

30 June 2017

A message from the Bishop of Bendigo

Kooyoora Ltd, the new independent professional standards company

Dear Friends

I am pleased to announce that, as from 1 July 2017, the new independent professional standards company, Kooyoora Ltd, will commence operations as the Office of Professional Standards for the dioceses of Bendigo and Melbourne.

The commencement date for the *Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016* (Bendigo) (the Act), except for parts 4.1 and 4.2 (clearance for ministry and clearance for service for volunteers) is 1 July 2017. Parts 4.01 and 4.2 will commence on a date later in the year to be fixed by the Bishop in Council.

Existing clearances for ministry are recognised under the new Act and continue for their duration. If clergy do not have a clearance for ministry, they should apply for one forthwith. I commend to you a careful reading of the Act, in particular, the duties of clergy and other prescribed Church workers-

- (a) to familiarise yourself with the approved Code of Conduct: s16;
- (b) to comply with the mandatory reporting provisions: ss 17 and 18; and
- (c) to apply for and obtain a clearance in Parts 4.1 and 4.2.

I emphasise that the Act is for the protection of all in the Church community, particularly those to whom we minister but also our clergy and lay persons who give ministry and service in the mission of the Church. The Office of Professional Standards is available to discuss confidentially any particular concerns you have about conduct that may be causing harm.

The Melbourne and Bendigo Anglican Diocesan Corporations have formally appointed Kooyoora Ltd to provide professional standards services to each Diocese in accordance with the Act and have committed to meet its establishment funding needs.

Bishop in Council have formally approved the code of conduct under the Act being the National Code, Faithfulness in Service, modified only to reflect the terms used in the Act. Bishop in Council have also approved regulations under the Act, prescribing the requisite forms.

The new company has approved operating protocols, both for handling complaints and for clearance for ministry, after having first consulted with the respective dioceses. A further protocol on clearance for service is being developed. For continuity, Kooyoora Ltd has also appointed to the respective Professional Standards Committee, the Board and the Review Board, as constituted under the new Act, the like people who currently hold those positions. Further appointments are expected to be made.

The Act, the Code of Conduct, Regulations and Approved Protocols will be available on both the Diocesan website and, once it is online, the Kooyoora website.

It has been evident from the many survivor statements and learnings from the recent Victorian Parliamentary Enquiry and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual abuse that a more independent Office of Professional Standards can offer a greater assurance of effective handling of complaints and screening of clergy and lay people for the protection of the community. It offers a sound basis to seek to restore confidence and trust of the community in our institutions.

The Office of Professional Standards contact details will remain the same - 1800 135 246 or by writing to the Office ... Director of Professional Standards, PO Box 329, Canterbury VIC 3126. The Kooyoora Ltd office main days of operation will be Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The office number is 03 9416 1008.

Ms Anne Baker has been appointed as the Executive Director of Kooyoora Ltd with Ms Claire Sargent and Mr Vin Lucas filling the roles of Director of Professional Standards and Deputy Director respectively during the establishment phase and at least until November this year. Ms Sargent will be known to you as the Director of Professional Standards of the Diocese of Melbourne since 2004. Mr Lucas has had many years experience as a Human Resources Executive at Cadbury Schweppes and Asahi. Ms Marcella Meagher, who has administered clearances for the diocese, is taking up the role of Administrator.

Background:

Under my leadership, a Provincial working party was established in 2014 to identify the best option for independently handling complaints against Anglican clergy and other Church workers in a diocese and to undertake the necessary screening process to assess the fitness for office of people taking up roles in the Church. The working party approved the new

Professional Standards Uniform Act 2016 which was passed at the Bendigo Synod in May 2016 and the Melbourne Synod in October 2016.

Kooyoora Ltd was incorporated on 12 January 2017 as an independent not for profit company limited by guarantee. It has been established to provide services to charitable and faith based organisations in relation to Professional standards, screening of people and related training. Its initial sponsoring members are the Melbourne Anglican Diocesan Corporation Ltd and the Bendigo Anglican Diocesan Corporation Ltd. These dioceses are funding the establishment costs. Kooyoora Ltd will charge the respective Diocesan corporations on a fee for service basis for the services it provides in connection with complaints, clearances, training and inquiries.

The initial directors of the company, during the start up phase, are the Chancellors of each of those dioceses, Mr Michael Shand QC and Mr Ian Dallas. The intention is to expand the Board and appoint independent directors, representing a range of stakeholders by the last quarter of the year. Anne Baker has been appointed interim Executive Director of the company.

Please hold all survivors of child abuse in your prayers and support those associated with this new initiative in ensuring its success.
