



## DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

### DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

#### BRIEF REPORT ON THE 118TH MEETING

HELD ON SATURDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2013

**Present:** Bishop Bill Wright, Fr Brian Mascord, Mrs Teresa Brierley, Mrs Trish Hales, Mr Lawrie Hallinan, Fr Kevin Corrigan, Mrs Pat Campbell, Mr Bal Gato, Mrs Irene Gover, Mr John Presland, Mr Ray Keast-Jones, Mr Andrew McGinlay, Mr John Donnelly, Mr James Elliot, Mrs Shirley McHugh.

#### **Dioconate**

Fr Brian Mascord VG referred to the letter he sent in response to an inquiry from the City Region Social Justice Group on the role and purpose of Deacons in our Diocese. Fr Brian mentioned that there are some men who have expressed a desire to pursue discernment on a calling to the Diaconate. He said there is currently a review of the Diocesan policy on the Diaconate so no men have been accepted for formation.

The meeting commended Fr Brian on his well researched and clear letter. This information will be placed on the Diocesan website shortly.

#### **Discussion Paper on a Pilot Project on Regional Consolation**

Teresa Brierley, Vice Chancellor Pastoral Ministries introduced the draft Discussion Paper with her observation that the pilot offers informal and infrequent meetings which are likely to be suitable to many people thus increasing the number involved in our consultation processes.

There was agreement that the support of local clergy is important for the promotion and healthy functioning of the Regional gatherings proposed in the pilot.

There was agreement that the pilot was not needed so much in the Region with a functioning RPC. The comment was also made that there needed to be some goodwill and preparedness to cooperate within a Region for the pilot to be beneficial.

There was general agreement that the Regional gatherings should aim to be as inclusive of the wider Catholic community as possible. Bishop Bill suggested the gatherings be "an assembly of the Catholic community of the region". There was agreement that this Catholic community includes staff and clients of CatholicCare Social Services (CCSS), staff, students and families of Catholic Schools, Catechists, students and families involved in Special Religious Education in State Schools (SRE), other Catholic agencies and Parishes. It was agreed that the paper will need to be revised throughout the operation of the pilot to incorporate learning's.

Bishop Bill indicated that he did not see the necessity of making this model 'policy' as such for the Diocese, but rather as a mechanism for improving communication with

the appropriate support, therefore different models could occur across the Diocese depending on need.

#### **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes from the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2013, was accepted as accurate.

#### **Bishop's Update**

Bishop Bill advised that two priests have indicated their intention to retire in the next 12 months (Fr Greg Arnold retiring mid 2014 as Parish Priest (PP): Kotara, Cardiff, Adamstown and Fr Paul Mulconry retiring end 2013 as Administrator: Gloucester, Stroud & Krumbach). Bishop Bill said he currently has no fixed ideas on how these vacancies will be addressed.

Bishop Bill said the current overseas priests want to stay in our Diocese and we are happy to have them. He said the response to the overseas priest program review has almost concluded and we will eventually be accepting more priests from overseas.

Bishop Bill said we will be building additional disability housing and other affordable housing on the land adjoining the CCSS Mayfield office. Bishop Bill said CCSS are opening more offices/facilities in various Regions across the Diocese. He noted that recently they opened a disability services office in Charlestown near the office of National Disability Insurance Agency (formerly DisabilityCare).

Bishop Bill said the Report of Religious Education (RE) in Catholic Schools has been discussed by the Schools Council and Catholic Schools Office leadership. The Report found the RE curriculum was sound and recommended the employment and support of RE specialist teachers with career paths in that speciality. Other recommendations: concerned giving greater priority to RE in timetabling and the place of RE in the school. He said a working group has been formed to develop an implementation plan for the Report.

#### **Royal & Special Commission of Inquiry**

Bishop Bill said the Diocese has a Management Committee for Commissions of which he is not a member. He said this group is currently compiling lists of personnel who were in Parishes and Schools from 1945 onwards. They will need a part-time worker and data management software to complete this task. The

document management system may be rolled out throughout the Diocese if it is found to be beneficial.

Bishop Bill said we have heard that The Royal Commission will not focus on our Diocese while the Cunneen Special Commission of Inquiry is still operating. The Royal Commission will have access to the Cunneen Commission and we don't know if they will accept that as sufficient or whether they will investigate matters within our Diocese.

The Royal Commission recently looked into a Hunter situation involving the Scouts, Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services and NSW Department of Community Services.

Bishop Bill said the Royal Commission has completed and closed responses to three issues papers investigating:

1. *Working with Children Checks*
2. *Towards Healing: Principles and Procedures in Responding to Complaints of Sexual Abuse against Personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia*
3. *Child Safe Organisations*

Responses will be accepted until 08/11/13 onto the next issues paper:

4. *Preventing Sexual Abuse of Children in Out-of-Home Care*

Bishop Bill said the Catholic Church's Truth, Justice and Healing Council has made presentations on these issues papers and those interested should access information on the website: <http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au/>

Bishop Bill said the Cunneen Special Commission of Inquiry has mainly finished hearings and their report is expected in February 2014.

## **Regional/Council/Agencies Updates**

### **Regional Reports**

The Nelson Bay parish retreat was very successful and their visit to Aboriginal sites in Wollombi was appreciated by all. A report is available on the Diocesan website:

<http://www.mn.catholic.org.au/news-events/news/2013/st-michaels-parish-retreat>

Fr Richard Shortall sj (who accompanied the relic of St Francis Xavier around Australia) recently conducted a guided retreat in everyday life at Nelson Bay. He will be back in the Diocese in 2014 to run the same retreat for up to 25 people.

The Sugarloaf Parish were noted for their ongoing efforts at fundraising for groups in Vietnam and for their work in building goodwill between people in our two countries.

### **Council Reports**

#### **Diocesan Council for Ministry with Young People**

The Council for Ministry with Young People will be holding two formation days for the approximately 75 people from the Diocese who are attending the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Melbourne (5-7 Dec 2013). The festival is for people over 15 years (Year 9 at school). Bishop Bill will be attending.

A new member for the Council for Ministry with Young People is being sought.

A diocesan retreat is being planned for the first quarter of 2014 for people over 16 years of age.

The council is looking at running prayer and workshop sessions across the Diocese.

### **Social Justice Council**

Shirley McHugh said the mental health forum run by CatholicCare and the Diocesan Social Justice Council was successful. She said they are looking at whether to hold another in 2014 and possibly making it an evening event with more activities.

### **Information**

Helene O'Neill is looking for support people in the schools and parishes in her role as Parish Family Liaison Officer. It is hoped that they will assist in connecting parishes and schools.

A Safe Ministry workshop will be run in Chisholm Region but will be open to people from all Regions (places limited).

Toronto Parish has employed Brendon Mannyx, a married man, as a Pastoral Associate that is part of their structure under the moderator model. Morisset Parish have opted for a volunteer lay leadership team. A Discernment Team (of non-parishioners) is working with the parish to recommend suitable people to Bishop Bill for appointment.

The Diocese is looking to appropriately mark International Day of People with a Disability on the 3rd December 2013. This year the day overlaps with the inaugural Special Olympics Asia Pacific Games to be held in Newcastle 1-7 December 2013.

### **Date of Next DPC Meeting 2013**

The next meeting of the DPC is Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2013, in the Toohey Room, Cathedral House, 841 Hunter St, Newcastle, commencing at 9.00am.

To contact the DPC phone 4979 1117 or e-mail [Alyson.Segrott@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:Alyson.Segrott@mn.catholic.org.au)