

SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO

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11 November 2013

Ms Georgie Crozier MP
Chair
Family & Community Development Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Ms Crozier,

My attention has been drawn to the Hansard of Cardinal Pell's evidence to the Inquiry on 27 May 2013.

At Page 33 (enclosed), Hansard records an exchange between Ms Halfpenny and Cardinal Pell. Ms Halfpenny put to Cardinal Pell that "the Salesian representative who came before the Committee" stated that when a priest (referring I think to a Salesian priest) comes to Australia from another country only the standard visa checks are made rather than any additional requirements from the Church authorities. When Ms Halfpenny put to Cardinal Pell that the quite high ranking Salesian representative was not aware in his evidence of the protocols, Cardinal Pell responded that this was "inexcusable".

I, together with former Provincial, Father John Papworth, were the only Salesian representatives who, to my knowledge, gave evidence to the Inquiry. I have checked the Hansard record of our evidence on 29 April 2013. The Hansard shows that we were not asked any question about members of the Salesian Order coming from overseas to join our Province, and nor did we make any statement about that matter. I can only conclude that Ms Halfpenny, in raising this matter with Cardinal Pell, may have confused evidence given by a representative of another Order appearing at the Inquiry with the evidence given by Father Papworth and myself.

I ask that you correct the record at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'G Chambers'.

Father Greg Chambers sdb
Salesian Provincial

Encl.

Copy to: Dr Janine Bush, Executive Officer

Ms HALFPENNY — I just want to raise two examples — and they are just by way of example — of non-compliance with the church's policies and ask you to give a view on that. The first example is that the *Towards Healing* policy document states at 45.6:

Whenever a cleric or religious is to transfer from one diocese ... to another (whether within Australia or coming from overseas) ... the church authority ... shall ask for a written statement ... indicating whether ... complaints of abuse ...

have been substantiated or

... there are known circumstances that ...

may lead to abuse.

In the case of the Salesian representative who came before the committee, it was asked of him whether there were additional checks insisted upon when a priest, or a father, was brought in from another country. The answer to that inquiry was: no; they only rely on the normal standard visa checks that are required by the police or the country, rather than any additional requirements from the church authorities. So that is a clear case of breaching the policy. Were you aware of that?

Cardinal PELL — With the Salesians?

Ms HALFPENNY — Yes.

Cardinal PELL — On that particular example, I was not aware of that. It is a clear breach. Certainly I think it is spelt out in *Towards Healing*, if you have a priest coming in from another diocese you would need an explicit clearance from whomever he was with previously, say in another diocese or school.

Ms HALFPENNY — But who oversees that, who monitors that, who ensures that that provision is complied with?

Cardinal PELL — In the religious order, it would be the religious order. In the diocese, it is the bishop.

Ms HALFPENNY — So what will be done about that breach of the protocols?

Cardinal PELL — With the Salesians?

Ms HALFPENNY — I have just named an example of a breach of protocols. Who is responsible for that?

Cardinal PELL — It would have to be corrected — and brought to our notice. Either they would have to ask the previous employer or the previous bishop to give a clearance; if they could not give a clearance, they would have to be removed.

Ms HALFPENNY — But the problem is that here is a breach, and there is does not seem to be the monitoring or oversight in order for the church itself to pick up these breaches.

Cardinal PELL — Yes, there would be a monitoring or oversight, because there is a superior in Australia, of the Salesians, and he would have an obligation to ensure that in his institutions the *Towards Healing* protocols are being followed.

Ms HALFPENNY — But obviously quite a high-ranking Salesian representative was here and was not aware of the protocols that he is supposed to be enforcing.

Cardinal PELL — It is inexcusable.

Ms HALFPENNY — Another example is the case of out-of-home care. We have received some information from the Department of Human Services. I want to take you to another example of a breach — that is, according to those documents MacKillop Family Services, which is run by the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Mercy and operate in both Victoria and New South Wales — in October last year on three occasions did not comply with the government requirements to report alleged incidents of assault to the relevant department within one working day. What do you think about that — that they breached that provision?

Cardinal PELL — It is a clear breach of protocols, and it cannot be condoned in any way.