

## **SOCIAL SERVICES TASK FORCE ANNUAL REPORT 2006**

### **Members:**

Sister Margaret Armstrong dc  
Sr Antoinette Baldwin rsj **CHAIR**  
Ms Diane Campbell  
Br Michael Carroll fsc  
Sr Mary Comer rsj  
Ms Jude Ekerick  
Mr John Honner  
Sr Mary-Louise Petro rsm  
Ms Cate Sydes  
Ms Juanita Winks  
Sr Sharon Price rsm: Executive Director

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Social Services Task Force was begun by the Executive Committee of CLRI(NSW) during 2002 in response to requests from those working in congregationally owned or sponsored Services works. The Task Force exists to provide a forum and a network for those who work in congregationally owned or sponsored Services works. It aims to establish a liaison between those in ministry, CLRI(NSW), the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations and Catholic Social Services Australia (NSW). The initial name of this Task Force was the Social Welfare Task Force, but the name was changed in 2006 to align more with the language being used in this ministry sector.

The Terms of Reference provides for Task Force members to consider current social Services issues, propose areas to be investigated further by CLRI(NSW), keep the Conference informed about social Services concerns, receive and reply to reports from CLRI(NSW) representatives on the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations and SWERC (Social Services Employment Relations Committee) and prepare submissions to government and church bodies.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Task Force members are drawn from congregational leadership teams (usually the team member with some responsibility for social Services works) and from directors and staff of social Services works owned or sponsored by congregations.

During 2006 a number of members completed their term on the Task Force. Sr Helen Anderson sgs has been and interested and committed member of the Task Force for a number of years now. With a background of ministry with the predecessor of Catholic Social Services Australia (Catholic Services Australia), Helen brought a depth of insight and information to the group. Br Moy Hitchen cfc represented the social Services services of the Christian Brothers on the Social Services Task Force and also

on Catholic Social Services Australia, NSW branch. Sr Debra McCarthy dc was the Deputy Chair of the Task Force and an extremely knowledgeable and dedicated member. Debra reported to Catholic Social Services Australia, NSW branch on behalf of CLRI(NSW) and back to the Task Force after CSSA(NSW) meetings. Fr Graham Jackson brought a wealth of experience from his role as director of Marist Youth Care to the Task Force. Sr Janet Woods rsm was the faithful representative of CLRI(NSW) on SWERC and brought diverse ministry experience to the role, helping us to consider issues from a wider perspective.

The Task Force also benefits from the interest, viewpoint and expertise of leaders and leadership team members. New members in 2006, Sister Margaret Armstrong dc is a member of the Daughters of Charity leadership team and Sr Mary Comer rsj the leader of the Sisters of St Joseph, Perthville. Other new members during 2006 have been drawn primarily from the service sector and consequently bring an enormous wealth of experience and expertise to the Task Force. Ms Diane Campbell is the director of St Anthony's Family Care, Mr John Honner the director of Edmund Rice Community Services and Ms Cate Sydes the director of Marist Youth Care. Br Michael Carroll fsc represents the De La Salle Services ministries. Ms Jude Ekerick is the Executive Support Officer of CSSA(NSW) and we are looking forward to a dynamic relationship with CSSA(NSW) with Jude's assistance.

## **MEETINGS 2006**

The meetings for 2006 were scheduled for Tuesday March 14, June 6, August 22 and November 7. In addition, the Social Services Task Force organized two seminars in 2006.

Issues arising at meetings in 2006 included:

### **1. Updating and Maintaining a Register of Services Ministries**

CLRI(NSW) developed and maintains a register of all congregational Services ministries for its own use and for the use of associated agencies such as CCER and CSSA(NSW). All congregations that responded to a survey about agencies are listed. This register is updated each year.

### **2. Mapping Congregational Services Ministries**

As a result of our seminar on August 14, the Task Force embarked on a Mapping Project to capture the profile of congregationally owned or sponsored Services ministries in NSW. It is envisaged that we will, with CSSA(NSW) have the opportunity to talk to state politicians in the lead-up to the NSW State Election in 2007 and it is imperative that we have quantitative data as well as anecdotal material to bring to those encounters.

### **3. Developing our profile in CSSA(NSW)**

During 2006 we have continued to attend CSSA(NSW) meetings in our attempt to develop the profile of and interest in congregational Services ministries in NSW. While the progress being made at times seems excruciatingly slow, this objective is worthwhile and we will continue to work towards it. Ms Jude Ekerick, the soon to be full-time Executive Support Officer of CSSA(NSW), was previously employed by a congregationally-owned Services ministry and is interested in

developing the participation of congregational Services ministries in CSSA and CSSA(NSW). Jude has recently joined the Task Force and we look forward to the improvement of that relationship with CSSA(NSW) with Jude's assistance.

#### 4. Integrity in Ministry Seminars

The Task Force organised a workshop with Megan Brock rsj in October,2005 as an initiative accepted by the Executive Committee that CLRI(NSW) organise an information session on the updated *Integrity in Ministry* document. This workshop was well-attended and was repeated by request on March 20, 2006.

#### 5. Senate Inquiry: Children in Institutional Care

A watching brief is kept on the material related to this inquiry.

#### 6. Conference for Catholic Social Services Employers

CLRI (NSW) supported and attended the conference for Catholic Social Services Employers entitled *Foundations for Effective Employment Relations* held at the Vibe Hotel, Sydney on March 30 and 31, 2006. This was the first gathering of this nature and provided Catholic social Services agencies with useful input as well as great networking opportunities.

#### 7. SACS Award

This topic which is of paramount importance to congregational social Services agencies is constantly monitored by our representative on the SACS Working Party, Juanita Winks.

#### 8. Membership Issues

The Task Force has struggled with membership issues from its beginnings. By its nature the congregational Services sector is extremely diverse and the Task Force has taken time to find the right combination of agenda items to cater to the diversity. Likewise the congregational Services sector personnel are operating in an environment that is often very volatile and planning to attend a meeting and actually getting there are often two different things. However, with the larger membership achieved in 2006 and the clear mandate that arose from the August seminar, it is hoped that the Task Force's new lease of life will continue in 2007.

#### 9. *The Way We Care* Seminar, August 15, 2006

Much of the meeting time in 2006 was concerned with refining plans for the August seminar entitled *The Way We Care*.

## **SEMINARS**

On Monday March 20, Megan Brock rsj presented a repeat of *Integrity In Ministry.....Opportunities And Challenges* first offered in 2005 and fully subscribed. The seminar was again well-attended by leaders and leadership team members and the day featured both input from Megan and the opportunity for participants to discuss real life situations in small groups.

CLRI(NSW) plans to offer this workshop in a country location in early 2007. The material of *Integrity in Ministry* is of interest primarily to congregational members, but has relevance for those who are employed in Catholic ministries and there appears to be interest in taking the workshop to the country.

On Tuesday August 15, 2006 the Social Services Task Force organised a seminar day, titled *The Way We Care*, for congregational leaders and leadership teams, board members and direct service personnel and congregational members in congregational social Services ministries. The Task Force took up the challenge of organising the seminar as a result of comments made at the Annual Conference in March 2006.

We were extremely fortunate to obtain as a keynote speaker Mr Frank Quinlan, Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia. Frank examined the state of social Services in Australia and the ramifications of Government policy at a national level, urging participants to consider the effect of these ramifications in congregational social Services agencies. Robert Fitzgerald, invited to address the NSW government's stance on social Services as it affected congregations, challenged participants to engage with government policy, to collaborate with each other to ensure the future of congregational social Services and to continue to be the rebels.

It was hoped the sharing would result in openness to opportunities for collaboration and mutual support and that hope was realised. A second seminar in November 2006 which occurred as a result of the August seminar highlighted the need for continuing collaboration. The Task Force envisages a continuation of this process in 2007.

## **REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES**

The committee requests reports from three representatives

- The representative of CLRI(NSW) on the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations until May 2006, Sr Helen Clarke rsc. Due to the review of CCER being conducted during 2006, membership changes have not occurred as scheduled.
- Sr Janet Woods, was the representative of CLRI(NSW) on the CCER Social Services Employment Relations Committee (SWERC) until July 2006. Janet, as a committee member, reported at meetings and kept Task Force members well-informed. Ms Juanita Winks will be the representative of CLRI(NSW) in the future.
- The Social Services Task Force has a representative, Juanita Winks, on the SWERC SACS Working Party which monitors proposed changes to the SACS Award. Juanita Winks, as a committee member, reports at meetings.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT**

The Task Force welcomes additional members. If you have a congregationally owned or sponsored social Services 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 2007, please contact a member of the group or the Executive Director.

**Sr Antoinette Baldwin rsj**  
**Chair**  
**Social Services Task Force**  
**December 1, 2006**