



Section 7

Reports to 2013 Synod

Professional Standards Unit

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS REPORT LCAQD Synod 2-4 August, 2013

The LCA Professional Standards Unit is located in Church House, McDougall St Milton. The Professional Standards Unit provides services to all the Districts of the LCA however it has a particularly close relationship with the QLD District.

The role of the PSU is to develop a framework to ensure that the Church meets its legislative obligations to keep all who engage with the Church safe from harm, in accordance with the Work, Health & Safety Act. We have a particular duty to care for the most vulnerable within our community, especially our children. Queensland legislation requires that all bodies, including churches, who provide services to children have a risk management plan to ensure that our children are safe. Accordingly the LCAQD requires that all active Pastors (including active retirees), and all those who engage with children must have a current Blue Card. Any person serving on a Board of a school must also have a current Blue Card. LYQ require that all those in a leadership role must have a current Blue Card. The Church requires that a risk assessment be undertaken for all church activities and a management plan be developed to address these risks. This plan is then approved by the Church Council and recorded in the Minutes. This achieves the twofold effect of ensuring that risks have been identified and eliminated to the extent that this is possible and that the activity is clearly covered by the Church's insurance.

Since last Synod we have conducted some 25 Professional Standards Workshops with over 300 participants. In the last three and a half years over 1300 people have been trained.

There have been some administrative difficulties for the LCA in bringing policies through the approval process so the QLD District, having identified the risk of not having policies, determined to develop documents based on LCA draft policies but which particularly addressed the needs of our District.

These policies are:

- Guidelines for Ethical Standards of behaviour
- Child Protection
- Prevention of Harm from a Known Sex Offender
- Conflict of Interest
- Privacy
- Prevention of Fraud
- Gift Acceptance
- Prevention of Abuse and Harassment
- Volunteers
- Training and Learning

The Prevention of Harm from a Known Sex Offender policy has provoked much robust discussion. It must be remembered that our concern for victims or potential victims must remain uppermost in our minds. With more than 7 convicted offenders within congregations in the QLD District the need for this policy is obvious. It is essential that

we have a well thought through, clear process to ensure that vulnerable people are kept safe from harm whilst we care for and minister to those who have been convicted of the sexual abuse of children or other vulnerable people. Keith is also assisting a congregation in another District to develop a management plan for a convicted offender within the congregation.

We would especially like to thank those who are acting as Coordinators for the Safety Management Online system and the Safe Place/Safety Officers for congregations (often the same person!). Please pray for them and encourage them as they commit themselves to the essential work of keeping all safe.

Liz Crawford
Professional Standards Director

Keith Stiller
Professional Standards Officer