



DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

BRIEF REPORT ON THE 123RD MEETING

HELD ON SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2014

Present: Bishop Bill Wright, Fr Brian Mascord, Mrs. Teresa Brierley, Mrs Trish Hales, Mr Ray Collins, Mrs Judy Crittenden, Mr Jim Curran, Mr John Donnelly, Mr Bal Gato, Sr Louise Gannon, Mrs Irene Gover, Mr Lawrie Hallinan, Mr Andrew McGinlay, Mrs Shirley McHugh.

Regional Report Survey

Significant discussion was held on the Regional Report Survey. Some noteworthy points were as follows:

- Reports seemed to be mini records of Parishes instead of Regional Reports.
- Some reports appeared to be a 'copy and paste' of previous reports creating a repetitiousness, hence raising the question of how effective the process was and how relevant the information was received by this Council. Also highlighted was the reporting process such as the sources of information, the person/s collating the report and who reviewed it.
- Sensed that a lack of understanding of the Five Foundations at a Parish level was contributing to some repetition and inconsistency of information being reported.
- Consideration given to the reporting shortfalls using the current reporting process such as what challenges Parishes/Regions might have experienced and have not reported. How best to draw out regional concerns and important information.
- Council relied on its Regional Representatives, however also noted was that not all Representatives functioned as such within their region. Members felt the need to revisit the role of the Regional Representative and additionally the role of the Priest Regional Convenor.
- Regional Pastoral Councils and Representatives are not a requirement of Canon Law. The only requirement is that the Bishop be informed from a cross section of Diocesan communities. Deaneries not Regions are a requirement of Canon Law.
- Australian Catholic Bishops Conference noted that not all Dioceses had Regional Representation model.
- What is the role of the Diocesan Pastoral Council? Representative Group versus Group of Representatives. Councils needed different wisdoms and perspectives as this body is representative of the whole Diocese.
- Parish expectation was that the Diocesan Pastoral Council, on behalf of the Diocese would respond.

A number of ideas were discussed on how the future regional representatives and other could advise the Bishop were put forward. Teresa Brierley would look at the options and provide a report at the next meeting.

Process to replace vacant positions on the DPC

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is considered as the body that represents the whole Diocese linking agencies, religious orders and parishes, noting also that it was not essentially a Lay Council. It was seen as the forum where Pastoral issues were discussed. Members suggested approaching people and inviting them to join and also addressing Parishes, highlighting the shortages.

Prior to inviting people to join the Council it was agreed that the Council Executives needed to frame up the Council structures. Teresa Brierley would provide a report at the next meeting.

Nomination of Deputy Chair to DPC

The Chair opened the election for the position of Deputy Chairperson and informed Members that a number of nominations were put forward in support of Lance Scriven, whom was open to accepting the position if elected. Bishop Bill asked Members if there were any further nominations and since there were none, the vote in favour of Lance as Deputy Chair was carried.

DPC Pastoral Planning

Teresa spoke to the document 2014 Bishop's Leadership Forum Working Party – Priority Allocations as per the areas prioritized at the beginning of the year, and provide an update to the DPC.

Those involved in recommending the 2015 Diocesan Gathering were given a folder of planning documents from 2007 to the current day. These documents will be given to Bishop's Executive for their leadership planning in early 2015.

Parish-Family Liaison Officer

The Diocesan Pastoral Council recommendation to continue the appointment of Parish-Family Liaison Officer was accepted by both the Diocese and Catholic Schools Office.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on 26th July 2014, was accepted as accurate.

Bishop's Update

Happenings around the Diocese

Clergy

Bishop Bill said there will be expected considerable Clergy appointments ahead due to awareness of four to five senior Parish Priests of significant Parishes pending retirements.

Fr Gregory Barker transferred to this diocese from Diocese of Hobart. Bishop Julian Porteous had agreed to a three year loan.

Peter Street will become an ordained priest shortly. Five students are currently in the Seminary for this Diocese. Some Indian and Vietnamese priests are to be invited to come into this Diocese in near future. Fr Sabu from Diocese of Sale has also approached this Diocese. He is from the Syro Malabar Rite

Royal & Special Commission of Inquiry

No recommendation received yet from the NSW Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. There has been no further update from Commissioner of Police or the Attorney General. Detective Chief Inspector Fox has now retired.

The Independent Advisory Panel set up to advice on Monsignor Allan Hart and Fr Bill Burston would be in a position to soon advice Bishop Bill.

Regional/Council/Agencies Updates

Regional Reports

Macquarie Pastoral Region: Councillor questioned if Cooranbong was celebrating Mass since it regularly celebrated Sunday Celebration in Anticipation of the Eucharist. It was indicated that Mass was being Celebrated. In addition it was also noted that the Parish Leadership Team, which would be commissioned soon meet every Thursday. This Team also meet with, and form part of, the Parish Pastoral Council once a month.

Vineyards Pastoral Region: Teresa Brierley has met with Kurri Cessnock Parishes once a month and Parishes have held two Gatherings to explore options. Parishes are nearly ready to put forward a recommendation to Fr Tony Potts.

Upper Hunter Regions: Gathering gave a strong sense of togetherness and as a result was looking at doing the same again as Eucharist.

Council Reports

Social Justice Council

Shirley McHugh reported that the Diocesan Social Justice Council had drawn up a program for 2015 which would include commissioning a speaker against Domestic Violence. Shirley McHugh and Teresa Brierley both attend a joint Ecumenical Social Justice Committee with the Anglicans and Uniting Church on a bi monthly basis.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Council

Teresa Brierley reported to Members that the Three Commissions (Newcastle Anglican Diocese, Diocese of Broken Bay and Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle) had

decided to revise their processes in that rather than the Three Commissions coming together, a Working Party would be put together consisting of key people from Agencies to review education, youth and parishes with a view to improvement and with the hope that this would be productive.

Teresa recently met with Chairs of the other Commissions, Teresa Pirola (Broken Bay) and Reverend Mother Moira Evers (Anglican). There will be a joint proposal for a Lenten Program with a Social Justice aspect using social media such as billboards to display, slogans supporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers, which will be displayed once a week on the same day.

Another upcoming event is the dialogue and morning tea at the Wallsend Mosque on 4th December 2014. Bishop Bill and Fr Brian Mascord, along with some staff and members of the Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Council will be in attendance and are hopeful of a fruitful exchange.

Liturgy Council

All are invited to the upcoming *Introducing LicenSing Online* to be scheduled in the diocese, noting it was not a copyright workshop.

Agencies Report

CatholicCare Social Services

Mrs Helga Smit, has been appointed as the Director of CatholicCare and is currently moving with family from Taree to Newcastle.

Catholic Schools Office

A Student Leaders' Retreat was held at Riverwood Downs with Fr Brian Mascord attending in the absence of the Bishop. Bishop Bill had met with the School Leaders previously. Catholic Schools have been nominated for four categories in the CONCA Awards this year. The Director of Flexible Learning Centres was looking to establish a school in the Newcastle area. Ray Collins indicated that after having the opportunity to visit a number of these schools, he believed it to be a possibility in the Newcastle Region.

Diocesan Gathering

Members were advised that the next Diocesan Gathering was scheduled for 24th October 2015. A committee is currently being put together.

World Youth Day 2016

The diocese advertised the position of World Youth Day 2016 Coordinator. The position would assist the Diocesan Council for Ministry with Young People.

Bishop's Leadership Forum

Bishop Bill said that the 2015 Bishop's Leadership Forum would not take place. Instead he will meet with his Executive – Vicar General, Vice Chancellors and Directors of Catholic Schools Office and CatholicCare Social services. This Leadership Meeting will review the many documents of previous Forums to put forward a direction for the diocese. This will be

presented to the Diocesan Pastoral Council for review and comments.

Parish Pastoral Placement

The Pastoral Placement Program a new initiative of the Diocesan Pastoral Council has been advertised, seventeen applications have so far been submitted for consideration, including one person who is not a Catholic.

Date of Next DPC Meeting 2015

The next meeting of the DPC is Saturday 21st February 2015, in the Toohey Room, Cathedral House, 841 Hunter St, Newcastle, commencing at 9.00am.

To contact the DPC phone 4979 1117 or e-mail

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