

# Professional Standards Newsletter

ISSUE 05 - December 2013



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## Travelling at Christmas

Australians must be the world greatest travellers. One writer remarked recently that if long haul flying in Economy was an Olympic sport Aussies would take out the Gold medal.

Our indigenous brothers and sisters walked the land for thousands of years for food, ceremony and get togethers with family. Our European ancestors travelled half way around the world in boats no bigger than a Sydney ferry in search of a better life. The original Christmas story was of travelling, Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem for the census and the Wise Men guided by a star to the stable to bring presents for the new king.

Our travelling continues as we travel for food, ceremony and get togethers, not so often on foot, donkey or camel, but by car, bus, train and plane and never more often than at Christmas

Conversations usually start in April or May each year about where we will gather for Christmas. Lots of discussions ensue before the decision is taken. Plans are made, flights booked, workmen engaged to ensure that the paint is dry and the floors are polished well before the visitors arrive.

Further conversations are had about food, likes and dislikes, allergies and special diets. There are conversations about gift giving, Secret Santas, only for the children, only something you've made yourself. Sleeping

## Workshops - 2013

Mackay  
Mount Isa  
Milton  
Caloundra  
Milton  
Beenleigh  
Rockhampton  
Middle Park  
Noosaville  
Toowoomba  
Corinda (Refresher Course)  
Southport  
Highfields  
Milton  
Mt Gravatt



arrangements are considered, air beds and pumps are sourced, blankets and pillows, swags and tents are organised.

The travellers write lists of things to be done before they leave home, bills to be paid, mail to be collected, the key with the neighbour, the dog to the kennels and the lad up the street to water the garden. The car is serviced and tyres checked and replaced

Bags are packed, checked to ensure that there are two white sandals, dad's good shirt, the charger for the phone and enough blood pressure pills for a week.

Then after double checking that the windows are locked and the stove is turned off we set off to the airport, the motorway or the train or bus station for the journey to our Christmas get together.

Meanwhile at the host's home, food has been stockpiled, the old fridge kicked into life for the drinks, the oven worked overtime, the lawn mown and the lights strung around the back verandah.

When we get together, sing carols at the Christmas Eve service often with a tear sneaking down the cheek, all the work of the last eight

months is worth it for the joy of celebrating together.

You may recall from the Professional Standards Workshop the 6 P's that

**Prior  
Planning and  
Preparation  
Prevents a  
Poor  
Performance**

And this is ably illustrated by all we have done to ensure our Christmas get togethers with family and friends are times to enjoy.

Let's not forget during the other 11 months of the year to use the 6 P's to ensure that our church communities are safe and enjoyable.

Christmas blessings as you travel to gather with family and friends or as you prepare to welcome the travellers.

Liz Crawford

### Workshop—Facts

This year close to 200 people were trained in 15 workshops.

Since training began in 2010 almost 1400 people have attended at total of 68 Professional Standards Workshops.

This year we held our first 4 hour "Refresher Training" with 11 people attending.

# The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse



At the time of writing the Royal Commission has examined three Case Studies. They have involved the Scouts, the YMCA and an Anglican Children's Home in Lismore. The final public hearing for 2013 will hear evidence about the establishment, operation and review of the Towards Healing process by the Catholic Church. In addition, it will explore how that process works in practice with evidence from a number of people who have participated in it.

Justice McClellan says some preliminary themes have already emerged.

*"It is apparent that where an organisation lacks an appropriate culture, and there are not appropriate practices and training of staff within the organisation, there is a risk that sexual abuse will occur," he said.*

A great deal of information is available from the web site of the [Royal Commission](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au) [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au) . If you find the "Issue Papers and Submissions" menu item you will be able to find two submissions the LCA has supplied to the Commission. The first concerns the "[Working with Children Check](#)", and the second "[Child Safe Institutions](#)". It is also possible to watch live webcasts of the public hearings. The Case Study concerning "Towards Healing" begins Monday December 9. Transcripts of the past public hearings are also available.

Keith Stiller



## Facing Disaster

In preparation for my ten minute presentation for the recent Disaster Recovery Training organized by the District, I was challenged by this question. “During times of disaster do policies and procedures become less important or more important?” Do times of emergency allow us to ignore policies and get on with getting the job done, or at such times is it even more important to look to policies and checklists to guide our thoughts and actions?

Please don't tell anyone but the picture that first popped into my mind was a big strong guy reaching down into the flood waters to rescue a small child and me rushing up to ask whether he had a Blue Card. The trouble is that my cartoon image trivialises the question. Try this scenario. Flood victims have been ushered into a hall. You walk past a room where you notice an elderly man supervising a room full of children. Here's a situation where it might be very important to drop in and ask if he has a current Blue Card. Not for a moment would you expect him to produce one then and there, but his reaction will indicate whether he at least knows about them, and more importantly he'll know that you know about them. It's also important that you remember the policy about there always being more than one person supervising a group of children, and either lend a hand yourself or find someone else as soon as possible.

Here's another real situation I learnt about at the Training Day itself. If you decided to do your bit and offer to help out in a flood or its aftermath, would you bother with first signing on via a



volunteer form? The true story was told of a truck driver who for whatever reason did not register as a volunteer. As a result of his leg being badly injured while helping people, he ended up not being able to get back to his truck driving and so lost his business and possibly his house. Because he didn't register, sadly his good work wasn't covered by any insurance.

In checking further how this effects volunteer workers in our Church, I discovered a very helpful web page concerning volunteers developed by the [LCA Insurance Fund](#).

.....over



## Disaster Recovery ... (cont.)

After a clear reminder to congregations that the safety of volunteers is their responsibility it says—

“A register of volunteers should be kept with details of contact names and numbers in case of emergency. With the volunteer's approval, list details of medical conditions that may impact the volunteer's ability to carry out work for your organisation.”

Keeping accurate records is very important in the normal life of a congregation, during an emergency or disaster it becomes essential. Carry a clipboard so that you can jot down the name and phone number of that person looking after the kids, the young mother who is desperate to find her husband, or even the \$10 donation for food you received from the kind stranger.

Undertaking and recording Risk Assessments concerning the day to day activities of a congregation needs to become just a normal part of our preparation for what we do. Their aim is to keep

everyone in our care, safe. At times of crisis and chaos when all sorts of hazards present themselves, Risk Assessments play an essential role in everything we do.

There are times we can't help laughing at rules, shaking our heads as we confront regulations and wanting to hide when faced by the paperwork, but when things go wrong, when it's difficult to know what to do, when memories become confused or blank, there's much comfort to be found in a well thought through process, a checklist, and being able to produce the right piece of paper.

Have a safe Christmas.

Keith Stiller



## Let's care for our volunteers!



*“Volunteer workers are a very special extension of the regular workforce and it's vital to recognise their dedication and generosity. It's also important to ensure that they are well cared for and feel safe and secure in your workplace. “*

This important advice comes from words comes from our [LCA Insurance Fund](#) people. Check out their website for some advice on what practical things should be done to keep them safe. Do you know that they are covered not only while they do their tasks but also when they travel to and from their voluntary work.

**“Remember you are responsible for the safety of volunteers”**

## Workplace Bullying

Safe Work Australia has recently released a very helpful document - [Guide for Preventing and Responding to Workplace Bullying](#). It contains lots of valuable and helpful material. Congregations don't have to produce their own policy, this will be part of the "Prevention of Abuse and Harassment Policy".

We provide this link for your information.



safe work australia

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## Planning a Workshop

If your congregation is interested in hosting a either the six hour Professional Standards Workshop or the four hour Refresher workshop in 2014 please contact [Keith Stiller](#) or check out the [LCAQD website](#).

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## New "Refresher" Workshop now available

There's good news for all those who have participated in the 6 hour Professional Standards Workshop! We've developed a new 4 hour Refresher Workshop. In this Workshop there aims to be more of an emphasis on the practical. You will be assisted in actually doing a Building Assessment, Risk Assessment and evaluate applications for Permission to Proceed. However, it's essential that all who attend this Workshop have completed the first six hour workshop.

Congregations some distance from Brisbane are encouraged to think about offering the refresher training on the Sunday after holding the six hour workshop on the Saturday.

## Are you using SMO?

Many congregations haven't yet realised what a treasure this facility is for all congregations. Not only is it completely free for congregational use, but you can be confident that the information stored there is kept safe and secure.



The SMO site contains helpful forms and the online ability to record things like risk assessments, management plans, and both incident and accident forms. While the site was developed specifically for child related activities, we have gained permission to use it for any congregational activity. It is a resource well worth checking out.

So whether you are planning a congregational camp, a confirmation excursion, fete, monthly fellowship meals, or a working bee, don't forget to take a little time to think about how you are going to keep everyone safe. And then don't forget how this task can be made a lot easier by using Safety Management Online.

If you would like to know more please attend a Professional Standards Workshop or contact [Keith Stiller](#).

## Risk Assessments

### **If in doubt try a risk assessment!**

Here is an example of a query I recently received.

*"Are there any policies or recommendations with regards to the number and ages of people who work the kitchen at any one time? Our church hall kitchen is very small and having 4 adults and an 8 year old in there while hot soup and drinks are being served worries me. I put up a sign but that seemed to offend people."*

It sure can be difficult to convince others that some of our traditional ways of behaving in congregations may not be safe. This sort of thing is never easy, especially if you try to do it by yourself.

How about writing to your Church Council spelling out the risk you have observed and urging them to undertake a risk assessment for that congregational activity. You could even offer to be part of any small team who might be charged with that responsibility. Once the hazards have been identified and the risks analysed then a plan to manage those risks can be developed. Such a plan then applies specifically to that activity and is developed with the important purpose of keeping everyone safe.

**May your  
Christmas be filled  
with the Peace of the  
Christ-Child, and  
your New Year  
overflow with the Joy  
he brings!**



*Liz, Lois and Keith*



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Our aim is to produce two short newsletters a year for those who attend our Queensland Workshops. If you don't wish to receive this newsletter please email [keith.stiller@qld.lca.org.au](mailto:keith.stiller@qld.lca.org.au)

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