archbishop's Taskforce.

65. The SMB is thankful to the Archbishop for his leadership in this area and requests members of Synod to be prayerful for the work of the Task Force over the next three years.

Safe Ministry Guidelines and Other Advice

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

Care of Survivors of Abuse and Complainants

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

Tears and Hope Service

68. Tears and Hope is a church service held each year for survivors of abuse, hosted by Ed Vaughan (Rector of St John's Darlinghurst) with the assistance of the PSU Chaplain. In 2015 it was held on 23 November and was well attended.

Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme

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

70. Currently there are two identical schemes, one for matters that fall within the Diocesan responsibility and one for Care Leavers matters that are the responsibility of the Sydney Anglican Home Mission Society ("SAHMS"). Following the merger, Anglican Community Services (the new Anglicare) will take whatever steps are appropriate on behalf of SAHMS in respect of care leaver.

71. Between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2016 there were 7 payments under the Diocesan Scheme and 3 payments were funded under the SAHMS scheme.

72. The Steering Committee has requested a review of the Diocesan Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme following the release of the Royal Commission's Report on Redress and Civil litigation on 14 September 2015.

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). 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 person in reporting the matter to the Police.

75. The five Contact Persons are Margaret Fuller (Illawarra), Nicky Lock (Northern Beaches), Rosemary Royer (Northern Suburbs) (appointed early 2016), Richard Elms (Western Suburbs) and Rob Carroll (Southern Suburbs).

76. At the end of 2015 Sue Kreicers finished in her role as Contact Person for the Northern Suburbs after almost 20 years of faithful service in this vitally important role. The SMB and PSU are very thankful to Sue for the experience, care and dedication that she brought to the role and wish her well in her future endeavours.

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

Discipline Ordinance

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

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

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

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

82. 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.

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

Complaints

84. The Director received 9 new complaints under the Discipline Ordinance during the reporting period.

85. The Director made 10 complaints under the Discipline Ordinance (clause 10) during the reporting period.

86. The Professional Standards Committee met 5 times and considered 18 matters in the reporting period.

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

The Professional Standards Committee

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

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

Adjudicator

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

Parish Recovery Teams

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

92. In 2007 a group of nine volunteers for our PRTs was trained by Pastor Tim Dyer of John Mark Ministries. From 2010 to 2012 a new team of 9 volunteers were trained.

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

94. One PRT was deployed during the reporting period for a new matter.

Office of the NSW Ombudsman and the Reportable Conduct Scheme

95. There have been a number of meetings with representatives from the NSW Ombudsman's Office to discuss whether the application of the *Ombudsman Act NSW 1974* includes misconduct of certain 'employees' in the Diocese where the conduct is directed towards children. If the Act applies, such matters would need to be reported to the NSW Ombudsman's Office which would provide a level of oversight and/or review in those cases. This is known as the Reportable Conduct Scheme. The Sydney Diocese is not a 'designated agency' for the purposes of the Scheme and is therefore not subject to its terms unless in specific cases 'substitute residential care' is being provided. However it is very likely that around 20 to 30 youth camps conducted by

parishes in the Diocese each year actually meet the definition of 'substitute residential care'. This situation is unsatisfactory as some parishes providing ministry to children appear to be covered by the Scheme while others are not, subject to their involvement in 'substitute residential care'.

96. On 22 December 2015 the Archbishop wrote to the NSW Attorney General requesting the NSW Government to provide greater clarity around the Reportable Conduct Scheme in relation to ministry to children in the Diocese in general.

97. In early 2016 the NSW Ombudsman's Office tabled a Special Report to the NSW Parliament which is generally supportive of the Reportable Conduct Scheme being extended to cover religious institutions. This Report is available on the NSW Ombudsman's website and makes specific reference to the Archbishop's letter at pages 17 and 18: <https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/news-and-publications/publications/reports/child-protection/special-report-to-parliament-strengthening-the-oversight-of-workplace-child-abuse-allegations>.

98. The NSW Ombudsman held a Forum on the Reportable Conduct Scheme on Friday 26 February 2016 in Sydney. The Archbishop presented during the afternoon session alongside leaders from the Catholic Church, the Islamic and Jewish faiths, as well as a sporting association peak body and the CEO of Crusaders. A number of Government ministers, the Commissioner of Police and the General Secretary of Family and Community Services were among the 800 attendees.

99. Following the Forum the NSW Minister for Family and Community Services and the Minister for Social Housing organised a round table meeting with key stakeholders to discuss the extension of the NSW Ombudsman's jurisdiction to the religious and sporting sectors. This meeting was held on 20 May 2016 and Bishop Ivan Lee and Lachlan Bryant attended on behalf of the Archbishop as he was overseas at the time.

100. The NSW Government has not made any final recommendations on this matter at this time.

Cooperation with NSW Government Agencies and Other Churches

101. The NSW Police Child Protection and Joint Investigation Squad Advisory Council meets together semi-regularly and the Director of the PSU continues to be a member of this Council.

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

Finance

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

104. Following detailed submissions to the Diocesan Resources Committee from the Chair of the SMB and Director of Professional Standards in 2015, it was recommended to Standing Committee that PSU costs be fully recoverable under the Parish Cost Recovery charge.

105. The implementation of this recommendation by the Standing Committee with the approval of Synod has resulted in the PSU, for the first time in a number of years, slowly beginning to find itself on more of a sustainable financial footing towards the end of the reporting period.

106. The Standing Committee approved the establishment of a Professional Standards Unit Oversight Committee ("PSUOC") in November 2015 that is responsible for overseeing the budget and finances of the PSU among other things. The Secretary of PSUOC is convening a meeting of PSUOC in the near future.

Conclusion

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

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

THE REV DR KEITH CONDIE
Chair
Safe Ministry Board

LACHLAN BRYANT
Director
Professional Standards Unit

8 August 2016

8 August 2016