

SOCIAL WELFARE TASK FORCE ANNUAL REPORT 2003

Members:

Sr Helen Anderson sgs
Sr Antoinette Baldwin rsj **CHAIR**
Br Martin Blattman fsc
Sr Anita Brennan sgs
Br Moy Hitchen cfc (previous chair)
Fr Graham Jackson
Sr Debra McCarthy dc
Sr Mary-Louise Petro rsm
Sr Mary Quinlan rsj
Br Anthony Robinson fms
Sr Sharon Price rsm: Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

The Social Welfare Task Force was a new group begun by the Executive Committee of CLRI(NSW) during 2002 in response to requests from those working in congregationally owned or sponsored welfare works.

The group had been meeting under the aegis of ACLRI during 2001 and early 2002, but it was not part of ACLRI's mission to organise groups for NSW. A proposal to form a Social Welfare Task Force was put to the Executive mid-year 2002 and received approval.

This task force exists to provide a forum and a network for those who work in congregationally owned or sponsored welfare works. It aims to establish liaison between those in ministry, CLRI(NSW), CCER and Catholic Welfare Australia (NSW).

The Task Force also aims to consider current social welfare issues, to propose areas to be investigated further by CLRI, to keep the Conference informed about social welfare concerns, to receive and reply to reports from CLRI representatives on CCER and SWERC (Social Welfare Employment Relations Committee) and to prepare submissions to government and church bodies.

MEMBERSHIP

Nominations for Task Force members were sought from congregational leaders and those associated with the ACLRI group moved across to the Task Force. Members are drawn from congregational leadership teams (the team member with some responsibility for social welfare works) and from leaders and staff of social welfare works owned or sponsored by congregations. The membership has changed somewhat

over the 18 months or so of operation, as changes have occurred in welfare ministries and as the group begins to find its feet.

MEETINGS 2003

The meetings for 2003 were scheduled for the second Monday of the months of February, May, August and November.

Some of the issues discussed in our meetings this year have been:

- The Mapping Social Services Project of the Australian Catholic University: this committee made a submission to Associate Professor Peter Camilleri questioning the scope of a project that took little account of welfare ministries not operated by large agencies, as many congregational welfare ministries fall into this category. Catholic Welfare Australia commissioned the study and its scope, which demonstrates that the committee needs to continue to promote the place of congregational welfare ministries to that organization.
- The governance of congregational welfare ministries: the committee has begun the task of exploring and noting the array of governance models current in this sector –while some congregations with larger and/or more numerous welfare ministries tended to have highly-organised and developed governance methods, some congregations are yet to formalise governance policies and institutions management. One fact that has emerged is that a number of welfare ministries are supported solely by congregational funds. The committee is considering how much longer congregations can continue the present levels of governance.
- Readiness of employers in this sector to deal with the tax law which allows direct debit donations to a charity from salaries before tax
 - ability to handle the deduction process for staff;
 - ability to advertise our services as needing donations.
- Formation of staff in this sector: essentially about values formation. What processes are available and implemented in our services? How is it possible to form staff who are casual, part-time, shift workers, who cannot be relieved of duty simultaneously?
- The Social Auditing process and values.
- The *Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care* was a focus for the group in the earlier part of the year and this committee pursued the issue until it was taken up by leaders in May and then by ACLRI.
- Members of the Task Force and the Executive Director have worked hard to forge a relationship with CWA's NSW branch in order to have some influence in discussion and decisions being made about welfare ministries in NSW. Since the amalgamation of Centacares and other Catholic welfare institutions into CWA, some congregationally owned welfare ministries have been without representation at a higher level and finding it difficult to access information and representation. One of our major aims is to establish a relationship with CWA (NSW) and to claim a place in that network where we can be represented. Branch meetings are now held at CLRI's Rosebery office.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

The committee receives reports from two representatives

- Sr Helen Clarke rsc, representative of CLRI(NSW) on the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations, and
- Sr Janet Woods, representative of CLRI(NSW) on the CCER Social Welfare Employment Relations Committee (SWERC).

Representatives forward written reports after CCER and SWERC meetings; Janet Woods, as a committee member, reports at most meetings and Helen Clarke attended one meeting this year to report on CCER. As a result of that meeting, the committee invited Michael McDonald, Executive Director of CCER, to attend its August meeting to discuss further some of the issues raised, particularly the SACS Award and enterprise agreements, and child protection.

The committee also invited Nigel Spence, Executive Director of the Association of Child Welfare Agencies (ACWA) to attend its August meeting to speak to legislation and policy that affect service providers; new opportunities and funding frameworks especially regarding out of home care; and the role of ACWA in assisting agencies.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

The Task Force welcomes additional members. If you have a congregationally owned or sponsored social welfare work and would like to nominate a congregational member or an employee to join the Task Force, please contact the Executive Director.

If you have any issues that you would like to see the Task Force pursue in 2004, please contact a member of the group or the Executive Director.

Sr Antoinette Baldwin rsj
Chair
Social Welfare Task Force