



**Pastoral Care Council of the ACT**  
*Caring Together*

**Report by the Chair of the Board  
To the Annual General Meeting of  
The Pastoral Care Council of the ACT  
3 November 2011**

The development of a Draft “Standards of Practice for Pastoral Care” is a significant step in providing a basis for best practice. The Standards are about seeking quality and excellence. They describe broad responsibilities for which practitioners are accountable, reflect the values and priorities of the task, and provide direction for professional practice and a framework for the evaluation of practice. This is fulfilling the mandate for the Pastoral Care Council of the ACT of ensuring the standards of accreditation of pastoral care practitioners.

Our approach to the provision of pastoral and spiritual care, in the in the context of a diverse faith and cultural backgrounds, requires skills which can seek to ensure that every person in any context can be supported. This was the driving rational which led to the establishment of the Pastoral Care Council of the ACT.

These standards provide valuable guidance for the way that pastoral care is provided by individual practitioners. It also provides a reference for best practice within institutions, as well as for the religious and faith bodies, which encourage and sponsor the provisioning of pastoral care with chaplains and spiritual carers. It is proposed that these Standards be adopted as “Provisional”, to be reviewed in twelve months.

Our focus in this coming year needs to be on the promotion, implementation and assessment of these Standards. We should give a vote of appreciation for the many hours of voluntary time provided by members of the Sub Committee in making this possible. However, this has only been a first step in the process. A submission has been made for a grant to fund this process, which will include a research project of assessment.

Also there are national implications. The question needs to be addressed as to when we can have a national standard, which the Pastoral Care Council of the ACT can incorporate as its criteria which applies to practice within the ACT. These discussions are also being explored with relevant organisations across Australia, including Spiritual Care Australia. Kevin Teo and myself will attend a meeting of national representatives in Melbourne early in November to update and discuss issues about “pastoral and spiritual care”.

The Board has particular ongoing oversight of pastoral care responsibilities at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) and at the Canberra Hospital (TCH). This is undertaken by two subcommittees tasked with the oversight these chaplaincy services

which are undertaken by Rev. Clair Hochstetler at TCH and Rev. Canon Simon Wooldridge at AMC.

The presence of the web site <http://www.pastoralcareact.org> provides a networking of information for the Council and significant organisations, including the **Canberra and Region Centre for Spiritual Care and Clinical Pastoral Education** with information on current training courses, and **Spiritual Care Australia, ACT Branch** with information on the monthly in-service training programs. A forum for interactive online discussions is also being designed; this will form part of the Council's website.

More details about the actions of the Board are contained in the Annual Progress Report of the Council, which is written against the criteria for funding from ACT Health, which is based on the mandate for the Council. My thanks are expressed for the efforts of the members of the Board and the sub-committees, as well as the splendid work of our Executive Officer, Kevin Teo. Finally, the Council should note an appreciation for the cooperative support provided by our host of office facilities, with the **Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies (CAPS)**.

Geoffrey Hunter

*Chair*

*Board for the Pastoral Care Council of the ACT*

18/10/2011



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## **2011 Annual Report**

### **Council membership**

This membership of the Council has been steady this year:

- The Council has welcomed the participation of Calvary John James Hospital, whose membership should be formalized at the Annual General Meeting.
- There has been a change of representative at the Australian Catholic University.
- A change of representative is expected from CatholicCare, which will be effected once a new appointment is made by the Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

### **Seminar**

The Council organized a seminar in conjunction with the Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies (CAPS). This seminar on mental health and chaplaincy was presented by the Rev. Rob Merchant, a visiting gerontologist from the England, and was offered exclusively to Council members and associates. The registrations and relevant monies were collected by CAPS; this was to have been paid to the Council although it was subsequently decided that CAPS be permitted to retain the funds to offset the cost of bringing Rev. Merchant to Australia.

### **Subcommittee for Standards for Accreditation and Training (SubSAT)**

The major achievement of SubSAT this year has been the completion of a draft *Standards of Practice for Pastoral Care*, which this Subcommittee was specifically established for.

A survey was undertaken from late 2009 to mid 2010 to review the landscape of pastoral care in the ACT. Although the collection and collation of data went smoothly, there were difficulties in obtaining the expertise necessary to conduct an analysis of the results. This was eventually obtained and the analysis was completed earlier this year, with the report authored in March. SubSAT subsequently completed its first complete draft of standards in June, titled *Standards of Practice for Pastoral Care*.

The draft document has thus far been circulated to member organizations of the Council as well as to members of the ACT Churches' Council. SubSAT will review all feedback in collaboration with the Council Board and will make any necessary final adjustments to the *Standards* document before it is ratified at the Council's Annual General Meeting in November. The Council has also applied for a Community Support and Infrastructure Grant in the hope that this would enable the appointment of a project officer to oversee the introduction - and adoption - of these *Standards* by the local community.

### **Subcommittee for Corrective Services Chaplaincy**

The primary objective of this Subcommittee for 2011 was to secure a three-year renewal of a contract for the provision of chaplaincy coordination services at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). Besides accomplishing this goal, the Council was able to negotiate an increase in the value of the contract from \$99,000.17 to \$124,149.72, which alleviated two vital concerns. The Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, who auspice the ministry of the Rev. Canon Simon Wooldridge at the AMC, had been operating at a loss as expenses to the Diocese were not being met by the income received from the Department of Justice and Community Safety (JACS). The funding increase ensures that all costs to the Diocese are now met. Secondly, the new terms also provide for an “operational cost”, wherein ministry and other expenses (such as the purchases of bibles, prayer mats, and other items for prisoners as well as program materials for training) are now provided for by JACS. The Council had hitherto been dependent upon donations from organizations such as the Rev. Fred McMaster Chaplaincy Support Trust to fund such expenses. The new agreement with JACS was made retroactive to January 2011 and will run through January 2014.

### **Subcommittee for Hospital Chaplaincy**

This Subcommittee has been maintaining oversight of the Chaplaincy Manager position at the Canberra Hospital (TCH). It was noted in last year’s report that much effort had gone into the establishment of a ward-based general team for pastoral care at TCH. With that endeavour now off the ground, the focus has been on the reclassification of the position from administrative officer (ASO5) to health professional officer (HPO4). Whilst this effort has been ongoing since 2009, the Council notes that numerous changes in upper management staff at TCH have made continued progress on this issue difficult. In March, a member of the Council Board interceded by requesting assistance from Mr Bill Arnold had interceded by seeking assistance from Mr Ross O’Donoghue (Executive Director of Policy Division at Health Directorate). The matter is awaiting action from Human Resources.

### **Reorganization and additions to the Council website**

Subsequent to feedback concerning the layout of the site, several alterations were made to the menu systems of the site. An interactive forum is also in the works and will offer Council members (and the public) to engage in bulletin board discussions, with a special focus on the *Standards of Practice for Pastoral Care*.

### **Bimberi Youth Justice Centre**

The Council was unsuccessful in its effort to secure a grant to fund a pastoral care service at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. One of the reasons for this was that the Council was unable to obtain a letter of support from Bimberi. This was unfortunate as the Bimberi Programs and Services Manager was the only contact point for the Council; at the time of the application, he was on an extended period of leave due to injury and subsequently resigned his position. The Council is also disappointed that

the assessment panel believed that the “provision of pastoral care is not specifically a health promotion project but more of an individual intervention”.

### **Meeting of State and Territory Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care Bodies**

In October 2010, the Chair of the Council Board and the Executive Officer met with representatives from the equivalent chaplaincy and pastoral care bodies from New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. On November 8 and 9, there will be a follow-up of this meeting in Melbourne. On the agenda for discussion, are the ACT’s *Standards of Practice for Pastoral Care*, Victoria’s *Capabilities Framework* glossary and general discussions about training standards and accreditation processes.

The meeting will also debate the relationship of state chaplaincy bodies with Spiritual Care Australia, which is the professional association for practitioners in chaplaincy and pastoral care. The Council already has long-standing links with Spiritual Care Australia (which is a member of the Council and has its ACT Branch web page hosted by the Council) and hopes to continue this relationship into the future.

The Council views that participation in interstate dialog provides the Council a better picture of where it stands in relation to the other states and therein a better understanding of the areas in which improvement to pastoral care practice and advocacy is needed in the ACT.

Kevin Teo  
*Executive Officer*  
*Pastoral Care Council of the ACT*