

Safe Ministry Board and Professional Standards Unit Annual Report for 2011

(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 2010 to 30 June 2011.
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) to exercise careful selection and screening of all clergy and church workers;
 - (b) to provide a clear statement of requirements and expectations 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, 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 Safe Ministry Board (SMB) are: the Rev Dr Keith Condie (Chair), Mrs Sarah Clancy, Ms Stephanie Cole, the Rev Patrick Collins, the Rev Andrew Heron (resigned March 2011), the Rev Steven Layson, the Rev Christopher Moroney, Deaconess Pattie Mutton, the Rev Janine Steele, Dr Ruth Shatford AM, and Mrs Kylie Williams.
5. The SMB has met 10 times in the reporting period.

Professional Standards Unit

6. Jenni Woodhouse is the Unit's Chaplain to victims and survivors (of abuse). Miriam Stevenson serves within PSU as the Project Manager for Anglicare Care Leavers. Annelie Singh serves as

a Personal Assistant and the Unit's Administrator. Glenn Murray has been the Director Professional Standards since August 2009.

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

8. The Director has operational responsibility for the complaints and discipline procedure (*Discipline Ordinance 2006*) and the National Register (*National Register Canon 2007 Adopting Ordinance 2008*) in relation to clergy and church workers and is the CEO of the Safe Ministry Board. This position acts as head of PSU and is responsible for the PSU staff team.

9. 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 counseling as required. The Chaplain also has responsibility for the operation and co-ordination of the PSU Contact Persons.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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 during the period 1950 to 1975. 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.

13. The functions of this position entail a pastoral care role as well as research and administration and a two year contract is in place. This role is known as the *Pastoral Case Manager* and reports through the Director to Anglicare. Anglicare fully funds this position and its costs, so that parish funds are not directly used for this purpose.

Staff Development

14. Each PSU staff member has been able to attend some self directed professional development programs over the reporting year which has both challenged and encouraged these staff members. In

some cases this has been coupled with an opportunity to formally contribute to the same event.

Website

15. 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 NSW Department of Family and Community Services, counseling services, other dioceses and other denominations.

Archbishop's Meetings with Victims

16. Throughout 2010 - 2011 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.

17. 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

18. 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.

19. 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 or parish nominators.

20. 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.

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

21. All candidates for ordination and licensed by the Archbishop continue to be required to complete a comprehensive screening and disclosure questionnaire. This is administered by MT&D.

22. 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. The General Synod *National Register Canon 2007* applies to the Diocese of Sydney.

23. 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

24. 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. There are currently 38 independent churches and other Dioceses who are members of the Safe Church Training Agreement across Australia.

25. This *Safe Ministry Essentials* course remains the mandated safe ministry training for the Diocese. Progress has been made in training and validating local trainers who in turn can train others in parishes using the kit.

26. Youthworks continues to administer and provide train the trainer training in the *Safe Ministry Essentials* course to provide the whole Diocese with a heightened level of child protection awareness and responsibility. The SMB and PSU are thankful that Youthworks carefully provides this essential whole-of-Diocese service to their high standards.

Training of Ministry/Ordination Candidates & Clergy

27. 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. Modules have been developed and are being trialed by Moore College, Ministry Training and Development and Youthworks College in their courses and programs.

28. As this Report is being prepared, this revised program and the majority of its modules are complete and being used in safe ministry training for clergy and church workers.

29. The next round of the triennial *Safe Ministry* training for clergy is being prepared to be presented during September 2011.

Safe Ministry Representatives

30. The role of Safe Ministry Representatives in parishes continues to be pivotal in keeping parishes abreast of changes and possible church child and parishioner protection issues. The PSU telephone support service continues to provide a significant level of direct and enquiry support to parishes.

31. 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 do not intend for the role of Safe Ministry Representative to be an additional duty of the minister in charge.

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

Safe Ministry Guidelines and Other Advice

33. 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.

Care of Victims and Complainants

34. As Chaplain, Jenni Woodhouse, cares for complainants and their families. This important role supplements counseling and other emergency assistance which are 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, as they raise concerns about their abuse and some Diocesan action follows. This interim care of victims and survivors is a significant role in the partial healing of persons abused by clergy and church workers.

Care and Assistance Scheme

35. 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.

36. Currently there are two identical schemes, one for matters that occurred within Diocesan responsibility, currently called Parish Care and Assistance, and one for matters which occurred in the Church of England Homes for which Anglicare has assumed responsibility, currently called Anglicare Care and Assistance.

37. Between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2011 there has been one payment under the Parish scheme, and thirteen payments were funded under the Anglicare scheme.

Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Complaints Protocol

38. 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.

39. Any complainant identifying possible criminal behaviour is encouraged to make a report to NSW Police. The Contact Person, the Chaplain or the Care Leaver's Project Manager continues to assist this person through reporting the matter to Police. During the past year a revised protocol has been established with NSW Police's Sex Crimes and Joint Investigation Response Squad's Intelligence Unit that reaffirms the Diocese's commitment to report possible crimes where the victim or survivor is unable to do so.

40. The Contact Persons meet four times a year for training and coordination in their roles.

Discipline Ordinance

41. 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.

42. 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 where the complainant is not able to make that report.

43. 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.

Activity

44. The Director received 16 complaints that were permitted under this Ordinance during the reporting period.

45. The Professional Standards Committee considered 11 matters in the reporting period and met six times.

46. The Tribunal commenced hearing two matters referred to it in the reporting period and concluded one of these.

PSU Processes

47. The SMB has amended its 2008 *Policy for reviewing the processes of the PSU* in which the SMB considers process complaints about the actions of the PSU. During the reporting period there was one complaint against PSU. This complaint is yet to be concluded.

The Professional Standards Committee

48. This Committee comprises seven persons, at least one of whom is not an Anglican. Under the provision of the *Discipline Ordinance 2006*, the Committee's function is to review and recommend to the Archbishop on the complaints made to the PSU.

49. This Committee meets as necessary to consider all complaints handled by the Director and is currently meeting every second month.

Parish Recovery Teams

50. 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 to aid personal and parish healing. These volunteers attended four one-day training sessions during the reporting period.

51. A new team of nine volunteer consultants began their training last year in conjunction with the existing team. Training involves the four one day workshops each year and working in conjunction with existing consultants in parishes. Some of our new volunteers have been engaged in this way.

52. In the reporting period, two teams have been deployed on new matters.

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

53. The Diocese continues to work as closely as possible with sister churches. Currently a group comprising officers in similar roles to those of 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. This group has been instrumental in making preparations for the *Safe as Churches 5* Conference to be held in July 2011 at Thornleigh.

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

55. A National Network of Directors of Professional Standards meets approximately each quarter and this is attended by the Diocese's Director. These two-day network meetings are crucial to building understanding and co-operation across the whole nation for Professional Standards Directors who are often isolated because of their particular role. This national network has been instrumental in process improvements for this Diocese and contributing to National register implementation changes and further efficiencies.

56. The Director contributes to the national professional standards agenda and its progress through his role as a member of the General Synod Professional Standards Commission. There are seven members of this Commission drawn from the National Anglican Church.

Finance

57. The financial control and administration of the PSU is the Director's responsibility with the able assistance of the Administrator, Annelie Singh and the SDS Finance staff. Reporting of all PSU income and expenditure has been enhanced by conversion to a cost centre model so as to provide improved tracking of income and expenditure. This includes costing allocation to discrete cases to better understand what further efficiencies might be achievable in the current challenging environment of contracting income.

58. The SMB receives an up to date summary each meeting of the progress of the PSU's finance both in income and expenditure results and balance sheet results. The summarised PSU accounts are reported in the Synod Funds reports elsewhere in the 2011 Synod papers.

Conclusion

59. The Board and the Diocese are well served by PSU staff Annelie Singh, Miriam Stevenson, and Jenni Woodhouse who have provided continuity of service over some years. The Board also records its appreciation of their work in this PSU's role in our Diocese.

60. The Director wishes to record his thanks for the challenge and support of PSU of his own role, that the SMB exercises each meeting. Additionally, he records his thanks to the PSU staff team who have worked hard in the last two years to manage the increased work load of the additional Care Leavers' service and the necessary process changes to enhance recording and professional accountability.

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

THE REV DR KEITH CONDIE
Chair
Safe Ministry Board
24 August 2011

GLENN MURRAY
Director
Professional Standards
24 August 2011