

## **Governance Review Update**

This short review summarises what I would have said to the planned ACCCR meeting in Canberra on April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020.

The Governance Review Project Team (GRPT) was set up by the Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) and began work in January 2019. It has met at least monthly since then. The members are Neville Owen (chair), Jack de Groot, Susan Pascoe, Pauline Connelly, Isabel Naumann, Brendan Daly and myself, together with four consultants, Brendan Reed, Massimo Faggioli, Richard Lennan and Myriam Wijlens, and two correspondents, Kim Smolik and Michael Brough from the Leadership Roundtable (USA).

Note that the report will be issued under the name of IAG not GRPT. It aims to address the Recommendation of the Royal Commission for a review of the governance and culture of the Catholic Church. Its terms of reference are on the public record (see ACBC).

### **Where are we now?**

The final draft will be ready by about April 9<sup>th</sup>. What will then remain is final editing and design before it is presented to the ACBC and Catholic Religious Australia by the end of April in time for meetings of those two bodies during May and June.

### **What will the report say?**

I believe it will be seen by most people as a progressive document, though raising expectations is a dangerous exercise. Let me just say that the aspirations of ACCCR in our Call should be largely met or at least reinforced.

It is a long and detailed report which covers both general principle and detailed recommendations on governance, culture and leadership at the diocesan and parish level. It includes considerable discussions of theology, ecclesiology, canon law and civic principles of accountability, inclusiveness, fiduciary responsibility and transparency.

### **Conclusion**

It will be important for the report to be made public ASAP, if it is to be widely discussed and have some impact.

It is also important that the report and the reports of the relevant PC2020 Writing and Discernment groups are in sync. If not the impact of this report may be weakened.

The Plenary Council 2020 is one immediate target for discussion of the report, but it is not the only or even the main target. We hope it will be widely discussed over the immediate and somewhat longer term in parishes and dioceses.

Finally, one personal reflection. My own participation gave me a great education into the complexity of the Catholic Church in Australia. The renewal movement must be awake to this complexity if it is not already. PC2020 will reveal some of it. There are the Latin and Eastern Rite churches, diocesan and religious congregational structures, and the growing number of lay organisations and new movements to consider, as well as ethnic and geographical diversity. Each have their governance implications.

John Warhurst, March 29, 2020