

Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes in New South Wales

ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL FINANCE PERSONNEL

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

The Working Group for the Association of Congregational Finance Personnel is pleased to present their report of activities for the last twelve months.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS (as at September 2008)

Mr Andrew Ballesty (Assistant Chair)	Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
Sr Margaret Chaplin rsm (Chair)	Sisters of Mercy Parramatta
Mr Paul Favero	Sisters of St Joseph, Perthville
Sr Vianney Hatton sss	Blessed Sacrament Sisters
Mr John Hawley	Sisters of the Good Samaritan
Mr Graham Hunt	Sisters of St Joseph, Goulburn
Sr Angela Jordan rsm	Sisters of Mercy, Goulburn
Mr Bernard Kenna	Marist Brothers
Sr Yvonne Lamerand ibvm	Loreto Sisters
Sr Marietta Mangelsdorf pbvm (Secretary)	Presentation Sisters, Wagga Wagga
Mrs Susan Martin	Sisters of St Joseph, Lochinvar
Mr Ian McDonald	Christian Brothers

Changes to the Working Group

Sr Noelene Simmons tendered her resignation as a member of the Working Group. Noelene has worked for many years as a member of this group, contributing from her experience as a congregational bursar for the Marist Sisters. She has given willingly of her time as Chairperson. The Bursars are very grateful for the time and expertise Noelene has given.

At the November 2007 meeting, Sr Margaret Chaplin was elected to the position of Chairperson; Andrew Ballesty retained his role as Assistant Chairperson, and Sr Marietta Mangelsdorf accepted the role as secretary for another year.

SEMINARS

Two Seminar Days have been held for NSW Finance Personnel during the last twelve months.

OCTOBER 2007

OH&S; Hints & Tricks for MYOB; Investments

Jim Sfinas, from CCI, spoke about the programmes for its clients, to ensure compliance with standards that satisfy the legislation for OH&S in religious properties. Contact details for consultants who will assess properties for Risk Management are provided and financed (after approval) by CCI.

The 2nd Session: "Getting More out of MYOB" was presented in two sessions. The presenter, Anne McClellan, MYOB Consultant, covered advanced techniques of the

programme as well as including some helpful hints. Anne provided a workbook which is a handy reference when working with the programme.

The final session was presented by Silvio de Vecchio from Macquarie Bank. Silvio covered important issues such as drawing up an Investment Policy which has the advantage of providing benchmarks to work towards, prevents panic selling when markets are poor and excessive risk-taking at better times, and assists in a planned approach to investment. He spoke of the different asset classes and gave examples of portfolio construction alternatives apportioning different amounts to different asset classes with varying levels of risk.

The update session covered such information as the Centrelink Kit, Workplace Relations Fact Sheet, reminders about the Stipend and Superannuation, and Asset Tests and Aged Care Facilities.

April 2008

Excel at Fraud Protection

The session on Fraud Protection was presented by Joe Shannon from Moore Stephens. He emphasised that it was the responsibility of the Finance Manager to detect and prevent fraud in the finance office and to set up systems that would protect the Institute. He identified the risks and ways of being proactive in lowering the possibility of fraud. Setting good systems strategies in place were important.

A short session given by Vince Dore and David Hutchison, Delphi Financial Management/MLC presented clear descriptors for choosing investments in Ethical Funds.

The next session was a practical and very helpful session of tips, tricks and shortcuts for using Microsoft Excel and Word.

The final session was given by Anne Byrne from CCER, and covered issues relevant to Religious Institutes, such as OH&S, Current Employment Relation Issues, both State and Federal and the 2008 State Wage Case.

From this Seminar Day, some useful notes have been written up on “Audits and Auditing” and “Risk Management in the Finance Office”, presented by Joe Shannon at the morning session. These will be handed out at the next Seminar Day in October.

UPDATES

During each Seminar Day, participants are given the latest information available from Centrelink, Industrial and Wage Updates, and OH&S topics. These sessions provide an important link with business issues, relating to the position and role of the finance office in Religious Institutes.

EVALUATION OF SEMINARS

Attendance at seminars indicates that they provide valuable information and connections with other finance personnel for later support. The evaluation sheets indicate that those attending do receive satisfaction.

WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

These four meetings are planning meetings for the upcoming seminars. The members bring their own expertise and willingly take on the jobs of organising speakers for the days. Reports from representatives of related committees, PDRIERC and CCER OH&S committee are shared and communicated to all finance personnel at the Update sessions of the Seminar Days.

LOOKING FORWARD

Picking up on suggestions made and collated from the Evaluation Sheets, the October Seminar Day is called "Banking on our Wellbeing". This will cover the all-important area of Electronic Banking. As this method of operation will soon take over from cheques and hardcopy procedures it is important that Finance Personnel gain confidence and care in this area. Work-place audits will also be an important agenda on the yearly calendar.

With the upheaval in the financial markets this year, the Seminar Days will be an opportunity for Finance Personnel to gather with others working in Religious Institutes, to gain support in their work and share resources and ideas with others on management of money.

CONCLUSION

The CLRI(NSW) Congregational Finance Personnel Association is very grateful for the willing and competent support it receives from Sr Sharon Price rsm, Executive Director of CLRI(NSW) and Ann Paynter, Administrative Assistant at the CLRI(NSW) office at Rosebery. The Working Group is also very appreciative of the hospitality and welcoming atmosphere, experienced during meetings here.

Sr Margaret Chaplin rsm
Chair, CLRI(NSW) Congregational Finance Personnel Association
16th October, 2008