

Appendix 1

FIRST LETTER TO BRIAN LUCAS SECRETARY BISHOPS CONFERENCE.

From: Ian Lawther.

Sent: Monday, 3 November 2008 11:35 AM

To: Fr Brian Lucas

Subject: Angela Ryan talk

Hi Brian just a short note to express my gratitude to you for contacting me just after your talk with Fran Bailey, I suffer severe vision impairment which makes computer work my least favourite task and was hoping to have speech operated software installed by now, it hasn't happened. After our phone conversation I conferred with my friends who were with me at Angela Ryan's talk (clergy sexual abuse, what we have learnt, what we are doing about it) She stated that Towards Healing handles around 250 cases per year but no statistics were kept because the dioceses are all over the place and no one had bothered to collect the data. Brian may I humbly suggest to you that any Professional standards organisation that does not have statistics publicly available will be seen by the public as unviable. Brian there is no animosity implied or intended in this letter my main aim in life is to save kids and families from the same sort of pain and suffering my own family has been put through. All the Best Brian, Ian Lawther.

ANSWER TO FIRST LETTER.

From: Fr Brian Lucas

To: Ian &/or Pam

Sent: Monday, November 03, 2008 11:40 AM

Subject: RE: Angela Ryan talk

Dear Ian,

Thank you for this comment. It is less a case of 'not bothering' but given the independence of dioceses and especially the independence of religious orders it is not easy to have reliable national statistics. This is compounded by problems of actually defining what we mean by sexual abuse in its various forms and then groups applying the right definitions to particular facts. With what we do know there is a conscious effort to eliminate risk and to assist those affected.

Fr Brian Lucas

General Secretary

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

G.P.O. BOX 368

MY REPLY TO FIRST LETTER .

From: Ian Lawther

To: Fr Brian Lucas

Sent: Friday, November 14, 2008 12:53 AM

Subject: Re: Angela Ryan talk

Hi Brian, sorry about the delay but this computer work is plain hard yakka for me. thank you for your prompt reply, in response to your letter, may I respectfully suggest that the church could leave the interpretation, of the meaning of sexual abuse , to the police. I'm sure this would speed the process up for victims. Maybe the collection of data is complicated but the longest journey starts with the first step and the failure of any professional standards body to take this step can only make onlookers wonder just how big is the problem. I have spoken to many child protection agencies over the last 6 months and the one thing they all say is that it is impossible to get into the catholic system. The only diocese I know of, that has taken positive steps to protect children, is Rockhampton(Bishop Heenen with Childwise).If there are others could you please let me know. Bishop Fabbro and Father Sharp of the London Diocese in Canada have introduced a program called Isolation to Action which has an excellent section on the recognition of grooming behaviour.

If the Church were to adopt a policy to train all staff in the recognition of grooming behaviour (and guarantee them their jobs would be safe if they reported any suspicions) Sorry mate had to add that I've seen so much of the shoot the messenger syndrome that seems endemic in the catholic system. The positive side to this is all the children would be safer, the Church's credibility would start to improve and predators would be less likely to attempt anything on church property. I will send some emails after this which will hopefully be interesting to you my IT skills are minimal and I don't know how to attach anything. Once again Brian there is no animosity intended in this letter . I wish you all the best.

Ian Lawther.

No answer to this one.