



DIOCESE of
PARRAMATTA



Review of Governance

Diocese of Parramatta

June 2020 – February 2021



DIOCESE *of*
PARRAMATTA

Lord God,
whose blessings reach to the ends of the earth,
you show us your love in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus,
whom we call Saviour and Lord.

Confirm us in our faith
that we may walk together with you and one another.

Open our hearts and our minds
so that through the implementation of our governance review
we may embody Christ in servant leadership.

Unite ourselves in the bond of love
And keep us faithful to all that is true.

Send your blessing upon us,
that what we have begun in the Spirit
may be brought to completion by your power.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

***R* Amen.**

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Diocese of Parramatta
June 2020 – February 2021

Adjunct Professor Susan Pascoe AM



Adjunct Professor Murray Baird

OMEGA CONSULTING



Duc in Altum

Go further into the Deep (Luke 5:4)

Coat of Arms and motto of Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL

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Section 1: Executive Summary, Commendations and Recommendations

Diocese of Parramatta

The Catholic Diocese of Parramatta stretches from western Sydney to the Blue Mountains, centred on traditional Darug country. Created in 1986, Parramatta is the fifth largest Catholic diocese in Australia with some 321,000 Catholics. It is a suffragan diocese of the Archdiocese of Sydney. It comprises 46 parishes each led by a Parish Priest,¹ and one parochial district, led by a deacon. It is organised into 6 deaneries, each coordinated by a Dean. Its current Bishop, the fourth in its history, is Bishop Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL, installed as the Bishop of Parramatta at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta, on 16 June 2016.

The diocese extends across seven local government areas and covers 4,289 square kilometres. Its oldest parish, Parramatta, was established in 1827. Sydney's western flank is an area of rapid expansion with projections of one million homes to be built, and a range of infrastructure projects and industries associated with the construction of Western Sydney Airport in Badgerys Creek. Parramatta is located at the geographical centre of Sydney and is a focus for future employment, housing, recreation and cultural opportunities. Parramatta is recognised in the NSW Government's metropolitan strategy as a dual CBD to Sydney. As Sydney moves towards a population of 6 million in 2036, Parramatta and western Sydney will experience significant population growth with a demographic profile younger than much of Australia.

Alongside this development is the growth of parishes, and the expansion of Catholic education, welfare and other services within the diocese, and the consequent need for expertise and resources to minister to an expanding population. There are currently 82 Catholic schools with 43,000 pupils enrolled.

Inspired by Pope Francis's calls for inclusion for all the baptised, Bishop Vincent has overseen changes to the governance of the diocese in his first four years as bishop, including the creation of a Diocesan Pastoral Council and Deanery Pastoral Councils, the expansion of the Curia to include two women, and the introduction of a diocesan-wide approach to risk management. Bishop Vincent was appointed to the diocese 18 months before the release in December 2017 of the report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (RCIRCSA), and has put energy into ensuring a pastoral approach to healing and redress, as well as robust professional standards. He wants to lead in a collegial and synodal way, and to create a culture of collaboration and participation in which the gifts of all the baptised - not just the ordained - are brought to bear on the life of the church. He noted in interview:

The Holy Spirit speaks through the signs of the times and we must discern and learn to listen to God's voice in our culture. In the same way, we must apply a critical lens to the institutional structures and practices that have been part of the monarchical, imperial and patriarchal past and have been entrenched in the Church... The origins of Christianity had an amazingly egalitarian structure – for example, the word 'ecclesia' in Greek entails the concept of a democratic assembly of free citizens. We've lost much of this concept... So, an ecclesiology 'from below', that is the theology of the Church rooted in the People of God, has been a much older tradition than an ecclesiology 'from above'. (There is a scriptural basis for respect, inclusion participation and so on).

Context for governance review

One of the recommendations in the Report of the RCIRCSA was that the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) institute an inquiry into the governance of parishes and dioceses in Australia to consider best practice approaches to governance, and whether the practice of Catholic health, education and welfare agencies could provide insights to improve ecclesial governance practice.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference should conduct a national review of the governance and management structures of dioceses and parishes, including in relation to issues of transparency, accountability, consultation and the participation of lay men and women. This review should draw from the approaches to governance of Catholic health, community services and education agencies.²

The inquiry, initiated by both the ACBC and Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) was conducted across 2019-20 and resulted in the report entitled *The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-responsible Governance of the Catholic Church in Australia (The Light from the Southern Cross Report)*.³ The report has been provided to the writing teams for the Plenary Council which has had to reschedule its assemblies to 2021 and 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In May 2020 Bishop Vincent provided copies of the initial version of *The Light from the Southern Cross Report* to members of diocesan committees and to senior Chancery staff for feedback to assist him in formulating a response from the Diocese of Parramatta for the ACBC. He also saw potential in the Report being used as a resource for a review of governance in the diocese to independently assess the degree to which diocesan governance structures and governing bodies, as well as key individuals and agencies, adopt the ecclesial values and principles embodied in the Report. In addition, he was keen to ascertain the degree to which the complementary civil governance principles were adopted, and the appropriateness of the structures and legal forms of governing bodies.

A Terms of Reference was developed (see Attachment 1) and two reviewers were appointed, Adjunct Professor Susan Pascoe AM, Principal of Kadisha Enterprises (see Attachment 2), and Adjunct Professor Murray Baird, Principal of Omega Consulting (see Attachment 3).

Commendations and Recommendations

To anticipate our analysis, and to provide the broad context for this summary of commendations and recommendations, our overarching assessment of ecclesial and civil governance practice in the Diocese of Parramatta is that it is generally excellent, notwithstanding our recommendations for some improvements identified during the independent review. We were impressed with many elements of ecclesial and civil governance in the diocese and these are contained in the commendations. In addition, we were impressed with levels of commitment to the Bishop's vision of a diocese going 'further into the deep' to support and include those at the margins, and of a diocese engaged with civil society. By way of example, this was practically expressed during the conduct of the review with the parish in Seven Hills offering its air-conditioned church and hall to the Blacktown City Council to be used as sanctuaries during heat waves.

Areas for improvement are contained in the recommendations. However, there are times when we have expressed a view and not formalised it into a recommendation, so as not to overload the diocese. We encourage the diocese to give consideration to these opinions, as well as the formal recommendations.

Commendations

1. Ecclesial and civil governance practice across diocesan entities is generally excellent, notwithstanding some recommendations for improvements.
2. There is good governance practice in the up-to-date presentation and document control for many of the governance documents within the diocese.
3. The Bishop is commended for clearly communicating his vision for the diocese, and for engendering commitment to it.
4. The Bishop is commended for the appointment of two women to the Curia – a religious and a laywoman.
5. Contemporary approaches to human resources are adopted across diocesan agencies, including open recruitment, clear role descriptions for lay staff, and a whole-of-diocese appraisal approach.
6. The prudent, long-term financial focus of the DFC, situates the diocese well for a sustainable financial future where its ministries can be maintained.

7. The Bishop's vision for an inclusive, synodal Church has been well communicated and widely embraced.
8. Formalised arrangements for the Diocesan Pastoral Council to have regular engagement with the Council of Priests is a positive development.
9. The particular law that every parish have a Parish Pastoral Council is commended.
10. There is a clear sense of purpose in the diocese, good committee and administrative structures, and high standards of accountability with relevant audit paths.
11. The comprehensive approach to risk management, including efforts to enculturate a risk-based approach to planning and decision-making across diocesan entities, and the provision of an online platform to record incidents, represents exemplary practice.
12. The CEDP is commended for its transparency, accountability and access to information on a variety of platforms.
13. The dedicated voluntary involvement of expert laypeople to the various advisory bodies in the diocese is a rich contribution which adds high levels of professionalism and assurance to the governance of the diocese.
14. The stance of inclusive respectful listening of the Bishop in meetings contributes to effective decision-making.
15. There is general adoption of ecclesial values and norms, and civil governance principles across governing bodies and agencies in the Diocese.
16. There is a generally high standard of governance practice in the advisory and decision-making bodies in the Diocese.

Recommendations

1. All governing documents be catalogued and held in a common document bank, accessible to authorised persons which would include all members of those bodies.
2. Documents that can be made available such as board and committee Statutes or Charters, and the current list of membership be made publicly available to enable transparency, and support the potential inclusion of a more diverse group of people on diocesan committees.
3. Maintain a Governance Oversight Schedule of regular self-review and external review of the effectiveness of each entity.
4. Maintain a Conflicts Register for each entity, and as a standing item on each agenda.
5. Ensure adequate induction and formation for members of each governance body.
6. The Diocesan Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Committee be renamed the Diocesan Audit Risk and Compliance Committee to reflect its current functions and establish a consistency in its naming.
7. Consideration be given to renaming Diocesan Property Council as the Diocesan Property Committee.
8. The Personnel Board develop a charter to clarify its role, accountabilities and composition.

9. Consideration being given to the Charter and composition of the Board of Management, including the input of a qualified accountant and the role of lay men and women.
10. That all entities have a Mission Discernment Framework at the committee level which relates to their values, governance principles and missionary purpose, and which is used as a means of assessing their performance at each meeting.
11. Boards and committees conduct annual self-appraisal to reflect on their effectiveness, and organise an independent assessment every 3-5 years.
12. Role descriptions drawn from the tenets in canon law be developed for senior clerical roles to provide role clarity, criteria for performance assessment, and the basis of accountability with provision for review to meet changing needs.
13. The Bishop is encouraged to provide stable succession pathways for aspiring leaders through making new appointments at the point of turnover in vicar roles.
14. Consider transferring the formal reporting line for the heads of some diocesan agencies to the relevant Vicar or Board Chair to lighten the load of the Bishop, avoid potential ambiguity, and locate the reporting close to the person with the deepest knowledge of the enterprise (under the principle of subsidiarity).
15. Improve information and communication to Parish Priests on the operation of the Diocese, including greater information on finances.
16. Guidance on decision-making within the Diocese be provided to new board and committee members as part of an enhanced process of induction.
17. That the Diocese develops a Charter for the Curia and that Statutes for key ecclesial bodies (The Curia, The College of Consultors and the Council of Priests) be presented in the form of a standard template with document control and provision for periodic review.
18. Provide induction, and targeted training and support for Deanery Pastoral Council chairs.
19. That a culture of synodality be emphasised and adopted as part of the 'Parramatta Way' of clergy and laity walking together and co-operating together in the mission of the Church.
20. Consideration be given to the optimal legal form of CatholicCare Social Services and its part in the long-term strategy of the Diocese's missionary outreach.
21. The diocese engage in a broad-based process of discernment to consider moving the governing body for the CEDP, from an advisory council to the board of an incorporated body.
22. A process for timely board and committee appointments be developed and applied either centrally within the Chancery, or by each committee or board.
23. Develop a talent bank of prospective board and committee members through advertising openly through channels such as the parish bulletins or pastoral councils.
24. Consider inviting like dioceses to share information on agreed topics with a view to improving practice, creating peer support, and generating benchmarks.
25. Where Parish Pastoral Councils do not operate, they be established in accordance with the pastoral approach and particular law of the Diocese.
26. The Diocese undertake a modified process to produce an interim Pastoral Plan to guide direction until the outcomes of the Plenary Council are available for the diocesan synodal process.

27. The Diocese assess the effectiveness of internal and external communication to ensure effective channels with key stakeholders, and adequate transparency including the use of available information and communication technology for efficient, timely and effective communication between stakeholders.

28. A Governance Authority Matrix be developed for the Diocese of Parramatta.

29. A governance person be appointed to oversee governance processes and to support decision-making and advisory bodies in the Diocese with maintaining up-to-date charters, reviews, appointment processes and regulatory compliance.

30. The Diocese provide access to formation activities for lay people to deepen their understanding of ecclesiology to support their synodal approach.

31. A consultation policy detailing the matters on which people will be consulted and the processes for consultation be developed for the Diocese.

32. That the Diocese adopts a posture of transparency in its financial reporting so that unless there is an imperative for confidentiality, high-level financial information will generally be published.

33. Parish Priests implement a means of gathering parishioner feedback on the pastoral, liturgical and support services of the parish as a means of receiving feedback and guiding good practice.

34. The Diocese introduce a professional review and feedback service for priests to voluntarily opt in to receive independent advice on their strengths and areas for improvement.

Section 2: Review Methodology and Governance

Essentially the work of reviewers is to hold a mirror to the enterprise; to document core practices; to seek out the views and perceptions of a sample of key individuals; to examine core documents such as statutes; to analyse the findings against the backdrop of predetermined criteria, good practice, and comparison with like entities; and to provide an account back to the leaders. This was the approach taken with the review of governance in the Diocese of Parramatta. The reviewers have taken a forward-looking perspective and not concentrated unduly on legacy issues unless they were unresolved, or still creating distraction from core purpose.

The review was intended to be conducted across a six-month period from late June until late December 2020. However, the restrictions on gatherings, and the border closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meant that adjustments had to be made to the timeline and approach. The timeline was extended until 31 March 2021. The approach was modified to incorporate virtual (Zoom) interviews and virtual meeting observation. However, some sessions required face-to-face interactions such as sensitive or probing follow-up interviews, and feedback sessions designed to elicit responses from key groups in the Diocese. These were rescheduled from November 2020 to December 2020 and February 2021.

The methodology involved five streams of work:

- Desktop analysis of core documents, including charters, statutes and constitutions of governing bodies, alongside relevant canons
- One-to-one structured interviews with key members of governing civil and canonical bodies, heads of diocesan agencies and Chancery staff (virtually, and in person)
- Meeting observation (virtually and in person)
- Feedback sessions for key groups and individuals with a view to eliciting from them insights and perspectives, for consideration for inclusion in the final report
- Comparative analysis of practice within the Diocese of Parramatta from information revealed in interviews and core documents against the identified ecclesial and civil governance values and principles.

The findings contained within this report provide the foundation for commendations and recommendations, and the identification of the model of governance in the Diocese of Parramatta.

This review has had as its focus the structures of governance in the Diocese, the inter-relationships between governing bodies, the degree to which espoused civil and ecclesial governance values and principles are practised, and the suitability of founding documents for those entities not created by canon law. It does not contain an in-depth entity by entity review, as that was beyond the intent and scope of the review.

We now describe what we mean by ‘governance’, and the elements of the methodology adopted for the Diocese of Parramatta governance review.

2.1 Governance framework

Drawing on principles of ecclesiology and governance raised in *The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia*, a schema of good governance practice was used against which to evaluate current governing documents, governance structures, practices and processes in the Diocese. (See Attachment 6.) These principles are reflected in the Terms of Reference which have guided the focus of the reviewers.

In addition, the reviewers considered whether entities registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) met the ACNC governance requirements summarised in Attachment 8.⁴ Finally, the reviewers took account of the not-for-profit (NFP) governance principles developed by the Australian Institute

of Company Directors (AICD), as guidance to general conceptions of good governance. (See the summary of the AICD NFP Governance Principles in Attachment 7.)

Good governance exists where an organisation has systems and processes in place that are appropriate to its circumstances, and which enable the organisation to pursue its purpose effectively and meet its obligations under the law.⁵

The term 'governance' refers to the norms and systems that direct and control - or govern - an organisation. Governance is underpinned by values, principles, protocols and relationships. It concerns the actions and relationships of the people in an organisation. Governance enables authority to be exercised and decisions to be made properly, and for people to be held to account. The report, *The Light from the Southern Cross*, examines good ecclesial and civil governance practice, noting that the governance of church agencies rests on scriptural, theological, ecclesial and juridical foundations. It notes the similarities between civil and ecclesial and civil governance principles (see Attachment 6) and that:

[T]he Church distinguishes itself in areas such as discernment and stewardship. However, other areas such as accountability and transparency, and engagement and inclusion can be at variance with civil norms of good governance practice; this is so in many dioceses and parishes.... The Catholic Church in Australia has to balance the ecclesial and the civil as it moves to improve governance practice through rigorously implementing universal standards of good governance through a Gospel lens.⁶

The governance of a diocese will reflect the vision of the Bishop and the imperatives of canon law and civil law to meet the requirements of the Church, the state and of the wider community. It will appreciate that the Church is a visible structure organised as a complex reality comprising human and divine elements. It must also serve the needs of those who participate in the work of the diocese.⁷ That is why we have consulted widely amongst stakeholders to hear their voice and glean their wisdom.

Finally, direction and control must serve the mission of the Church and not be an end in itself. As Pope Francis has observed: *Mere administration can no longer be enough.⁸*

2.2 Structured interviews

Structured interviews were conducted with key personnel using a series of questionnaire templates designed to elicit responses attuned to the particular context of the interviewee, be it a chair or board member, an agency head, or a dean. The questionnaires were created to identify the historic and existing bases of good governance and administration, the instances where this has not been achieved, and the current conduct of the governing bodies as corporate entities. Individuals in key leadership roles were interviewed for their perspectives regarding the means of achieving optimal governance performance.

All interviews were conducted on a confidential basis. A draft transcript from each interview was emailed to interviewees, and they were invited to confirm or modify the contents to ensure an accurate account of their views was used by the reviewers. As part of the analysis of the aggregated responses, the information from the interviews was triangulated by the reviewers to provide assurance in the findings. We note that this social science methodology is a means of gaining more in-depth information than quantitative approaches. While the responses are the perspectives of individuals, it is these viewpoints that drive behaviour, so it is critical they are elicited if we are to fully understand the dynamic in the diocese. The report contains quotes from many of these voices as they give authenticity and life to the account.

The Bishop was interviewed at two points to clarify his expectations for the operation of the review, and to seek his views on the conduct of the organs of administration and governance currently operating in the diocese. The original set of 51 interviews were conducted between June and September with follow up interviews bringing the total to 72. Some interviewees were then interviewed more than once to probe or confirm particular issues. The intent of the original interviews was to get an overview of governance practice in the diocese, and to identify any common, or singular, issues and trends. Generally, a sample of people was interviewed from key governing bodies, and from senior Chancery functions. However, all the members of the

Curia, the Council of Priests, the College of Consultors, and the Parramatta Schools Council were offered an interview, and most agreed. (See Attachment 5 for the full list.)

A number of follow up interviews were conducted with key personnel, including the Bishop, between October and December 2020. Follow up interviews tested reviewer impressions and explored particular matters in depth.

2.3 Observation of board/committee/council/consultor/college Meetings

The reviewers attended a sample of the key advisory and decision-making meetings to observe the conduct of the meetings, the processes adopted, and the degree to which they conformed to their written constitutions, as well as their fit with the Bishop's identified values and preferred governance approach for the diocese. (A list of the meetings attended is in Attachment 9.) Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only one of these meetings was attended in person. The rest were observed remotely using Zoom technology. Ideally meeting observations would be in person, however, this was not a significant issue as many of the meeting participants were themselves attending remotely due to restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

2.4 Provision of advice on organisational structure and management effectiveness

High-level advice is provided on the expression of ecclesial and civil governance principles in the diocese, on the organisational structure between governing bodies, how decisions are made, the delineation between management and board on major decisions, the nature and quality of reporting to the Bishop, and on current levels of accountability. This advice is contained within sections 4 and 5 and within the commendations and recommendations.

2.5 Presentation of findings and seeking advice on implementation

The reviewers sought to identify if the distinctive approach to governance and leadership espoused by the Bishop was reflected within diocesan agencies and governing bodies. Following their analysis of the findings from interviews and from desktop research, a series of presentations was held in February 2021 with key groups of diocesan leaders to present their findings and seek advice on implementation. (See Appendix 11 for the list of Workshops). As part of this exercise, views were sought on the approach to leadership and governance within the diocese.

2.6 Provision of Report

A draft report containing key findings, commendations and recommendations for future action was provided to the Bishop at the first draft stage for initial feedback and discussion. His input was sought on the findings, on areas of good practice and on recommendations for change. The Bishop provided a copy of this early draft to the Curia, then the reviewers met with his two Vicars General, the Chief of Operations and Finance and one of the Chancellors in December 2020 to hear feedback. This final report contains analysis by the reviewers of the findings of their investigations; consideration of governance practice in the Diocese of Parramatta against core ecclesial and governance principles and practices; responses from key diocesan leaders to initial drafts of the report; feedback from key figures in the governance and administration of the diocese to the preliminary findings; and commendations and recommendations.

2.7 The reviewers

The review was led by Adjunct Professor Susan Pascoe AM, a board chair and board member, as well as principal of consulting firm Kadisha Enterprises. She is a former senior executive in Catholic Education in Victoria, and currently a Trustee of one Catholic health enterprise, and a board member of another. Adjunct Professor Pascoe was the inaugural Commissioner of the ACNC, and prior to that a Commissioner at the Victorian State Services Authority, and a Commissioner on the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. She was a member of the Governance Review Project team which authored the 2020 report, *The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia*.

Adj Prof Murray Baird is a nationally recognised specialist in charity law and governance. He is the principal of Omega Advisory Pty Ltd and a practising lawyer in the law, governance and regulation of charities. He was the inaugural General Counsel of the ACNC, helping to establish it as Australia's first national regulator for charities. Prior to that he was Chairman of Moores Legal - a specialist NFP law firm and leader of its charity team. He has written, edited, and advised in the development of numerous texts on not-for-profit governance and is a regular adviser and speaker on NFP governance issues. He teaches NFP law and governance at the Melbourne University Law School and has chaired several NFP and public companies. He has also advised on the structuring of not-for-profit and private entities.

2.8 Governance of Review

A small Committee comprising the Vicar General, Very Rev Peter Williams, and the Chief of Operations and Finance, Geoff Officer, together with the two reviewers was created to provide oversight of the project. Regular updates on progress were provided by the reviewers, and feedback and advice on internal diocesan issues was provided by the senior diocesan personnel. Ms Jasmine Sammy, Head of Risk, Compliance and Assurance was the key contact and an interface for the reviewers with diocesan agencies. As noted, the timeline was modified due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19, and some adjustments to the original design of the project were accommodated, such as the addition of interviews with all members of the Parramatta Schools Council.

2.9 Structure of the Report

The report contains an introductory chapter which provides context for the review in Section 1; an outline of the methodology in Section 2; a description of the constituent elements of advisory and decision-making bodies in Section 3; an outline of key findings (with some reference to good practice) in Section 4; a discussion of the key issues and themes to emerge from the independent investigation in Section 5; and a concluding reflection in Section 6. Much of the supporting documentation is provided in the attachments and endnotes.

The report is structured as follows:

Section 1: the context for the review

Section 2: an outline of methodology

Section 3: a description of the constituent elements of advisory and decision-making bodies

Section 4: an outline of key findings (with some reference to good practice)

Section 5: a discussion of the key issues and themes to emerge from the independent investigation

Section 6: concluding reflections

Attachments and endnotes: supporting documentation

2.10 Observation of reviewers on the conduct of the Review

The reviewers found strong support for the review amongst those interviewed, observed and consulted. At all times they were treated courteously and given excellent administrative support. As would be expected a range of views was expressed, but there was a generally a very positive assessment of the administration of the diocese, and of governance practice.

Section 3: Review of Constituent Documents

The Diocese of Parramatta comprises a number of entities which carry out the work of the Church in the diocese under the control of the Bishop. Some are governance bodies and others are advisory bodies. That is, some have power to make decisions that direct and control activities and others only have responsibility to advise decision makers. Entities that do not need to interface with government or the public, such as advisory councils, do not have formal legal governance responsibilities. However, it is best practice to at least have a clear definition of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities and a picture of how all entities relate to one another.

Where a body is identified as having characteristics of a distinct entity (regardless of legal form), it may choose to register as an entity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). Whilst ACNC registration is not mandatory, it carries with it various concessions including tax exemption in exchange for reporting and compliance obligations. We summarise the key entities (registered and otherwise) below, and comment on how they are documented, the makeup of their membership and any governance matters of note. (A list of all ACNC registered entities is provided at Attachment 4.) But first we provide some general comments applicable to all bodies.

To foreshadow our analysis, and to provide the broad context for this document analysis, our overarching assessment of ecclesial and civil governance practice in the diocese is that it is generally excellent, notwithstanding our recommendations for some improvements.

Commendation 1: Ecclesial and civil governance practice across diocesan entities is generally excellent, notwithstanding some recommendations for improvements.

3.1 Document hygiene

3.1.1 Document control

We commend the presentation and document control that has recently developed for many of the governance documents within the diocese and encourage that process to be completed. We recommend that all governing documents be catalogued and held in a common document bank, accessible to authorised persons which would include all members of those bodies. This ought to be done using a web-based system. Such a move would demonstrate transparency of governance structures and processes in the diocese.

Consideration might be given to making governance documents available more widely on a diocesan website. This would demonstrate even greater transparency and may assist with a better understanding of ecclesial governance in the diocese and beyond - particularly for potential lay candidates for governance roles and those who have accepted such roles. Many of the documents have been accessible on the ACNC register for many years without apparent mischief.

Commendation 2: There is good governance practice in the up-to-date presentation and document control for many of the governance documents within the diocese.

Recommendation 1: All governing documents be catalogued and held in a common document bank, accessible to authorised persons which would include all members of those bodies.

Recommendation 2: Documents that can be made available such as board and committee Statutes or Charters, and the current list of membership be made publicly available to enable transparency, and support the potential inclusion of a more diverse group of people on diocesan committees.

3.1.2 Referencing constituent documents

In observing a number of meetings in the diocese it became apparent to us that meetings did not always reference the constituent document as the source of the body's authorities, accountabilities and operations. The agenda for meetings of each body could include a summary of the function and accountability of the body

as a touchstone of its deliberations. It is not unusual practice in many charitable organisations for agendas to provide a purpose statement of the body in the agenda template.

Specifically identifying the constituent document of that body in the agenda (perhaps with a direct link to the document bank) would keep it in the forefront of consideration and a ready reference during deliberations if required.

3.1.3 Governance Oversight Schedule

It is appropriate that all constituent documents are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and reflect the functions of the body. Some documents provide for five-year review periods. However, an annual practice of each body reviewing its own documents and procedures would be a useful exercise to enable the recommendation of changes in a timely manner. This could take the form of a Governance Oversight Schedule which would include a reporting and compliance timetable. Part of the timetable would be a review of board membership to ensure that there are no gaps, that the board's skills matrix is maintained, and that succession is well managed.

Recommendation 3: Maintain a Governance Oversight Schedule of regular self-review and external review of the effectiveness of each entity.

3.1.4 Conflicts

Many of the documents made provision for declarations of conflicts of interest but appeared to provide no mechanism for recording those conflicts in a standing register or in minutes when ad hoc conflicts may arise. As a general practice, governing bodies should maintain a standing register of conflicts and also a standing item on each agenda giving the opportunity in the agenda to declare conflicts not on the register. It should be clear who has responsibility to maintain the register and how often the register should be updated. A typical process is asking each committee member to update a declaration of potential conflicts annually.

Recommendation 4: Maintain a Conflicts Register for each entity, and as a standing item on each agenda.

3.2 Induction

Some documents made reference to the value of induction and formation. Although this need not be included in every constituent document, there would be value in having general principles for professional development in Diocesan bodies that ensure that new members in particular have opportunities for induction and formation relevant to that body, and that the chair take responsibility for ensuring that occurs. Such induction would necessarily include general governance duties (including disclosure of conflicts), the context of the body within the Diocese, the function of that body and the expectation of each member.

The Light from the Southern Cross report observes that many Church authorities provide professional development to staff members and that professional development, including fiduciary concepts and governance principles, should be undertaken by everyone in leadership positions.⁹ Governance duties in turn become criteria for self and peer assessment of effectiveness in the role.

Recommendation 5: Ensure adequate induction and formation for members of each governance body.

3.3 Incorporation

We appreciate that each body is an avenue for the mission of the Catholic Church in the diocese.

However, for some of the bodies in the diocese we are recommending consideration of separate incorporation. We stress that this is not intended to dilute the mission of the diocese or 'corporatise' the spiritual dimensions of that mission. In our view, there are instances where the mission can be better served where the governance structure best fits the task to be carried out as part of the overall mission.

The Light from the Southern Cross report observes that, generally speaking, Catholic health agencies in Australia have distinctive twofold governance arrangements (similar to the German corporate model). Canonically they operate as ministerial public juridic persons (PJPs) and civilly as companies limited by guarantee. Canonical stewards/trustees of ministerial PJPs have a particular oversight of the mission and stable patrimony of the enterprise, while the board's governance role is the setting of strategy, appointment of CEO, and oversight of the effective conduct of the operation.¹⁰

The decision to incorporate must come with strong imperatives as to why that structure will be more effective for that part of the mission, and for enabling the Bishop to maintain his pastoral and governance roles. Where we consider that is the case, we have made a recommendation accordingly.

We now turn to our comments on the various entities that play a part in the governance of the diocese.

3.4 College of Consultors

The constituent document is the Statutes of the College of Consultors dated 25 August 2016.

The primary purpose is to assist the Bishop in pastoral governance and to give consent and its opinion as required by law when important decisions of an economic nature are made, ensuring continuity of pastoral governance and correct procedure for succession in the case of a vacant or impeded See.

The College of Consultors is accountable to the Bishop and to compliance with canon law.

Its function is largely defined by canon law and its membership is drawn from the Council of Priests at the discretion of the Bishop.

We recommend that the Statutes be presented in the form of a standard template with document control and provision for periodic review (say, every three years). (See Recommendation 17.)

3.5 Council of Deans (currently inactive)

The Council of Deans has been in abeyance for some time and some of its functions have been assumed by a Diocesan Personnel Board.

However, the constituent document being the Council of Deans Statutes, dated 21 December 2017 (reviewed 20 January 2020) is still in place and can remain in place should it be deemed appropriate to re-activate the Council in the future. The format of the Statutes is presented in an accessible format with appropriate document control and review processes.

3.6 Council for the Religious

The constituent document is the Statutes of Council for the Religious dated 28 February 2017.

The function of the body is to advise the Bishop on matters of religious life, to arrange gatherings of religious, to organise publication of the Diocesan Directory of Religious, to assist the promotion of religious vocations, and to support the religious in the diocese.

The ex officio member is the Vicar for Consecrated Life and the members are six other Religious (from various institutes or societies) appointed by the Bishop. Whilst the Council advises the Bishop, we note the Bishop is not listed as a member of the Council and communication is by way of minutes.

The Bishop by law has a right to attend any meeting of any organisation under the auspices of the diocese. Sometimes his role is written into the statutes or constitutions and sometimes not. For the purposes of consistency, we recommend that the Bishop be referred to in all those instruments where he has a right to be present.

We recommend that the Statutes be presented in the form of a standard template with document control and provision for periodic review (say, every three years).

3.7 Council of Priests

The constituent document is the Statutes dated 21 December 2017 (reviewed 20 January 2020).

The function of the body is to assist the Bishop in the governance of the diocese to promote the pastoral welfare of the people. In effect, this appears to be a formal channel for communication between priests and the Bishop through a council which is a representative cross-section of clergy in the diocese (some by election and some by appointment). The methods of appointment contrast to other bodies appointed solely by the Bishop.

The membership comprises one priest from each deanery, one migrant chaplain, one religious priest, one priest of fewer than ten years' standing, the Vicar General and Episcopal Vicars (ex officio), Chancellor (if a priest), three other priests to meet particular needs, and a diversity of ministries.

The Statutes give a clear statement of purpose and process and include document control and provision for review.

3.8 Diocesan Finance Council

The constituent document is the Statutes of Diocesan Finance Council (DFC) 10 December 2015.

The function of the body is to provide stewardship of the assets of the diocese and to be responsible for financial planning, budgeting, financial reports, audit and financial risk. The DFC is also responsible for advice on property matters, administration, investment, insurances, inventory, the development fund, legal issues, and the appointment of the Chief of Operations and Finance.

Ex officio members of the DFC are the Chief of Operations and Finance of the Diocese, and the Director of Finance and Administrative Services for the Catholic Education Office who are non-voting. There are between three and nine non ex officio members appointed by the Bishop. In keeping with good governance practice the Parramatta DFC has an independent lay chair.

There is no guidance or assurance that these people hold relevant skills, experience or qualifications for the task other than being members of the Church and the diocese. The reviewers are impressed with the calibre of members appointed to the current DFC and its sub-committees. However, we recommend an explicit skill matrix be developed and published to ensure the relevant expertise is always maintained.

We recommend that the Statutes be presented in the form of a standard template with document control and provision for periodic review (say, every three years).

We note that the issue of some publication of diocesan finances as a means of accountability and transparency was raised by numerous interviewees during the review. It was also the subject of discussion in *The Light from the Southern Cross* report:

As a faithful steward of the resources of the People of God, church leaders – ordained and lay – are called to meet basic financial reporting requirements of both civic authorities and canon law and indeed to render a full accounting to the Catholic community, whose members provide their financial support. Without appropriate financial governance, the finances of the Church will not be put to best effect. Furthermore, at a time of financial vulnerability for the Catholic Church in Australia the continued support of the People of God, who make a life-time practice through personal financial sacrifice, of financial support of their parish and diocese, is best ensured if their trust is maintained by accountability and transparency.¹¹

As discussed in Section 5 we see benefit in increasing the levels of reporting from financial bodies to the parishes and beyond. (See Recommendation 32)

We note there are three standing sub-committees:

- Diocesan Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Committee (DAERC). (We recommend in 3.9.1 below, adding 'Compliance' to the title.)
- Diocesan Property Council (DPC). We recommended in 3.9.2 to change the name to Diocesan Property Committee which better expresses its role as a sub-committee of the DFC.
- Diocesan Development Fund Investment Advisory Committee (DIAC).

These are appropriate sub-committees. These will be discussed separately below. We note that the chair of the DFC is ex officio on every standing sub-committee. This is a substantial burden on the chair but does ensure cross-over of information.

3.9 Sub-committees of the Diocesan Finance Council

3.9.1 Diocesan Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Committee

The constituent document is the Charter of the Diocesan Audit and Enterprise Risk Committee approved 2 May 2017. The DAERC is a sub-committee of the Diocesan Finance Council to assist with the oversight of financial statements and external reporting, legal and regulatory requirements, audit function, risk management and communication with regulators.

It has between four and six members familiar with finance and accounting practice appointed by the Bishop, along with the Chief of Operations and Finance as an ex officio member. Some will be members of the DFC, but the proportionate makeup is not clear.

An audit and risk committee is widely recognised as a responsible way to have people with appropriate independent expertise focus on these functions.

The committee is rightly given wide powers to oversee the areas within its remit. There are detailed requirements for reporting responsibilities through the DFC to the Bishop and provision for an annual report giving an account of how duties were discharged. The charter defines well the audit and risk supervision which is an essential function for good governance.

We note that there is an inconsistency in the naming of this committee in its own terms of reference and in those of the DFC. It is variously named the Diocesan Audit and Enterprise Risk Committee and the Diocesan Audit and Risk Enterprise Committee in its own Charter, whereas the DFC Charter refers to it as the Diocesan Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Committee. This inconsistency could be corrected in a review of documents.

Recommendation 6: The Diocesan Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Committee be renamed the Diocesan Audit Risk and Compliance Committee to reflect its current functions and establish a consistency in its naming.

3.9.2 Diocesan Property Council

The constituent document is the Diocesan Property Council Statutes approved 10 October 2019. We note that although the DPC is referred to as a Council, it is a sub-committee of the Diocesan Finance Council and therefore more properly termed a 'committee'. We recommend that consideration be given to renaming Diocesan Property Council as Diocesan Property Committee.

The function of the Council is to review and make recommendations to the Diocesan Finance Council to oversee and advise the Diocesan Trustees and Diocesan Finance Council about matters involving the use of any real property, including compliance and statutory requirements, vested in the Diocesan Trustees by civil law.

This includes:

- Review and recommend to DFC and diocesan trustees on all proposed dispositions of entities under the Bishop;
- Inform DFC and Diocesan Trustees about the economic situation of entities proposing disposition and history of dispositions and ensure valuation;
- Review and recommend re proposed leases of diocesan entities in excess of 9 years;
- Recommendations re acts of extraordinary administration;
- Review all proposed acts of major importance in relation to lands and buildings;
- Analysing demographic trends for acquisitions;
- Allowing for changes to parish boundaries;
- Acting on urgent matters between meetings; and
- Advice on building works.

The body is made up of six persons appointed by the Bishop with experience in planning, valuation and land development, as well as a parish priest. The ex officio members are the Vicar General, the Diocesan Financial Administrator and a nominee of the Executive Director, Catholic Education. Appointments are for three years with provision for reappointment. Meetings occur every second month.

We note that the Diocesan Property Council, as a sub-committee of Diocesan Finance Council, advises both the DFC and Diocesan Trustees. However, the meeting cycle does not appear to be conducive to regular advice and our observations of the committee were that there appear to be neither formal referrals to the Property Council nor any formal advice back.

In interview, the Diocesan Property Council was described as a “brains trust” to give advice to management on property matters. That may be a worthwhile resource but does not reflect the stated purpose of the Council. It appears the Diocesan Property Council currently is operating more as a sounding board for management than as an accountability committee. There is a risk that the meeting cycle leaves property oversight with management for the months between meetings when some aspects of property transactions move quickly.

We query whether this Council has responsibility for property risks such as breach of planning schemes, environmental contaminants, health and safety issues. We gained the impression that this meeting had no access to an inventory of property in the Diocese but that one “would be prepared at some stage”. We recommend that this process be expedited. The meeting we observed received oral reports on several properties. The reports were informal, in narrative form, and did not involve decisive and authoritative recommendations. Unexpected reports and proposals for dispositions of land were mentioned without formal reports or clear decisions.

We recommend that the Council keep a log of all referrals to it for advice and of the recommendations given. A review and discussion with management of current property issues is not sufficient to fulfil the role set out in the Statutes.

We note that some transactions within the diocese are not at arms-length. We recommend that there be rigour in obtaining valuations, tabling documentation, and the minuting of decisions as recommendations to the Diocesan Finance Council and the Diocesan Trustees. Whilst the accountability framework in the Statutes is clear, it does not appear to be operating as intended.

There is a comprehensive document control page in the Statutes, but it is incomplete in terms of documenting approvals of various amendments and the descriptions of approval dates, for example the document control records the ‘date last approved’ which should read ‘date previously approved’ and ‘date subsequently approved’ should read ‘date last approved’.

Recommendation 7: Consideration be given to renaming Diocesan Property Council as the Diocesan Property Committee.

3.9.3 Diocesan Development Fund Investment Advisory Committee

The third sub-committee of Diocesan Finance Council is the Diocesan Development Fund Investment Advisory Committee which was established to govern the Diocesan Development Fund.

The Investment Advisory Committee is responsible for the management of the Diocesan Development Fund and is doing so with expertise and rigour. We attended a meeting of the Investment Advisory Committee where the auditor commended the committee on their policies and procedures. We found the committee to be collegiate, expert, astute and efficient.

3.10 Diocesan Liturgical Commission

The constituent document is the Liturgical Commission Statutes dated 19 March 2011 (Reviewed 15 March 2018).

The purpose of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission (DLC) is to assist with liturgical life and practice in the diocese including through education, networks, inquiries and celebrations.

It comprises eight members in total, appointed by the Bishop, including the Diocesan Director of Liturgy (ex officio), one or two clergy and other members of Christ's faithful. The intent appears to be that the DLC have a strong lay component. However, the current makeup demonstrates a preponderance of clergy members.

There is a danger that the majority of clergy 'experts' on the DLC will eclipse or at least mute the place of laity on the DLC and a broad range of perspectives being heard. This may well be a cultural issue of the way lay men and women and clergy relate respectfully together. This in turn can discourage lay involvement.

We observed the need for clarification in the role of the Liturgy Commission and that of the Office for Worship. It is primarily the work of the Office for Worship to put in place the liturgy. The relationship between DLC and OfW could benefit from further clarity of respective roles.

For example, the DLC reports directly to the Bishop by means of providing its minutes, but the committee itself feels that it does not get direct feedback or response.

Our enquiries indicate that it is now timely to review the Statutes, particularly to ensure alignment between documents and practice. The Statutes would benefit from having provision for review (say every 3-5 years).

3.11 Diocesan Safeguarding Council

The constituent document is the Safeguarding Council Terms of Reference dated 1 September 2020.

The safeguarding committee provides strategic and skilled guidance and advice to the Bishop and other relevant leaders including the Head of Safeguarding regarding safeguarding children and vulnerable people in the diocese. It also monitors policies, procedures, and practices on safeguarding in the diocese.

The Council has a maximum membership of 12 – the Diocesan Safeguarding Champion (Chair), the Bishop, the relevant Vicar General, the Head of Safeguarding, expert external members, and two parish/congregational/ministry representatives. A membership of 12 appears to us to be at the upper level of the range for active involvement and effective decision making.

There is little guidance on the process for selection of expert external members and we would recommend attention to this matter.

We note provision for an annual review of the skills matrix with recommendations for changes or revisions to membership. This is good practice. The presentation and document control of the Terms of Reference is exemplary.

Although the document is to be reviewed every five years, it occurs to us that given that the Council has only recently been formed, the adverse findings on Church practice in the RCIRCSA, and the ongoing community interest in Church oversight of this area, an initial review be conducted after 12 months from inception and that a more frequent review cycle be adopted in its early years.

3.12 Diocesan Pastoral Council

The constituent document is the Diocesan Pastoral Council Statutes, as published in the *Handbook of Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Councils* (2018). Although not required by canon law (as are Diocesan Finance Councils) the Diocesan Pastoral Council is seen as an important means of involving the laity more fully in the life of the diocese and is recommended for every diocese in *The Light from the Southern Cross* report.¹²

The function of Parramatta's Diocesan Pastoral Council is to consider matters concerning pastoral works in the diocese and to propose practical conclusions. It is a conduit for communication between the Bishop and the people of each deanery. It does not have any formal governance function. We note that the original role of the Diocesan Pastoral Council in coordinating consultations for the Plenary Council left a lack of clarity about its ongoing role in the diocese. This has recently prompted the Diocesan Pastoral Council to draft a vision and mission statement to guide its work. We perceived a risk that if the Diocesan Pastoral Council does not have a clear program of work relevant to pastoral considerations in the Diocese and if it cannot see that its deliberations are making an effective contribution, the Council will lose a sense of purpose and vigour. For example, we note that there is no provision for frequency of meetings or formation of agendas in the constituent documents.

Ex officio members include a Curia member, the director of the Pastoral Planning Office, plus other appointments by the Bishop with at least one member drawn from each of the five deaneries. Memberships are for three-year terms, with eligibility for reappointment and provision for rotation.

The only criterion for appointment of a qualified person is the decision of the Bishop. The Statutes do not give guidance as to how the Bishop is to determine each appointment.

There does not appear to be provision for review or document control. That matter may need attention.

3.13 Deanery Pastoral Council

The constituent document is the Deanery Pastoral Council Statutes, as published in the *Handbook of Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Councils* (2018).

The role of a Deanery Pastoral Council is to share responsibility for the ongoing life and development of the deanery in sharing of faith and growing faith in Christ, and to consider pastoral works in the diocese and propose practical conclusions by way of recommendations to the Bishop. It does not have any formal governance function.

Its members include two lay people from each parish, the Dean plus one Clergy, the Pastoral Planning Representative and may include a Catholic Education representative, a chaplaincy representative or an institute or congregation representatives. It aims to have a diversity of age, gender and ethnic origin.

Like the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Deanery Pastoral Councils are striving to fully understand their role, to manage differing levels of acceptance and cooperation from parish priests, and to find points of liaison with the Council of Deans, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Parish Pastoral Councils.

There is a risk that if they are not supported and encouraged in each deanery, they will lose a sense of purpose and an important aspect of synodality in the diocese will be missed. We recommend that there be clarity of expectations of Deanery Pastoral Councils with an annual self-review of effectiveness and a scheduled time for an objective review of effectiveness.

3.14 Parish Pastoral Council

The constituent document is the Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines, dated 14 August 2020. The function of the body is a consultative/advisory council with broad functions to support the work of the parish. It is an explicit call to synodality. It does not have any formal governance function; however, the pastor must consider proposals attentively, especially if they are unanimous.

The Council consists of eight to 12 members, including the Pastor as President. It may include ex officio a member of the Parish Leadership Team, the Principal of the Parish School and a member of the mandated Parish Finance Council.

Appointments are for two years. Parishioners are asked to recommend members through a discernment process. Membership aims to be as broad as possible with respect to diversity of age, gender and ethnic origin.

The Council meets monthly and operates by consensus. There is appropriate provision for review and adaption of the guidelines. The guidelines are clear and well presented. However, document control may assist to maintain this good practice.

The Light from the Southern Cross report recommended that each parish pastoral council annually self-review and evaluate the effectiveness and operation of parish pastoral councils.¹³ The report also recommended that the ACBC commission a study to collate information about the experiences of parish councils in Australia with a view to developing models that can be adapted to local circumstances for matters normally found in constitutions or rules for like bodies, including (but not limited to), objects, purposes, powers, procedures, skills matrices and accountability systems.¹⁴ We support the annual self-review and suggest that rather than waiting for the ACBC that the Diocesan Pastoral Council could add this task to its list of works as a means of sharing good practice within the diocese, and possibly beyond in time.¹⁵

As with Deanery Pastoral Councils, there is a risk that if they are not supported and encouraged in each parish, they will lose a sense of purpose and an important aspect of synodality in the parish and the diocese will go missing. We make a recommendation on this matter in Section 4.4.1.

3.15 Parish Finance Committee

Canon law requires a finance committee to assist the parish priest in the administration of the temporal goods of the parish. The finance committee is a collaboration between parishioners and the parish priest in this administration.

The constituent document is the Parish Finance Committee Statutes, dated 21 June 2018 (Reviewed 20 January 2020). We considered in passing whether the status of a committee as distinct from a council signified a lesser status but concluded that nothing turned on this distinction.

The function of the body involves an extensive list of duties on maintaining and reporting parish finances as set out in canon law. The committee consists of the Parish Priest, the Assistant Priest or Deacon, and at least three members appointed or elected. There are terms of two years with rotation, but members are eligible for reappointment. The committee meets every three months.

There is provision for declaration of conflicts of interest and clear tables of delegated authorities for finances and property. In our view this is an important vehicle for supervision and accountability for all parish financial matters. The Statutes are clear and well presented, with good document control and thorough guidance.

It would be appropriate from time to time to review whether there is an effective finance committee operating in each parish and to address any gaps or concerns.

3.16 Parramatta Schools Council, Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP)

A full discussion of the Parramatta Schools Council, and the optimal structure for the CEDP is provided in Section 4.3. This section looks at the current arrangements. The constituent document is the Schools Council Charter, endorsed 25 July 2017.

The Schools Council Charter is a surprisingly skeletal document for an organisation within the diocese with such significant assets, budget, risk and responsibilities. The Council is clearly advisory to the Bishop concerning Catholic Education in the diocese. There is neither a direct line of accountability from the Executive Director to the Council nor is there any duty of the Council to hold CEDP accountable.

The Charter stipulates council membership as three ex officio members – the Bishop, the Episcopal Vicar for Education and Formation, and the Executive Director CEDP. There is provision for up to 11 additional members although we note that the latest Annual Report lists only eight additional members which, in our view, is a more manageable number. This ought to be clarified in the next document review. Presently there are only six additional members. A board of up to 14 voting members plus various senior managers from CEDP attending as non-voting participants is unwieldy and unlikely to be an optimal size to allow inclusive discussion or meaningful contribution from all members.

Although the Charter requires a wide range of expertise, we did not see evidence of a formal matrix of skills and experience. The charter requires a minimum of four and a maximum of five meetings per year. This appears to be inadequate for anything other than occasional feedback and certainly not rigorous supervision.

We probed more deeply into the operation of the Parramatta Schools Council (See Section 4.3) and observed a full meeting. We were impressed by the quality of the papers, and the calibre of CEDP staff briefing the PSC. However, we noted that in the absence of the chair, a senior member of management chaired the meeting, and that the bulk of time was taken with briefings rather than the members interrogating staff, and probing substantial matters such as the RE Curriculum, the budget, and enrolments.

In our view the diocese needs to give serious consideration to separate incorporation of CEDP as a company limited by guarantee with the Bishop as the sole member. The reasons for this are set out in more detail in Section 4.3. There is no reason why incorporation would derogate from both Catholicity, mission and educational imperatives. The use of a company does not exclude religious formation or mission as such bodies are by definition ‘for purpose’ vehicles. In our view this structure would overcome many of the consistently expressed concerns about the current school’s council structure outlined in interview.

Such a structure creates a greater synodality as it brings together both lay and religious experts to consult together about the strategy and operations of schools as an instrument of diocesan mission. The makeup of the board will of course include those with expertise in mission, formation and education, in addition to business, financial and legal disciplines. Directors would be appointed directly by the Bishop (no doubt in consultation with key stakeholders) and could be dismissed by him. We provide a recommendation on this matter in Section 4.3.

3.17 Diocese of Parramatta CatholicCare Social Services

The constituent document is the Constitution of CatholicCare Social Services, an unincorporated agency of the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta ABN 27 799 858 202 approved by College of Consultors and Trustees for the Roman Catholic Church for the diocese 4 January 2017.

The function of the body is to be a community service agency providing benevolent relief. This entity is registered with the ACNC as a public benevolent institution and accordingly must comply with the ACNC governance standards.

Although we found some references to this body as ‘Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains Advisory Council’, it appears that is an outdated description. The constitution of the unincorporated association establishes a “council of governance” known as “the Council” which operates as “the board of the

entity" (beyond a merely advisory function) which operates under the authority of the Bishop. The entity is accountable to the ACNC.,. The reference to Western Sydney and Blue Mountains appeared to us to be a confusing description for an agency of the Diocese of Parramatta.

Membership comprises not more than 10 and not fewer than three, including the Episcopal Vicar for Social Welfare (ex officio), and other qualified councillors appointed by the Bishop from time to time. Appointments are for three years and members are eligible for reappointment. The chair is appointed by the Bishop.

The Council operates under a code of ethics signed by each member dealing with accepted governance duties such as care, diligence, confidentiality and conflict of interest. This code is comprehensive and provides for each council member to sign a declaration of understanding and agreement. There is no indication of who administers and reviews the declarations. It should be made clear who has this responsibility and where declarations should be recorded to ensure that each council member has provided a current declaration. The signing clause for the declaration is confusing and repetitive and requires editing. There is no evident document control. For completeness a link from clause 4.2(g)(i) in the constitution to the code of ethics would ensure that the consent to act as councillor includes subscribing to the code of ethics.

We note that the unincorporated entity is registered with the ACNC as the Trustee for the Roman Catholic Church for the Diocese of Parramatta, reflecting the 'ownership' by the Trustee as an agency of the diocese. This is an implicit confusion as a result of utilising trust structures rather than discrete corporate structures.

The annual budget is in the vicinity of \$10 million. We note that there are substantial regulatory requirements attaching to this entity as distinct from other agencies of the diocese, given their accreditation requirements and their programs with vulnerable people.

In our view, consideration should be given to separate incorporation of CatholicCare as a company limited by guarantee. We do not see this as pressing, but worthy of discernment. Some of the reasons for this are:

- Clarity of purpose and mission, and distinction between the roles of CatholicCare and CDPSL;
- Ensuring rigorous and focused supervision of the strategy and operations;
- Recognition that the Bishop should not be solely responsible for the governance of social services in the diocese, noting that sole membership would still maintain the principle of ultimate authority;
- Isolation of assets and potential liabilities from other diocesan assets;
- Quarantining of regulatory and compliance models from other aspects of diocesan mission;
- Consistency with the trend in other dioceses; and
- Ease of interfacing on contractual and funding matters by identification of a separate social services entity.

There is no formal provision for periodic review of the constitution, although there is provision for amendment if required. Good practice would see periodic review.

Further commentary and a recommendation on CatholicCare Social Services Advisory Council is provided in Section 4.2.5.

3.18 Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Services Limited

The constituent document is the Constitution for Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Services Limited (CDPSL), a Company Limited by Guarantee dated 28 June 2019. The charitable objects for which the entity is established are to advance the works of the Diocese of Parramatta, in education and religion by:

a) extending the pastoral outreach of Parish and school communities to support the needs of families with young children by providing an effective system of Catholic Early Childhood Services;

b) providing other social enterprise services to promote the works of the Diocese.

CDPSL is an example of a ministry of the diocese being separately incorporated, presumably for governance focus, funding arrangements and separation of liability. As such, it could be seen as a 'toe in the water' of incorporation of diocesan ministries.

We understand that at this stage it will be the vehicle for delivery of Catholic early childhood services such as day care, pre-school and out of school hours care.

We appreciate the suspicion in some church circles about the 'corporatisation of mission'. Indeed, we heard concerns expressed about this in our interviews and in committee observations.

It is our view that adopting a corporate structure need not derogate either from control by the Bishop, nor mission imperatives of the church. In fact, mission imperatives of the church can be entrenched in the constitution by a statement of mission, as it is in this constitution.

A company limited by guarantee is more likely to have readily adoptable or adaptable governance frameworks as the vehicle is a common and well-recognised vehicle for carrying out social enterprise.

The challenges in the journey from establishment to maturity of CDPSL will be a clear definition of the programs to be included within the structure and the relationships with other Diocesan agencies such as Education and Social Services. This will involve clear articulation and good relationships to see CDPSL not only as the vehicle for social enterprise but of mission.

3.19 Oversight of all canonical, advisory and governing entities in the diocese

While this section has analysed individual entities within the diocese, their relationship to one another and the structure of the governance architecture of the diocese are also important.

The Diocese of Parramatta has adopted an Organisation Chart (see Attachment 14) which puts the Bishop at the centre and reporting and accountability relationships as either hard or dotted lines. We take this to mean that where there is hard line reporting, there is a direct relationship of monitoring and reporting. Where there is a dotted line, there is a secondary line of oversight, guidance and reporting with some level of influence and leadership.

The current Organisation Chart was first developed following the reorganisation of Chancery as a result of the Pastoral Plan in 2014-2015 and was based on three or four other dioceses around the world at that time.

The Parramatta model has been likened, by analogy, to Australian government arrangements. The College of Consultors acts as the Senate to the Diocesan Finance Council's House of Representatives, through playing a key role in ratifying decisions. A typical route to a decision of the Bishop on significant matters is Curia (as a sounding board) to DFC to College of Consultors to the Bishop for final decision.

We note that the current Organisation Chart is under revision which is a continuing task in a dynamic environment adapting to changing circumstances.

Whilst the Parramatta Organisation Chart describes each entity and the reporting and accountability relationships between them, we also commend the Canonical and Organisational Governance structure chart set out in *The Light from the Southern Cross* report (LSC Chart).¹⁶ This schema sets out the role and source of authority for each entity (including references to Canon Law).

We appreciate that Diocese of Parramatta is different from many other dioceses in the role the Curia plays. While the term 'Curia' generally refers to the full suite of governance and administrative arrangements associated with a diocese, a few Australian dioceses (including Parramatta), have used the term to refer to the body that acts in an advisory capacity directly to the Bishop. Parramatta uses the term 'Chancery' to refer to the overall administration of the diocese. The reviewers detected some confusion regarding the locus of decision-making amongst the range of governance entities and individuals and see benefit in the diocese

clarifying these arrangements, possibly with reference to the schema in the LSC Report. There is no reason why both depictions could not be used to illustrate different aspects of the governance relationships.

The Personnel Board and the Board of Management were not included in this governance review. However, we make reference to them below as a number of interviewees expressed views related to their operation, including ideas for improvement.

The reviewers believe there would be value in further consideration being given to the charters and composition of both the Board of Management and the Personnel Board and consideration given to the role of lay men and women in those bodies.

3.20 Personnel Board

The personnel board has the dual roles of the appointment of clergy and ensuring their wellbeing giving it both an administrative and pastoral function. The former Council of Deans performed some of these functions, in the past, but it was not operating optimally. The clergy were happy for the change to be made to the Personnel Board with a broader governance structure including a laywoman. While not included in the governance review, we did ascertain general satisfaction with the conduct of the Personnel Board. However, there would be value in the Personnel Board developing a charter to clarify its role, accountabilities and composition.

Recommendation 8: The Personnel Board develop a charter to clarify its role, accountabilities and composition.

3.21 Board of Management

We note that the Board of Management is outside the usual accountability structures of the diocese (although accountable to the Bishop). Its fiduciary function is to act as a steward for the priests' remuneration. It comprises three priests elected by their fellow priests on its board. Arguably the accountability of the Board of Management is to the Bishop and the priests through the Annual General Meeting. There is not a qualified accountant on the Board of Management. We see value in appointing a full or ex officio member of the Board of Management to add this expertise and independent assurance.

It is inevitable, the actions of the Board of Management will be seen externally as actions of the diocese as was illustrated by media attention over JobKeeper arrangements in early 2020. This situation does leave the diocese exposed from a communications viewpoint. There would be value in reviewing the relationship between communications function of the diocese and that of the Board of management.

Recommendation 9: Consideration being given to the charter and composition of the Board of Management, including the input of a qualified accountant and the role of lay men and women.

3.22 Evaluation

As already noted in the analysis, not all the diocesan advisory and decision-making entities have provision for reflection and appraisal. We recommend that all entities have a Mission Discernment Framework at the committee level which relates to their values, governance principles and missionary purpose, and which is used as a means of assessing their performance at each meeting. This is typically done by a member being nominated ahead of the meeting (as is common for the person leading the prayer) to reflect on the deliberations and conduct of their colleagues during the meeting, and to spend around three minutes at the conclusion of the meeting giving their view as to whether the board or committee conducted itself in accordance with its values, principles and purpose. By sharing the responsibility for this role, and embedding it in the conduct of meetings, it can act as a powerful reminder of purpose and values.

Recommendation 10: That all entities have a Mission Discernment Framework at the committee level which relates to their values, governance principles and missionary purpose, and which is used as a means of assessing their performance at each meeting.

In a similar focus on continuous improvement, it is recommended that boards and committees conduct annual self-appraisal to reflect on their effectiveness, and that they organise an independent assessment every 3-5 years. We further discuss this matter in Section 5 related to the oversight of all governance arrangements in the diocese. A copy of the independent board assessment should be provided to the Bishop.

Recommendation 11: Boards and committees conduct annual self-appraisal to reflect on their effectiveness, and organise an independent assessment every 3-5 years.

Section 4: Summary of Findings

A review provides a snapshot in time. During the period June 2020 – March 2021 the reviewers probed governance practice in the Diocese of Parramatta drawing from a number of sources outlined in Section 2. The results of these explorations were then aggregated and analysed and grouped into five categories (see Attachment 10):

- Senior priests and religious;
- Deans, Deanery Pastoral Council chairs, Diocesan PC chairs and deputy chairs;
- Board chairs, deputy chairs and members;
- Council of Priests; and
- Lay leaders.

A number of interviewees have dual or multiple roles, memberships or affiliations, and this was accommodated. Some key individuals were interviewed several times. We found little variance in perspective between these groups, so the findings have been aggregated across groupings. Where there are differences these are noted. Quotes are used from individuals to highlight key points or to illustrate a minority view (with each separate individual preceded by an asterisk). Observations of meetings are included where relevant. The issues and themes that emerged from the analysis of findings are discussed in Section 5.

4.1 Individual roles

While governance reviews generally focus on the conduct of corporate entities, a diocesan review needs to take account of those roles in canon law which vest power and authority in individuals. Key roles, such as the Bishop, his Vicars and financial administrators, are set out very broadly in canon law. A challenge for those in roles which are prescribed canonically is that they may well be working alongside lay administrators who have clear deliverables and accountabilities written into their contracts and role descriptions. The reviewers found a mix of practice and perceptions in the conduct of individual roles.

4.1.1. The bishop

As part of its investigation into the governance of dioceses, *The Light from the Southern Cross* report examined the role of the bishop and noted that canon law states that a diocese “is a portion of the People of God entrusted to a bishop to be shepherded by him with the cooperation of the priests”.¹⁷ (See Attachment 12 for a full extract on the role of the bishop.) The elements of most relevance to this governance review are that the Bishop:

- holds all the powers of governance – legislative, executive and judicial – required for the exercise of his pastoral office, ‘except in those matters which the law [universal of the Church or promulgated by the bishops’ conference, plenary or provincial councils] or a decree of the supreme pontiff reserves to the supreme pontiff or to some other ecclesiastical authority’;
- makes financial and management decisions with the advice and consent of the Diocesan Finance Council and the College of Consultors;
- makes important decisions for the diocese with the assistance of the Council of Priests; and
- plans the pastoral activity in the diocese with the assistance of the Diocesan Pastoral Council composed of a representative group of laity, religious and clergy, where they exist.¹⁸

Fundamentally, authority and power are vested solely in the bishop, apart from those matters enshrined in the Church’s universal laws, and certain financial matters (See Section 3.8). Hence the leadership style and persona of the bishop are important in setting the governance norms and practice. Similarly, the approach to administration is strongly influenced by the bishop: namely, his vision for the diocese, his expectations of a congruence between civil and ecclesial norms (or not), his priorities for financial expenditure and risk management, and his requirements for regulatory compliance (or not).

In the case of Bishop Vincent, he set out his vision for the diocese very clearly at his Installation Mass in June 2016:

As your bishop, I am committed to be a bridge builder. We must foster pathways across the political and religious divide to build not only a rich and strong Australia but also an inclusive and humane society and a responsible global citizen. Furthermore, Pope Francis urges us to be a church where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live according to the Gospel. There can be no future for the living church without there being space for those who have been hurt, damaged or alienated, be they abuse victims, survivors, divorcees, gays, lesbians or disaffected members. I am committed to make the church in Parramatta the house for all peoples, a church where there is less an experience of exclusion but more an encounter of radical love, inclusiveness and solidarity.

He reiterated these principles in an address to a diocesan forum in July 2019, *Envisioning the Church in Western Sydney for the New Millennium*:

The Church as understood and articulated by the Second Vatican Council sees itself as a pilgrim People of God, incarnate in the world. It is a new paradigm – one that is based on partnership, collaboration, participation and empowerment as opposed to the old way of clerical control, and monopoly at worst, or lay subservience and passivity at best.

The time has come for us to implement decisively this participatory, inclusive and collaborative model in our diocesan and parish structures. The Royal Commission recommends that the clerical governance structures be reviewed, drawing from the modes of governance already implemented in Catholic health, community services and education agencies. We need to create a Church more humble, transparent and accountable to the faithful and the community at large. The time has come for the Church to be truly the Church of the baptised and together with the ordained, all the People of God can create a new culture of humility, accountability and service.

The reviewers found a very clear understanding of the Bishop's vision for the diocese, and a general commitment and enthusiasm to implement it. Given the very diverse nature of the diocese there was also evidence of some priests and laity still adhering to pre-Vatican II conceptions of a traditional Church with a hierarchy of bishop and priests to whom laity paid homage.¹⁹ One lay person commented:

Clericalism doesn't always wear a collar. There are lay people who like to be in the aura of the priest and are overly deferential. Some want to be instructed.

And a priest commented of some of his fellow priests:

Many clergy see themselves as their own bishop – a fiefdom. Some are reluctant to connect beyond the parish – for example, to the deanery. There is not a great deal of accountability... There is an implicit code of conduct for the priests, but it is not explicit. Some of the behaviours are a dimension of clericalism – I'm responsible only to myself and to God. This is a fault in formation and selection. There is also a need for ongoing formation and professional development, but many see this an impost. Some of the priests are proud of the fact that they haven't opened a book since they left the seminary.

However, these views are minority views, with the clear majority of those interviewed enthusiastic about the Bishop's approach. He has a clear preference for a synodal, inclusive, accountable and compassionate diocese. This is reflected in governance structures and practice. We observed exemplary governance practice in most meetings, which is significant given that most of the governing bodies are advisory. We note the tendency for advisory bodies to lose direction as they are not the decision-makers. However, the synodal stance of co-responsibility adopted by the Bishop, his approach of respectful listening in meetings, and his general acceptance of advice, means that directors have a sense of purpose and dedication that keeps them highly engaged.

Commendation 3: The Bishop is commended for clearly communicating his vision for the diocese, and for engendering commitment to it.

4.1.2 Senior episcopal roles

The Diocese of Parramatta has two Vicars General, an Episcopal Vicar for Education, an Episcopal Vicar for Social Welfare, an Episcopal Vicar for Judicial Matters (who is also Episcopal Vicar for Ethnic Chaplains), and an Episcopal Vicar for the Clergy. There are two other vicars – a Vicar for Communication and a Vicar for Religious, both of whom are religious. *The Light from the Southern Cross* report describes the vicar roles:

Under canon law, a bishop must appoint one or more vicars general to assist him in administration. The vicar general has 'the same executive power throughout the whole diocese as that which belongs by law to the diocesan bishop: that is, he can perform all administrative acts, with the exception however of those which the bishop has reserved to himself, or which by law requires special mandate of the bishop...

The bishop can also appoint one or more episcopal vicars, who have the same power as a vicar general but only in relation to a specific aspect of diocesan affairs (for example, episcopal vicars for clergy or education). The episcopal vicar is not an auxiliary bishop and is appointed for a determined period of time.²⁰

While the roles of the senior clergy such as episcopal vicar, chancellor, and other vicar roles are written broadly in canon law, only one has been given practical expression in the diocese in a role description. There are mixed views amongst those in the roles as to the value of a role description. The canonical breadth gives leeway to the bishop and the incumbent to shape the role. However, the absence of a role description also makes induction and onboarding more of a challenge, and makes it more difficult to establish performance criteria to which the occupant can be held accountable, as noted by two senior interviewees:

**There is confusion between the ecclesiastical and civil governance aspects of the roles. Because of the vacuum much if it has been driven by personalities... The Vicar-General (VG) role is strongly influenced by the personality of the incumbent. However, this is also in relation to the personality of those with whom the VG works.... Is the particular agency part of the ministry of the diocese or is it a separate agency? What is the role of the VG in this context – just to be a spiritual and temporal influence in terms of Catholicity?*

**Where the rubber hits the road is in respect to relationships and accountability. There are two Episcopal Vicars (EVs) who work with Executive Directors who also report to the Bishop. However, this places the EV in a difficult role as they are sandwiched between the Bishop and the ED. In the perfect world the ED would report only to the Vicar, and occasionally might have engagement with the Bishop. This would limit the number of direct reports to the Bishop.*

There are time limits on these Vicar roles, and this represents good practice. The Bishop is encouraged to use these caps on tenure to provide opportunities for other clergy and senior lay leaders to work in a central role in the diocese and learn about diocesan administration, and to provide pathways to succession. The Bishop inherited a structure of two Vicars-General and has retained both roles. This makes sense given that Parramatta is the fifth largest diocese in Australia, there are no auxiliary bishops, and there is growing complexity in civil and canonical compliance.²¹ He has appointed two women to the Curia, one a religious and one a lay person and is to be commended for his inclusive approach.

Recommendation 12: Role descriptions drawn from the tenets in canon law be developed for senior clerical roles to provide role clarity, criteria for performance assessment, and the basis of accountability with provision for review to meet changing needs.

Recommendation 13: The Bishop is encouraged to provide stable succession pathways for aspiring leaders through making new appointments at the point of turnover in vicar roles.

Commendation 4: The Bishop is commended for the appointment of two women to the Curia – a religious and a laywoman.

4.1.3 The roles of senior administrators

The diocese is a very large enterprise canonically and temporally. It has a number of impressive people in senior lay leadership roles, with the most senior role laid down in canon law, the Chief of Operations and Finance.²² The next largest role is that of the Executive Director of Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) who has oversight of the largest ministry in the diocese with an annual turnover of some \$750 million and 82 schools. This is not to diminish other senior roles which lead and manage important ministries such as welfare/social services, financial management, safeguarding, liturgy, risk management, pastoral planning, the tribunal, business development and so on. All these roles are filled by lay people.

Senior lay leaders operate under formal written role descriptions which provide greater clarity and specificity than their clerical and religious counterparts. As such there are clear responsibilities, expectations and grounds for accountability. The Executive Director of CatholicCare, and the Head of the Office of Safeguarding are both relatively new to their roles and have the position descriptions used in recruitment as a guide. All the senior lay leaders interviewed were clear regarding their lines of reporting and accountability, their delegations, and their functions. They are subject to an annual performance review which precedes the annual remuneration review for all lay staff.²³ All are very clear that they are a ministry of the Church, and that the Bishop is the ultimate decision-maker in the diocese.

Commendation 5: Contemporary approaches to human resources are adopted across diocesan agencies, including open recruitment, clear role descriptions for lay staff, and a whole-of-diocese appraisal approach.

The Bishop's direct reports include the Chief of Operations and Finance, the Executive Directors of Catholic Education and CatholicCare, and Head of Safeguarding. Given that he also has eight Vicars, two Chancellors, and the Rector of the Seminary reporting directly to him, this is a significant number of direct individual reports. If we add to this the number of committees that report to the Bishop, he has extremely heavy oversight and decision-making functions. In addition, as noted, there can be confusion in the lines of reporting to the Bishop and the relevant Vicar. There would be value in formally delegating lines of direct reporting and accountability for some roles from the Bishop to others to rationalise the scope of the Bishop's responsibility and liability to a more manageable scale. (This is discussed in Section 4.4.)

Recommendation 14: Consider transferring the formal reporting line for the heads of some diocesan agencies to the relevant Vicar or Board Chair to lighten the load of the Bishop, avoid potential ambiguity, and locate the reporting close to the person with the deepest knowledge of the enterprise (under the principle of subsidiarity).

Lay leaders are clear that they are leading Church ministries in the diocese. Unprompted, most of them referred to their entities as part of Church and of the diocese:

**I see the Chancery role as making sure the business side is supportive of the mission of the Church – the pastoral side... We have set up a virtual parish support team within the Chancery as a means of providing a better focus by the whole of Chancery to the back-office support to the parishes. The aim of Chancery staff is to see ourselves as a customer service organisation providing advice. The Chancery cannot tell its stakeholders what to do, other than support the requirements enacted by the Bishop. The key customers are the parishes specifically and other agencies within the Diocese, globally.*

**Staff feel very connected to the Church and the faith, even the non-Catholics... A key part of the role is to provide strategic direction to CatholicCare and oversee services and supports built from the faith – doing Christ's work on behalf of the Church in to the community. That drives conversations around the types of services and supports and the mode of service delivery to the poor and marginalised. CatholicCare operate in a crowded market, much of which is now commercialised.*

**There is respect for the role of the finances in decision-making. Decisions that could jeopardise the financial situation are considered very carefully. As a NFP there is a 'triple bottom line' consideration which is pastoral or mission-based. This might lead to a deliberate loss-making decision in some circumstances, and in these circumstances a long-term view is taken for recouping the financial investment.*

There have been legacy issues in a couple of the agencies which are being addressed.²⁴ However, all senior administrators reported levels of cooperation, and support from the Chancery for their leadership role, and for connecting them as senior personnel – for instance, the COF's Thursday morning briefings. However, some speak of operational siloes and difficulties brokering arrangements across these:

**Whilst top-level leadership may attempt to practise these Catholic principles, often 'middle management' are frozen in their very focused siloed approach to issues and the overall good of the Diocese. Ongoing training is necessary for all diocesan lay leaders in these leadership principles of Vatican II.*

The onus is on the heads of agencies to ensure their staff don't engage in siloed work approaches, and that they seek collaboration and operational efficiencies where they can be found. It is noteworthy that a similar exhortation is made in the summation of issues for Plenary Council:

Avoid unnecessary duplication of administrative effort by adopting a spirit of financial cooperation and identifying efficiencies in the diocesan structure of the Church.²⁵

4.1.4 The role of deans

The deanery structure is part of the ecclesial governance of the diocese. The deans are local parish priests and all displayed a clear understanding of the purpose of the deaneries, as set out in Canon 555, to provide a forum for the local priests to meet, share ideas and support one another. The deans are appointed by the Bishop for a five-year term, generally following suggestions from the local deanery. Most see the function positively, to support the priests and to bring their concerns to the attention of the diocese, generally to the Council of Priests, or directly to the Bishop or the diocesan office concerned. There are six meetings with a lunch six times each year, usually with a guest speaker, where matters of concern to the Parish Priests (PPs) are discussed. There are friendly gatherings of the priests on the alternate months which helps create a bond between the priests in the diocese.

There is no role description for the role of dean, nor is there induction and professional development, so new deans must invent the role for themselves. Generally, it is seen as relaying diocesan matters on behalf of the Bishop or the Vicar General, and coordinating the local community of the priests.

While most of the deans were positive, not all see the model as working well, as its effectiveness depends on individual Deans and the time and energy and resources they have to put into the role.

**It is nominally effective. There are issues with it. When it was first implemented it was established as a communication channel and the effectiveness of it depends on whether the pastors wanted it. Some want to be individualistic PPs. The model relies on the understanding of synodality of the PPs.*

**Deaneries are to support the Parish Priests (PPs) working within the deanery, with their pastoral needs and with friendship and to create opportunities for them to spend time together. It is difficult with COVID but generally the deanery achieves its purposes. It is not only Parish Priests but also other priests like the assistant priests and retired priest who are staying in the deanery are part of the deanery, and their concerns are addressed as much as possible...*

The deans understand their role as supporting the vision of the Bishop, and being a conduit for regional issues which could be pastoral, parish-related, education matters and so on. It is a challenge to maintain scheduled meetings between the deans and the Bishop; for instance, funerals can intervene.

**The dean is the Bishop's representative, appointed by him, so represents the Curia in this role... The dean is closer to the priests in need or in distress on behalf of the Bishop. The priests are often open to the dean speaking to them rather than the VG or the Bishop – there is an existing fraternal bond. The dean can then submit the issues to the Bishop or the CoPs.*

Generally, the deaneries coordinate sacramental programs such as First Reconciliation and First Communion. Also, the Parish Priests try to supply for each other when they take holidays. The majority of the deanery support is through the relationships between the priests. One of the deans visits the Parish Priests in their parishes, to sit with them, hear of their concerns, and if appropriate, relay matters to the diocese. The isolation of some of the Parish Priests is noted:

**Diocesan priests don't have the same formation as those in religious communities. For them the parish is supposed to be the primary community, but this doesn't always work. Therefore, there is a need to have a fraternal community of priests – brothers working for the same purpose, someone to rely on to foster friendships and mutual support. The role of dean is not a heavy burden. You need to prioritise what you do. If there is a crisis it can take time, but the role is not generally a burden.*

The values and principles referred to by the deans are those of openness, cooperation, creating a safe environment for people to express their views, mutual trust, synodality and respect.

**There is a broad spectrum of ideology and ecclesiology in the groups [ranging] from Opus Dei, to more liberal views. So, there can be conflicting views. Still have an element of clericalism amongst the laity, as well as the clergy. They want to check with Father – still have a mindset that they need authorisation.*

When asked to consider opportunities for improvement to the administration of the diocese the deans generally spoke of bureaucratisation of the Chancery, a related poor understanding of the issues facing parishes, and a lack of transparency and accountability for the use of finances. One of the deans believes the CEDP is 'wagging the diocesan dog', another that there are too many staff in the Chancery, and another that matters from the diocese (such as staffing changes) could be communicated better. Sitting underneath their concerns appeared to be the isolation in individual Parish Priest roles, and a thirst for information on the operation of the diocese.

Recommendation 15: Improve information and communication to Parish Priests on the operation of the diocese, including greater information on finances.

Information sharing, effective communication and authentic consultation were raised by the deans as some of their ideas for improved governance practice. A specific suggestion was for an expanded monthly *Ad Clerum* with contributions from units across the Chancery.

**The governance would benefit from more sharing of information about what is going on, what is the direction. An example is the changes to the RE Curriculum in schools... There needs to be more openness about what is going on at the Executive level of the diocese – for instance, the move to the Bethany Centre prompted some reorganisation of the Chancery, and it would have been good to share this. What is the future for Parramatta? It looks different from the diocesan to the parish perspective.*

4.1.5 Senior governance roles

A detailed analysis of the Statutes, purposes, and modus operandi of the various incorporated and unincorporated bodies in the diocese is provided in Section 3.

As noted, the reviewers were impressed by the calibre and commitment of those volunteering their time and expertise to the governing bodies of the diocese. They comprise a mix of people with experience in professional services, directorship, commercial and banking practice, and NFP management. There is no remuneration for these roles and only the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Services Limited (CDPSL) is constituted as a Company with a decision-making board. Some bodies, such as the Diocesan Finance Council

(DFC), demand a considerable amount of time, and require technical expertise and a deep understanding of certain precepts in canon law as well as civil, prudential and ecclesial governance principles.

Board and committee chairs were generally highly effective, clear on their role, the purpose of their body, and where it fitted into the mosaic of decision-making in the diocese, apart from the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Diocesan Liturgical Commission (DLC). The Diocesan Pastoral Council is discussed in Section 4.2.3. The Diocesan Liturgical Commission is discussed in Section 3.10. Those in governing roles have a strong sense of purpose and dedication, despite their roles being largely advisory to the Bishop. This appears to be due to factors such as their respect for the Bishop's vision for the diocese, their personal commitment, and their comfort that their entity is run on robust governance protocols despite being advisory in nature:

**The body is advisory, and has no power per se. The Bishop is a member and attends meetings as often as he can. CatholicCare Advisory Council (CCAC) operates as a board would, run on principles of good governance.*

**The DFC involves an understanding of both canon law and civil law [in] that the Bishop has an advisory committee to assist him in making financial decision. The DFC is not a board in a true sense, more of an advisory committee. However, the DFC does mirror contemporary governance practice.*

Given the essentially advisory nature of most of the diocesan boards and committees, most agree there is adequate clarity. However, the role of the consultants on some decisions is not as clear, including the lines of control and the process for escalation. There would be value in providing advice on decision-making as part of onboarding new members and producing diagrams such as those provided in the *Handbook for Deaneries*. Some members noted that their induction had been "by osmosis" and suggested that a more formal process would be beneficial.

Recommendation 16: Guidance on decision-making within the diocese be provided to new board and committee members as part of an enhanced process of induction.

4.2 Diocesan governing bodies

Section 3 has provided an entity-by-entity account of the governing bodies in the diocese, with an emphasis on their statutes and fidelity to mission. This present section looks more broadly at the governance practice of councils, committees and boards with a particular focus on the Council of Priests, the Diocesan Finance Council, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the CatholicCare Council and the Parramatta Schools Council. It was beyond the scale of the review to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of each governing entity. However, the interviews, document analysis, and meeting observations provided scope for a broad assessment of the conduct of these boards and most were found to be highly commendable.

4.2.1 Ecclesial governing bodies

In its examination of the governance of dioceses, *The Light from the Southern Cross* report defined the roles of the key diocesan governing bodies:

- *The Curia is the administration which assists the bishop to govern his diocese. It consists of individuals and bodies including the vicar general, episcopal vicars, the Chancellor, the judicial vicar, the business manager and the finance council.*²⁶ This definition encompasses the core elements of administrative support to the bishop, consistent with canon law. In practice many dioceses have an advisory body, also called the Curia, which provides ongoing counsel to the bishop. The Parramatta model of 'Curia' is more akin to an Executive in a civil entity where the final decision-making is retained by the CEO. In practice Parramatta calls its administration the Chancery. We note that a Charter is being developed that will define the role of the Curia.
- *The council of priests expresses the communion between the priests and their bishop. The council of priests is a group of priests who represent the presbyterium and who are to be, as it were, the bishop's senate. The council's role is to assist the bishop, in accordance with the law, in the governance of the*

*diocese, so that the pastoral welfare of that portion of the People of God entrusted to the bishop may be most effectively promoted. The council of priests assists the bishop in the governance of the diocese and is very important in making decisions in accordance with the statutes drawn up in consultation with the priests. The bishop should not act contrary to their unanimous opinion.*²⁷

- *The members of the college of consultors are chosen by the bishop from the members of the council of priests for a five-year term. There are to be between six and 12 consultors, and they give advice and consent on important economic matters and when the see is vacant ensure continuity of pastoral governance.*²⁸

The Council of Priests (CoPs) meets every two months, and the College of Consultors makes provision for 11 meetings each year and meets as required. Typically, they meet every two months and retain the other five meetings as needed. The CoPs represents a cross section of the priests and provides an interface between the Bishop and the clergy. The Bishop during 2020 proposed to both CoPs and the College of Consultors, that he invite a wider representation of people on to these clerical bodies, but they did not welcome the proposal, preferring to have a forum dedicated to their own issues. The matter was not progressed.

Most interviewees were broadly positive about the CoPs, describing it in terms of being an extremely valuable way of keeping the Bishop updated on what is happening around the diocese. However, one was critical citing the tendency to leave the same people in roles for a long time, and to produce minutes which he believed did not adequately reflect strong views. One priest described the potential for conflict of interest and another the difficulties with timeliness:

**There is a plethora of views at the CoPs and a conflict of Interest in that deans tend to represent their deaneries. This is how they become members of the CoPs. So, they feel they are representing the deanery, and that detracts from the individual input vs the collective.*

**Members of the CoPs can raise issues of pastoral significance from the deanery and vice-versa. It is not a bad process but as only bi-monthly meetings take place at the deanery and CoP's level, it can take a long time to effect change. The CoPs need to be able to make issues actionable more quickly.*

Most members of the CoPs saw the body as providing a forum for matters related to the work of the priests and as a means of supporting the Bishop:

**Individual members of the CoPs support him by letting him know what is actually happening in the diocese, bringing in some realism, suggesting initiatives for better collaboration and effectiveness, especially due to the decline in the number of clergy. And there are different models of Church from other cultures with the overseas parish priests which can cause a clash of ecclesiology's and cultures.*

One priest described it as trying to respond to the signs of the times, and trying to bring gospel values to bear on the pastoral, moral and socio-economic situation in the diocese. Another observed that differing perspectives can be voiced with respect for one another, that people can get passionate, "and that is good when it is for the Kingdom of God". Similar to the perspectives of the deans, they would like to see greater transparency from the diocese to the parishes on financial matters.

**Large diocesan expenditure needs a rationale. The CoP has no understanding of the finances and accountability and transparency in that domain. That is paradoxical as the diocese has very specific accountability rules for parishes. The accountability is only going one way, and this raises questions. We would like to see accountability back to the parishes on diocesan expenditure.*

We observed some confusion regarding the locus of decision-making amongst ecclesial bodies – the Curia, the Council of Priests and the College of Consultors. A few priests perceive the Curia to be overly influential on the thinking of the Bishop. This is likely the case given the frequency of Curia meetings compared to the Council of Priests. We regard it as good practice that the Bishop has two groups of advisors to give him frank counsel on different topics at different times.

Given their trustee role those priests on the College of Consultors are rightly apprised of all financial matters of the diocese which are properly not part of the agenda of the Council of Priests. Members of the College of Consultors are Trustees in civil as well as canon law.

Similarly, the members of the Diocesan Finance Council have insights into the financial situation in the diocese which is not common knowledge to the priests – and this is proper. People with particular expertise or experience are privy to information for the conduct of their governance role which might otherwise be subject to confidentiality or privacy provisions, or commercial-in-confidence requirements. We note that the College of Consultors has met twice in joint sessions with the Diocesan Finance Council in recent years to determine significant financial matters. This is a sensible means of ensuring that the two bodies are in agreement on major transactions.

However, we note the thirst for greater information sharing and transparency from amongst some of the clergy and believe that transparency should be the default position where this is possible. This would support a synodal approach, and potentially increase understanding of the operational side of the diocese. This is discussed further in Section 4.4.

During the conduct of the review the Bishop requested a charter for the Curia be developed. We commend this move. There would be value in having charters drawn from canon law and local practice for the Council of Priests and the College of Consultors as well. This would provide clarity and specificity on the differing roles of each body, and be a means of explaining such to the priests and interested laypeople. As recommended in Section 3, we see benefit in providing charters of all governing bodies (decision making and advisory) and the membership of each body, on the diocesan website.

Recommendation 17: That the Diocese develops a Charter for the Curia and that Statutes for key ecclesial bodies (The Curia, The College of Consultors and the Council of Priests) be presented in the form of a standard template with document control and provision for periodic review.

4.2.2 Diocesan Finance Council

A pre-eminent body in advising the Bishop in the administration of the considerable property and business matters in the diocese is the Diocesan Finance Council (DFC) as noted in Section 3.8. It assists the Bishop with oversight of the overall financial objectives of the diocese and with a property strategy.

Every diocese must have a diocesan finance council composed of experts in financial matters and civil law according to the statutes drawn up in consultation with the members and the consultors. This council must be consulted or give their consent jointly with the college of consultors for significant acts of administration and alienation of church property. The diocesan bishop with the assistance of personnel such as the finance manager provides guidance and oversight to the parishes in their financial and management decisions.²⁹

The long-term strategy in Parramatta diocese to create an annuity to fund diocesan ministries looks prescient in a post-COVID world. All dioceses (and the Vatican) are under financial pressure. Significantly the DFC works to balance the opportunities and challenges mindful of risk identification and management, as well as the risk appetite of the Bishop. The DFC would like to see risk management capability embedded more broadly within all parts of the diocese including parishes. The prudent long-term focus of the DFC positions the diocese for a sustainable financial future, despite declining numbers of parishioners.

Commendation 6: The prudent, long-term financial focus of the DFC, situates the diocese well for a sustainable financial future where its ministries can be maintained.

We found high levels of expertise, professionalism, and commitment in the DFC and its sub-committees. Regular monthly meetings are generally well-attended and well-conducted maintaining good governance practice, as well as momentum, even during the pandemic.

**The DFC is as good, if not better than the comparable corporate bodies in terms of the depth of debate which is conducted. Bishop Vincent handles this well – he is forthright, but accepts the expertise and advice of members. A recent example was what should be the base funding rate for the DDF – this was handled by a sub-committee.*

One area where unprompted critical commentary was made by a number of interviewees was in relation to the perceived independence of the Catholic Education. One DFC member described this as performing their advisory role with “one hand tied behind our back”. (Further discussion on the Parramatta Schools Council is provided in Section 4.3.)

**The DFC should be the overarching body supporting the Bishop in key operational and strategic decisions. There should be complete transparency: for example, where a major capital spend is proposed for education, the DFC and DDF should have a complete picture of its finances and asset base, including education assets.*

The three sub-committees of the DFC – the Diocesan Investment Advisory Committee (DIAC), the Diocesan Audit and Enterprise Risk Committee (DAERC), and the Diocesan Property Council -- are conducted professionally with the benefit of expertise and knowledge of experienced members with technical know-how and wide networks.³⁰

**DAERC has a strong focus on risk, and on the management of finances and has been involved in getting a standardised risk register across the diocese. DAERC deal with the relationship with the external auditors... There has been a phenomenal ramp-up in the professionalism of the diocese in terms of managing finance and risk, particularly compared to other dioceses. Expert staff have increased the level of professionalism – for example, the adoption of a capital adequacy framework, even though the DDF is exempt. This protects the diocese especially during the low interest rate environment.*

**[The Board chair] has read The Light from the Southern Cross report, as well as having deep familiarity with the ASX corporate governance statements. With the overlay of the Church there is strong similarity between ecclesial and civil governance norms.*

4.2.3 Diocesan Pastoral Council

The Diocesan Pastoral Council, like the Deanery Pastoral Councils, is just three years old. The chair and deputy chair believe that the Bishop wants the Diocesan PC to be the grassroots voice of the parish and the parochial district communities and to discern topical issues and concerns. They see their role to build relationships to co-create the pastoral journey with the Council of Priests. They meet quarterly on Saturday mornings, generally with the Bishop present. There are fortnightly executive meetings in the interim. The Diocesan Pastoral Council has suffered from meeting absenteeism and a high dropout rate which its leaders believe is partly due to people being busy, but also due to slow progress for the first two years. They worked in 2020 to rectify this.

We observed a growth in confidence and direction in the Diocesan Pastoral Council during the conduct of the review. The preoccupation with the establishment of the Plenary Council (originally scheduled for a 2020 assembly), at the inception of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, left it without a well-defined forward agenda. Their focus in 2020 on developing a Vision and Mission Statement, and in cementing a working relationship with the Council of Priests, has positioned them for a more clearly delineated role. As one of the newer bodies in the diocese they find transparency and accountability challenging as they are not decision-makers, and do not always get access to core information. They identified the areas needing improvement as access to information and effectiveness of communications.

**We don't understand what is going on across the diocese, the programs they are running, and the quality of those programs. Who is the decision maker? What are the consequences of good or poor decisions? What is the governance formation of clergy and diocesan bodies? What are the compliance obligations we have (for instance, safeguarding) and are we meeting them? Is there a whistle blowing policy? Where can we access key policies and procedures?*

In relation to possible governance improvements, we noted that co-responsibility with the laity would require careful consideration of the requests made of volunteers:

**The concern is that as a movement toward a lay-led church, we have possibly overwhelmed the lay people who felt they couldn't balance their family, work and church involvements and responsibilities.*

**How do we deal with conflict, discernment and resolution? How willing are the clergy to let go of their self-perception as a traditional priest – not denying their responsibility, but allowing engagement with the laity that is in sync with Bishop Vincent and Pope Francis.*

We identified cultural and practical enablers and barriers to a vibrant pastoral vision, which involves contributions from the laity, alongside their priest and Bishop:

**Until the deanery clergy and the deanery pastoral councils form a working relationship there will never be a sense of working together at the coalface, that sense of breaking through the glass ceiling of clerical dominance. Yet, to be fair, lay people are finding themselves time-poor to be engaged as much as the Bishop is inviting them to be. If laity cannot give the time to the meetings and discernment that is required to make the cultural change, then, in effect, we are throwing the ball back into the clerical court.*

We see the Diocesan Pastoral Council as a relatively new body, preoccupied initially with consultation for the Plenary Council, and now beginning to formalise relationships and forge its positive forward agenda.

4.2.4 Deanery Pastoral Councils

The Diocese of Parramatta has six Deaneries – Central East, Central West, Eastern, Mountains, Northern, and Western. There is a *Handbook* compiled by the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Office (PPO) which sets the purpose, role and functions of the deaneries, and the statutes and operating protocols for the Deanery Pastoral Councils (PCs). The Deanery PCs undertook the consulting for Plenary Council with the parishes, and got lay people involved. Some see this as the primary impetus for the creation of the Deanery PCs. Like the Diocesan Pastoral Council, they were preoccupied initially with the consultations for the Plenary Council, and belatedly forging their agendas.

Despite only being in operation since February 2018, Chairs of the Deanery PCs demonstrated a good understanding of their role describing functions such as:

- fostering the Bishop's vision for the parishes within the deanery;
- being a two-way conduit between the parishes, deaneries, and where necessary the diocese;
- supporting coordination between parishes as some of the ministries, such as youth, are organised along deanery lines; and
- organising and chairing meetings.

The chairs described a number of positive and problematic features of the model, some of which could be regarded as implementation issues, and some attitudinal:

**There is an ongoing problem with the support of the model. It needs to be supported by every PP. One parish is not represented on the Deanery Pastoral Council. Some of the parish reps just don't turn up. The majority of the parishes have a commitment to the deanery model, but it would be a slim majority. Not all the parishes have Parish Pastoral Councils. It is difficult as you are dealing with volunteers – you hope they turn up.*

**The main purpose is to build connections between parishes which alert people to what is happening in other parishes so we can learn from one another. Some people find it difficult to communicate with the PP. Most are positive about the operation of their parish and use words like 'working collaboratively with the PP' or 'trying to find the real concerns of parishioners, and generate a rapport with the PP.'*

**Deaneries still have a long way to go mainly because of communication. Some Parish Priests never reply to emails, and that is difficult. They may be suffering burnout, and very tired. The deanery PCs do raise critical questions and can be seen as a pebble in the shoe of the PP.*

Despite having a good understanding of their role from the *Handbook*, a number of the chairs reported struggling with the role of chair and the mechanics of the meetings. In some cases this is due to inexperience, and in others due to the preoccupation with consultation on PC2020 at the outset, and now having to identify and manage new deanery priorities and issues:

**Sometimes the meetings can be feisty, sometimes just go along benignly and without energy, seeming not to get anywhere. It's hard to get enthusiasm sometimes. There was no training in role as deanery chair. There would be value in providing training in dealing with difficult people.*

Apart from organising the consultations for the Plenary Council it is not clear to all of the Deanery PC Chairs how their work supports the pastoral role of the Bishop. For those who see a link, it is framed in terms of supporting the mission of the diocese and being a conduit to get information through to the diocese. In contrast they can clearly see how their efforts support the parishes. In one of the deaneries where some members of the Pastoral Council are oppositional to the bishop, the Chair sees some of their work as potentially undermining the Bishop.

Recommendation 18: Provide induction, and targeted training and support for Deanery Pastoral Council chairs.

The chairs are aware that there is no authority in the Deanery PC. Members are expected to pass on the issues from the Deanery to the Parish Priest and the Parish PC but are not sure the message always gets through. Deanery councillors are active parishioners and would be well known to their Parish Priest who has to endorse the appointment to the Deanery PC. The quality of these relationships, rather than structural or procedural norms, seems to govern the effectiveness of the Deanery PC – Parish engagement.

**The support for Parish Priests depends on the Parish Priest and how open they are to ideas and whether they want to be supported. Some don't have Parish Pastoral Councils (PPCs) and then you feel like you're intruding. Not sure what the Parish Priests need either. If they have a PPC they probably pass on their issues to them, but that doesn't necessarily get to the Deanery Pastoral Council in a timely fashion.*

**Members of the Deanery PC see themselves as co-workers, rather than 'doing what Father asks me to do' and being in an infantilised state. Our language needs to reflect this relationship of mutuality – of an adult relationship.*

The Deanery PC Chairs had no difficulty in identifying the values and governance principles that guide their work. They referred to respect and care for each other, transparency, listening and communication, synodality, integrity, collegiality, discernment, leadership, and inclusion. Some referenced the Bishop's statement, "to be the Church that Christ calls us to be", but also spoke of the frustrations in contexts where hierarchical mindsets prevail:

**Are we going to talk about co-responsibility? If you get the right dean, a lot can be done. But there is no requirement that anyone takes any account of the deliberations of the Deanery Pastoral Council. People who are committed to the Deanery Council are committed to their local Church, so will wear some of this dynamic. The chair has to use leadership to try and get the matters, discussed at Council meetings, considered by the priests. In a number of the parishes the Parish Priest is not amenable to external ideas, and any perception of interference. Some of the Parish Priests see the Deanery PCs as an added interruption.*

Tackling clericalism ("the elephant in the room") was raised and seen as two-pronged – first, needing the priests to recognise it and be prepared to address it. Second, needing those in the circles close to the Parish Priest who are overly deferential to recognise and address their contribution to maintaining a clericalist culture. A related need was expressed for formation of the laypeople in church and faith so they can realise

their call to be ‘priests, prophets and kings’ in a synodal Church. This thinking is congruent with that of the Plenary Council Discernment Group #4:

That some clergy and laity reinforce the separation between clerical and lay states contributes to abuses of power. The baptismal dignity and common priesthood of all the faithful, lived in harmony with the ministerial priesthood, provide a healthy counterbalance.³¹

Recommendation 19: That a culture of synodality be emphasised and adopted as part of the ‘Parramatta Way’ of clergy and laity walking together and co-operating together in the mission of the Church.

4.2.5 CatholicCare Council

CatholicCare Social Services appointed a new Executive Director in 2020, and has a relatively new Board Chair after a period of significant instability, including 18 months when there was no Council. The reviewers were impressed with their grasp of the issues to be managed, and their planning to identify clear pathways for this important ministry in the diocese, despite the interruption of COVID-19. While not undertaking an in-depth case study on the CatholicCare Council, the reviewers noted that it adopts contemporary civil governance practice, and the Executive Director effectively reports to the Board Chair, whilst also having lines of accountability to the Episcopal Vicar for Social Welfare and the Bishop, both of whom attend their meetings. This represents a triplication of reporting as discussed in Sections 4.1.3 and 4.4, in relation to the number of direct reports to the Bishop.

Like a number of other bodies there is room for improvement, with induction and ongoing professional development for Council members. In addition, the agency operates in a mixed environment providing some programs in response to local need, others as contractors to government, and others in markets with commercial providers. As discussed in Section 3.17 the Council operates well as a governance body, and there is no pressing need for change to its governance structure. However, we believe that the move to incorporation should be an option in future consideration of the optimal legal form for CatholicCare Social Services. For example, the entity could enter into its own contracts and legal agreements, and the trifurcated reporting of the Executive Director could be streamlined.

Recommendation 20: Consideration be given to the optimal legal form of CatholicCare Social Services and its part in the long-term strategy of the Diocese’s missionary outreach.

4.3 Parramatta Schools Council

During the conduct of the review, we were asked to undertake a deeper analysis of the Parramatta Schools Council (PSC). This analysis complements the document analysis and account of the meeting observation in Section 3.16. We interviewed all members of the PSC and collected attitudes and perceptions from other interviews, such as members of the Diocesan Finance Council. The Bishop, CEO of the CEDP and Episcopal Vicar for Education are ex officio members, and they provided general interviews with some references to the PSC. The body is chaired by the Episcopal Vicar for Education.

All interviewees are cognisant that the PSC is advisory in nature. Some are satisfied with this, and even see the quarterly reporting of the PSC as a form of accountability, but others see it as providing limited additional value to CEDP. While high quality papers are produced and senior CEDP staff made available for the meetings, there is a sense by many PSC members that their contributions are ex post facto, and the directions set ahead of meetings. There is a general sense that CEDP resources are well-managed by PSC members which may explain the brief attention to the budget at the meeting observed by the reviewers. In addition, the Diocesan Finance Council pays careful attention to the finances of the largest enterprise in the diocese.

4.3.1 Optimal Governance Model for the CEDP

PSC members were specifically asked about the best governance approach for Catholic education and a majority favoured a move to an incorporated body with the caveat that it not become corporatised and lose its Catholicity and educational depth. A sample of viewpoints is provided below:

**The PSC could have more diversity in membership to increase independence. Quarterly meetings are not sufficient to enable adequate input. There would be value in the PSC becoming an incorporated body... It would help if there were more external members and greater independence.*

**Many have rushed to incorporation to prevent liability. However, you need to have other reasons why you would do this. We need to recognise that a bishop is not necessarily a CEO in terms of skills and capabilities. So, there is a need for a structure that brings expertise to support the enterprise of the diocese. The funding to support the diocese comes largely from government, and there are pitfalls with accountability and liability expertise. This requires a strong governance model. This is partly about managing our expectation of what a bishop can fairly be expected to do.*

**It is extraordinary that it is not an incorporated board. There is a lack of understanding of who the CEO is accountable to. He needs to be protected. He reports to the Bishop who has a huge range of areas to oversee. It would be a real protection for the Bishop to have an incorporated board. However, you must ensure that the board is independent and working toward the common good. The Bishop would need to make the appointments, and it would have to be an independent process.*

**Parramatta Diocese needs a better governance structure in education which takes account of the financial and the pastoral, educational and spiritual (not unlike a parish). Arguments for incorporation tend to rest on finances, but don't want this to drive the education enterprise in the diocese. If there is an incorporated Schools Council it will have a significant role to play in the evangelising of the Church, as well as on education and other matters.*

4.3.2 A way forward

On the basis of our inquiries, we believe the Diocese of Parramatta would benefit from incorporating the CEDP as a company limited by guarantee with the Bishop as the sole member. We are cognisant of the significant move that this would constitute and suggest a timeline of a couple of years that allows for adequate consultation and discernment. Some of the reasons we believe that a move to incorporation would be an improvement are:

- To ensure rigorous and focused supervision of the strategy and operations;
- In recognition that the Bishop should not be solely responsible for the governance of Catholic Education in the Diocese, noting that sole membership would still maintain the principle of ultimate authority;
- Isolation of assets and potential liabilities from other Diocesan assets;
- Quarantining of regulatory and compliance models from other aspects of Diocesan mission;
- Providing a governance rather than advisory structure which will more formally hold management to account for performance; and
- Ease of interfacing on contractual and funding matters by identification of a separate educational entity.

With a well thought out constitution, the diocese can ensure that the Catholic education mission is maintained as well as the authority of the Bishop. Religious formation can be explicitly written into the statutes. The body would be philosophically and legally a 'for purpose' vehicle.

Whatever the legal structure, the bishop would retain his oversight of religious education and responsibility for education standards as set out in Canons 802–806. We envisage a model where the Executive Director retains a reporting relationship with the Bishop (or his delegate) on such matters, and to the Board Chair on matters of governance, performance and accountability. Consideration would be given to the role of the Episcopal Vicar for Education. As noted, there are ambiguous lines of accountability for the Executive Director of Catholic Education. These could be clarified in a new structure.

The governance structure is agnostic as to culture and practice in the sense that it is only a tool to facilitate Mission. The makeup of the board and its accountabilities can be designed to take account of the particular

preferences in the diocese. While it is beyond the scope of the review to design a new legal structure for the diocese, the reviewers suggest the following to assist with decision-making:

- The diocese creates a sole member company, to ensure focused oversight and to protect the bishop not only from the burden of multi-tasking but also the burden of sole responsibility. Such a structure creates a greater synodality as it brings together both lay and religious experts to consult together about the strategy and operations of schools as an instrument of diocesan Mission. The makeup of the board would include those with expertise in mission, formation and education in addition to business, financial and legal disciplines. Directors would be appointed directly by the bishop on advice.
- The Executive Director would report to the chair and be accountable to the board on education policy, student performance and financial management of the CEDP, and to the Bishop (or his delegate) on matters related to Catholicity and religious education.

Recommendation 21: The diocese engage in a broad-based process of discernment to consider moving the governing body for the CEDP, from an advisory council to the board of an incorporated body.

4.4 Governance in practice

While board and committee chairs and members understood that their entity was advisory in nature (apart from the CDPsL) most interviewees reflected that they operated on robust standards of good governance. We observed most of the meetings virtually and were impressed by the professionalism and the evidence of good governance practice. Some areas for improvement are the quality of papers to some committees, regular self-review of effectiveness and the timeliness of appointments to the boards and committees. For example, the Diocesan Liturgy Commission chair tendered his resignation after a period of 13 years, but was unclear of the process for the identification of his replacement. Timely appointments ensure there are not vacancies of undue length, and provide a check that board and committee terms are adhered to.

Recommendation 22: A process for timely board and committee appointments be developed and applied either centrally within the Chancery, or by each committee or board.

Another dimension of good governance practice is inclusive appointments which reflect the diversity of the context, alongside an able chair who ensures that all voices are heard. The Diocese of Parramatta has an eye to inclusive practice and there are conscious attempts to have gender, ethnicity, personal and professional background, and location represented. Depending on the committee this is achieved.³² However, some committees due to their function need to have a keener eye to technical experience and knowledge than others.³³ Every effort should be made to achieve open and inclusive membership notwithstanding the need for particular expertise (be it liturgical, financial, pastoral and so on). One means of achieving this is through a talent bank of prospective board or committee members. This could be developed through seeking expression of interest through the parish bulletins, or through another means such as through the Diocesan or Deanery Pastoral Councils. Each body should have an eye for renewal and succession of membership.

Recommendation 23: Develop a talent bank of prospective board and committee members through advertising openly through channels such as the parish bulletins or pastoral councils.

A related dimension of inclusion is the cultural environment where members feel authorised to contribute. This atmosphere could be subdued with the involvement of people such as the Bishop on a committee; however, there was a uniformly positive assessment of his involvement. He was typically described as a good listener, respectful and courteous, and open to ideas:

**Bishop Vincent is very open and engaged, regularly attends when his schedule allows and contributes actively around the table. He is a hands-on bishop who has clear expectations which makes it easier to arrive at decisions. He is a person of fresh thinking, a very direct person who cuts through the rubbish - he is outcomes-focused. We need to follow his lead and all be outcomes-focused and accountable.*

In practice committees tend to describe themselves as collegiate, taking seriously the importance of discernment, synodality and stewardship. Few discuss subsidiarity and one noted that it has only been under the Bishop's leadership that there is a renewed focus on dialogue, inclusion and participation. People are clear that the Bishop wants to have everyone included irrespective of race, colour, financial situation and so on.

One area where some would like to see improvement is accountability. It is suggested that this could occur with more information sharing across diocesan agencies, and benchmarking of the administration of the Diocese of Parramatta with other dioceses. This could be based on more dialogue between dioceses who would volunteer to provide their data so comparisons could be made in areas such as financial ratios, Safeguarding, CatholicCare and Catholic Education. Consultation with like organisations offers the opportunity for improved evidence-based practice.

Recommendation 24: Consider inviting like dioceses to share information on agreed topics with a view to improving practice, creating peer support, and generating benchmarks.

One interviewee suggested the development of national governance standards for the Australian Catholic Church – such as the CPSL's National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.³⁴ The Church could develop national governance standards in response to the *Light from the Southern Cross* report to achieve consistency in good practice.

A recurring observation during interviews is that the canonical structure which has the Bishop as the sole decision-maker is not in step with contemporary norms and can be problematic when tough pastoral decisions have to be made. This means that the temperament of the bishop, along with the soundness of governance structures and protocols, will have a significant impact on the approach to decision-making in the diocese.

The Bishop has a burdensome number of direct reports from individuals and governing bodies as noted elsewhere in this report and we believe this should be streamlined to make greater use of vicars and board chairs. This would be consistent with the principle of subsidiarity - and good corporate practice. The large number of entities and individuals reporting to any Bishop, presuppose levels of business acumen, professional knowledge, and technical knowhow when none of his selection or formation has dealt with this. The number of direct reports does not take account of the time required for the Bishop's primary roles as pastor and religious leader. We recommend in Section 4.1.3 that the number of direct reports be streamlined.

4.4.1 Adoption of ecclesial governance principles

There is mixed familiarity with the ecclesial governance principles (as well as Church Social Teaching) with some interviewees describing being on a journey to full adoption, and one view that they are "not always named but honoured". The Bishop exercises authority over the diocese in an ecclesial and judicial fashion using the principle of communion. His promotion of synodality is in keeping with his Vatican II-inspired approach. Senior priests and religious are clear on the Bishop's preference for a greater involvement of the laity through co-responsible, synodal approaches and most support his vision. It is noteworthy that the Bishop's approach is consistent with that outlined in the Plenary Council's second discussion paper, where the faithful are exhorted to understand "synodality" as more than a buzzword:

*[T]o be 'synodal' is not so much a structure as an attitude. It involves a dynamic form of togetherness. The whole community – with its hierarchical and charismatic gifts, with a humble leadership and an actively engaged community – is open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.*³⁵

It was pleasing to observe during 2020 the lay leadership in the Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting with the Council of Priests. This models co-responsibility and could foster more synodal approaches at the deanery level.

Commendation 7: The Bishop's vision for an inclusive, synodal Church has been well communicated and widely embraced.

Commendation 8: Formalised arrangements for the Diocesan Pastoral Council to have regular engagement with the Council of Priests is a positive development.

Most senior lay leaders see adoption of ecclesial governance principles to be improving but still in transition within the diocese. There is a view that the Bethany Centre building offers the opportunity to consciously work on a supportive culture. The approach of the Bishop permeates the organisation as he is modelling these ecclesial principles, and staff are striving to be more collegial and inclusive.³⁶ In addition, the influence of the COF and his “calm and considered” approach to decision-making was noted, as well as his openness and the inclusiveness in his weekly briefings.

Like the senior clergy, most senior lay leaders are well aware of, and support, the Bishop’s aspiration for a synodal approach to the governance and administration of the diocese. This involves a level of collegiality, and co-responsibility and ‘walking together’ with lay people. Some find the concept of subsidiarity more difficult to conceptualise, especially given the authority vested in the Bishop as the sole decision-maker. Related to this concentration of power, is the view that regular parishioners may struggle to understand principles such as ‘subsidiarity’, especially if they don’t have a Parish Pastoral Council, or if they have an authoritarian Parish Priest.

**You become familiar with ecclesial principles – for example, subsidiarity and leaving parish matters to the parishes. The Bishop wants to walk alongside people, be of service. He wants to break down clericalism and episcopalism, for instance, no kissing rings. One of the approaches is to embed safeguarding standards across diocese to give life to them at the parish and agency level thereby empowering others to lead safeguarding. There can never be too much dialogue and subsidiarity.*

**The big nut to crack is synodality. Unless they give witness to that, it will be hard to bring people onside as the People of God in a collaborative and inclusive Church.*

One element undermining a full realisation of the Bishop’s vision is the clerical and hierarchical nature to Church in the diocese and elsewhere. A number of interviewees noted an unwillingness in the diocese to be upfront with the clergy and address poor behaviour. This creates a gap between what is espoused and actual clericalism. The Bishop has made inroads in promoting an inclusive and diverse culture; however, this is not always reflected in the practice of individual priests. Priests have authority in their parishes but are not subject to performance requirements, like those in civil roles, and there is no annual appraisal to provide them with feedback which might impact on their performance. One priest phrased a common viewpoint:

**We are beginning to see a change in the mentality of people in the pews. The days of pray, pay and obey are over. The laity won’t remain silent anymore and expect grievances to be heard. That is healthy and shows a sign of a Church that is becoming more adult. Pre-Vatican II the Church was adolescent in terms of the laity. People are much better educated, and they experience a different mode of being and understanding. They experience cooperation, collaboration, and accountability in other places, and it jars with them if that is not mirrored in the Church... Paramatta Diocese is serious about adapting to the world in which we live... We need to develop a new polity. The Church is the last remnant of a medieval polity – the authority of the bishop is unparalleled in any other sphere of life.*

Since 1995 it has been a particular law in the Diocese of Parramatta for parishes to have a Parish Pastoral Council, but not all parishes have them. There have been Deanery Pastoral Councils and a Diocesan Pastoral Council for three years, but arguably they are still feeling their way due to an initial concentration on consultation for the Plenary Council. The aim is that healthy Parish Pastoral Councils exercise co-responsibility in the mission of the Church, and support their priest in discerning how best to meet pastoral needs in the parish. We strongly endorse this approach.

Commendation 9: The particular law that every parish have a Parish Pastoral Council is commended.

Recommendation 25: Where Parish Pastoral Councils do not operate, they be established in accordance with the pastoral approach and particular law of the diocese.

4.4.2 Adoption of civil governance principles

In considering the adoption of civil governance principles there was greater confidence that they were well understood and more generally adopted (apart from transparency and consultation), than the ecclesial governance principles. Integrity, ethical culture, and respect are seen as paramount and the approach to risk stands the diocese in good stead. However, a couple of interviewees believe the Diocese is not mature in areas such as procurement and risks getting into a cycle of related party transactions by returning to trusted providers if it doesn't routinely test the market.

**We could be more accountable, and better at demonstrating how the diocese is performing overall. For example, there have been big issues in IT with significant cost overruns. This needs to be accounted for and explained to stakeholders in the diocese. Some have been initiated before they are pressure-tested, and in a way that could deliver a more appropriate outcome for people in the diocese. There is a perception that the diocese is not always transparent in its dealings and decision making and would benefit from more consultation with parishes on key issues that are impacting them.*

As noted, some interviewees would like to see improvement to the quality and timeliness of meeting papers in their committees such as recommendations up front, more concise presentation of issues, and succinct minutes.

**The DFC should be more insistent on papers that are fit for purpose and succinct. Short succinct papers are difficult to prepare but are conducive to enabling Committee Members to reflect and discern on the issue/decision.*

Senior lay leaders believe civil governance principles are more widespread in the Diocese due to the greater understanding of these principles, and their requirement by funders and regulatory agencies in aspects of administration and governance.³⁷ These civil principles are more clearly reflected than the Church principles. One interviewee observed that there is a trickle down of the values from the Chancery and Bishop to the other diocesan agencies. Parramatta is a leading diocese with its approach to risk management – both the framework and the culture. It has been a challenge to embed the risk-based culture across the parishes given the authority structures and predilections of some parish priests. However, the work is progressing, and has been aided by the implementation of the online TriLine GRC reporting platform (See 4.4.4.)

**The Diocese is still in transition and there is a genuine attempt to practise a more modern approach as evidenced by Diocese's strong attention to risk management and the promotion of laity, especially women to key roles such as the Curia, and the Clergy Personnel Board. In corporate life there are incentives for more collegial approaches and changes in behaviour are included in remuneration. The Diocese does not have similar incentives.*

Fiduciary oversight is robust, and continuing on a path to full maturity. The Diocese publishes an annual financial report which goes to the Consultors and the DFC – not to the Council of Priests or Parish Priests. This has been developed for the past four years. The consolidated diocesan finances are published to improve internal financial transparency and to attest compliance with all civil codes and regulations. As noted in Section 4.2.1 we believe improvements could be made to external transparency. The Bishop leads a thorough approach to stewardship with the view that 'we operate in the world and have to live fairly within it'. Staff are expected to be models of adherence to the law and to apply good governance principles – both corporate and ecclesial.

Newer lay leaders have commended the clear sense of purpose in the Diocese, good committee and administrative structures, and the high standards of accountability with relevant audit paths.

**DFC meets monthly and has a strategy to ensure that the Diocese can generate income so we can be self-sufficient without relying on donations to continue good work in the community. With dwindling [numbers of] parishioners there is a need to identify alternate sources in income. At the DFC meetings the Bishop sits at the table and only contributes as per other members. He does not try to take over the meetings. He allows the collaboration. There is a goal for the Diocese to be self-sustaining.*

Commendation 10: There is a clear sense of purpose in the diocese, good committee and administrative structures, and high standards of accountability with relevant audit paths.

One gap is the Pastoral Plan which has lapsed and this creates a weakness for the diocese. It is a frustration for the Pastoral Planning Office and for the Diocesan Pastoral Council, which has now developed its own Vision and Mission. The plausible rationale for the lapsed Pastoral Plan is that the diocese was better to put its energy into consulting on the Plenary Council scheduled for 2020-21. However, with the Plenary Council now delayed due to the global pandemic, and the outcomes not available until 2023 or 2024, there is a need to generate pastoral priorities for the diocese, which would then enable clear operational planning, and financial decisions.

An interim Pastoral Plan need not be onerous as there are existing documents (such as the Bishop's key addresses, the strategic plans of agencies, the diocesan finance plan, and former Pastoral Plans) which could be harvested to generate a draft interim Pastoral Plan which could be released for a short, abridged consultation. With this simplified process, the diocese could then concentrate on putting in place the platform for its planned synod to discuss the outcomes of the Plenary Council. For example, there could be discussions at deanery and diocesan level envisaging the parish of the future, or looking at exemplars of thriving parish and diocesan life in other places.

Recommendation 26: The diocese undertake a modified process to produce an interim Pastoral Plan to guide direction until the outcomes of the Plenary Council are available for the diocesan synodal process.

4.4.3 Risk management

An element of practice where Parramatta is arguably leading other dioceses in Australia is that of risk management. A comprehensive approach to managing risk is being implemented across the diocese. There is a senior manager designated to the role, and an online reporting (proprietary) platform, TriLine, into which incidents are recorded giving the diocese clarity and visibility on all risks, as well as enhancing risk awareness. This includes ensuring compliance with legislated and regulatory requirements. A benefit of TriLine is that staff can record matters that could later become subjects of litigation, and can potentially detect any themes.

Commendation 11: The comprehensive approach to risk management, including efforts to enculturate a risk-based approach to planning and decision-making across diocesan entities, and the provision of an online platform to record incidents, represents exemplary practice.

The diocese has upgraded its approach to HR, advertises positions, and has an approach to remuneration which aims to pay people at the 50th percentile. The Chancery would be like to be seen as an 'employer of choice' to enable it to attract good talent. The reviewers were impressed with the calibre of personnel in senior roles. We note that appointing competent and experienced senior personnel is a key means of mitigating risk.

The Diocese of Parramatta itself is an unincorporated entity, and as such it is not required to comply with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) governance standards. There are 75 independent ABN numbers in the diocese,³⁸ which are all Basic Religions Charities (BRC). (These are listed in Attachment 4.) The Chancery financial function consolidates the reports for these entities and acts as the conduit for them with the ACNC. The Trustees are the responsible persons for most of the entities.³⁹ They are currently assessed as meeting all the required ACNC Standards. Some bodies such as the CEDP, the Catholic Foundation and CatholicCare have full accounting and reporting obligations to the ACNC, due to their size, legal status, and/or exposure to public funds. Ensuring all entities comply with their regulatory obligations is well managed in the diocese and is another means of managing risk.

4.5 Administration of the diocese

A well governed enterprise needs to be underpinned by an effective professional administration. This is the case in Parramatta, as evidenced in its handling of risk management (Section 4.4.3).

Financial stewardship is another area of strength in the diocese. There are highly expert, committed members of key financial bodies, and the Chancery works closely with them to strengthen the financial base of the diocese. We were impressed with the long-term strategy to create an annuity to fund diocesan ministries, so it is not reliant on parish contributions, the DDF dividend, or ad hoc business activities. The creation of the CDPSL as a company to house income-generating activities, without compromising ministry, is an important step in consolidating this savvy stewardship of resources with a separate legal entity. From the Vatican through to the smallest parish, the Church is managing the consequence of declining numbers, enhanced regulatory and compliance requirements, and the COVID-19 impact. Parramatta is well situated to meet these challenges. One interviewee with a business background made the following comparison of the fiduciary oversight in Parramatta compared to corporate boards:

**I can see a 'regime change' - they are doing an excellent job in corporate governance. There can be frustration in areas such as communication, but some of the committees are better run than comparable committees in the corporate world. The diocese is now outsourcing the internal audit function to make it more independent. There is a culture of risk management, and full responsibility for the issues in running a large enterprise.*

The Parramatta DFC meets monthly, which is more frequently than most DFCs, and detailed reports are prepared for members consideration. There is a shared view that financial management and governance have matured in the past five years (despite perceived poor project management of the new IT system). External assessments are sought when required from credible professional firms, and there is an increased understanding of stewardship principles in many parishes, notwithstanding the need for ongoing work in risk and financial management in others. For many on the DFC, the area requiring greater alignment and increased transparency is the CEDP, noting that there have been some improvements in areas such as the belated adoption of the diocesan risk model recently. The COF was singled out for praise by a number of interviewees.

Senior priests and religious generally see diocesan administration working well, with an integration of functions and a team-oriented culture. The Bishop takes the time to sit with staff in the communal areas in the new Bethany building and this is seen as supporting an open and inclusive culture. However, a number of interviewees see the need for more transparency or more communication from the administrative leadership, especially in terms of communicating decisions to advisory bodies. It is noteworthy that one interviewee sees a need for external auditors for the diocese and the CEDP, and yet this already occurs. This underscores the comment about improving communication.

Recommendation 27: The diocese assess the effectiveness of internal and external communication to ensure effective channels with key stakeholders, and adequate transparency including the use of available information and communication technology for efficient, timely and effective communication between stakeholders.

Section 5: Governance Principles and Practice in the Diocese of Parramatta

5.1 Introductory comment

The adoption of ecclesial and civil governance norms in the diocese, and the nature of governance practice, have been revealed through this independent investigation and analysis of findings. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the review (in Attachment 1) highlight the Bishop's core values and governance principles. The TOR also identified those bodies to be studied. This guided the conduct of the review alongside core precepts,⁴⁰ key contemporary papal documents,⁴¹ recent inquiries,⁴² key texts,⁴³ and professional guidance on good governance practice.⁴⁴ Valuable insights were provided by interviewees who are close to the practice of governance in the diocese, many of whom are experts or senior leaders as well as members of diocesan governing bodies. Section 5 now draws together all the threads from this investigation and analysis into diocesan-wide Issues and themes.

5.2 The Diocese of Parramatta in context of the Catholic Church globally

The pontificate of Francis began on 13 March 2013 following the unique decision of Pope Benedict to stand down due to health reasons. The Catholic Church's 266th Bishop of Rome was an unusual choice – the first from the Americas. Taking the name Francis signalled the genesis of his spiritual nucleus. Indeed, he launched his encyclical, *Tutti Fratelli*, over the Tomb of St Francis of Assisi on 3 October 2020, the anniversary of the Saint's death.

Pope Francis's pontificate has coincided with the crisis of child sexual abuse within the Church laid bare through civil inquiries in many developed countries, culminating in a series of damaging reports during 2017 and 2018. He has sought to 'clean up' the Vatican finances, initially drawing Cardinal Pell from Australia to lead those efforts.⁴⁵ He has been a champion for migrants and refugees and the more vulnerable, putting him at odds with the leaders of unwelcoming countries.

Pope Francis has championed a greater role for the laity, made clear his disdain for clericalism, and voiced his preference for a local synodal Church. Both his focus on global inequality and his views of a more inclusive Church have put him at variance with many within and beyond the Church who are strident contributors to the 'culture wars' waged politically and ecclesially. His pontificate has coincided with a growth internationally in populism, xenophobia, authoritarianism and individualism – all amplified by social media. Since 2020 the global pandemic has exacerbated these frictions and exposed their unequal impact on the world's poorest.⁴⁶ At the same time, the US election has sharpened the divide in conceptions of community, polity and economy, accompanied by an erosion of civility and respect in dialogue and debate. In his inaugural address on 20 January 2021, the 46th President (the second Catholic to hold that office) spoke eloquently on these issues.

The Diocese of Parramatta is not immune from these global and ecclesial changes. Bishop Vincent has communicated clear ideas for the pastoral direction of the diocese, which is very close to the social justice, spiritual and ecclesial principles elucidated by Pope Francis. Just as Pope Francis has his supporters and detractors, so does Bishop Vincent. In both environments, people of differing views are undermining their leaders, and agitating with a vehemence which leaves little room for civility and respect.

We observed, and interviewees attested, that Bishop Vincent treats people with dignity. However, we observed during our investigations that he was not accorded the same respect by a small minority of vociferous clergy and a small group of parents of students in Catholic schools in the diocese. A small minority of priests in the diocese do not share the Bishop's views and have actively attempted to white-ant him. During the conduct of the review this played itself out in a number of ways, including vocal opposition to the RE curriculum, implicit and explicit support of parents disgruntled with aspects of the RE curriculum, and open defiance in diocesan communication and the broader media.⁴⁷ This has been unsettling and a distraction for an otherwise well-functioning diocese. In our observations this was 'settling down' toward the end of 2020.

Aside from this small, disgruntled group, we found overwhelming support for the Bishop's pastoral approach and for his vision for the diocese. The reviewers were impressed by the dispassionate analysis provided by

some interviewees on the current circumstances of the Catholic Church globally, as well as the circumstances in Parramatta. Many of these were senior priests in a range of roles. A key observation was related to the authority and decision-making structures in the Church, noting that they are not democratic, creating tensions for some of the laity actively engaged in civic and professional life, where democratic norms apply. The Pope's call to the People of God to be actively engaged in the transformation of the Church's safeguarding approaches can create tensions when local priests do not share this vision of a co-responsible laity.⁴⁸ One member of the Chancery observed:

**The tone at the top is good as they always want to do the right thing, but centuries of tradition and canon law can make it difficult. In other organisations the CEOs take pride in diversity, but in the Church, it is difficult as there is so often a fully male environment. Whenever possible there is diversity in the diocese, such as a female chancellor.*

5.3 General governance assessment of the diocese

Governance in any enterprise is a complex multifaceted interplay of values, norms, policies, rules, protocols, and relationships. Good governance relies on clear leadership, effective communication, at times rigorous and respectful debate, and always modelling from the top. Parramatta exhibits elements of exemplary governance:

- Clear communication from the Bishop of his pastoral vision and of the Parramatta way of being Church in the twenty-first century;
- Committed and capable senior clergy;
- Committed and capable senior lay leaders; and
- Talented members of key diocesan advisory bodies.

The reviewers were directed in the TOR to particularly focus on the degree to which the governance and management structures of the diocese and parishes assist or impede accountability, transparency, consultation and synodality. A very first step is having a line of sight over the structures and understanding the decision-making practices. There is a significant minority of senior leaders and board members who are not clear exactly where and how decisions are made. Apart from the Bishop, the College of Consultors, the Episcopal Vicars (when acting for the Bishop), the CDPSL and the Board of Management, all other individuals and groups in the diocese are advisory.⁴⁹

There is still a need for clarity on procedures such as the times matters with financial implications from advisory boards need to go to the DFC. Ensuring statements of the power of the Advisory Committees are clear and well understood is a necessary first step. This could be accompanied by a commitment to consider their advice or otherwise account for alternate decision-making to these committees. While delegations have been spelled out, a broader document such as a Governance Authority Matrix would be useful.⁵⁰ A document such as a Governance Authority Matrix identifies the core statutes, which individual or entity is responsible for decision-making, which financial thresholds apply, when matters need to be escalated, and so on.

Recommendation 28: A Governance Authority Matrix be developed for the Diocese of Parramatta.

A contemporary governance structure will be difficult to achieve, especially for an enterprise that has been in existence for more than 2000 years and is subject to canon law. While there is congruity between civil and ecclesial governance principles (see Attachments 6 and 7), there is not quite the same harmony between canon and civil laws. This can cause confusion for staff and board members as they try to navigate the expectations of their Statutes. Decision-making can be slowed by any confusion around the frequency of meetings, the advisory nature of most boards and committees, and the ultimate authority of the bishop. This situation can be improved by a Governance Authority Matrix, improved induction and formation for Board members and chairs, and clarity in briefings and board papers. In many organisations, a full-time person (sometimes called the company secretary) takes responsibility for all governance arrangement - charters, reviews, appointment processes and an annual calendar of regulatory compliance. We see value in a governance person being appointed in the diocese to oversee governance processes and to make

recommendations on creating, defining, dissolving and supporting decision-making bodies in the diocese. This function could be a new role, or added to an existing role.

Recommendation 29: A governance person be appointed to oversee governance processes and to support decision-making and advisory bodies in the diocese with maintaining up-to-date charters, reviews, appointment processes and regulatory compliance.

The reviewers found that the diocese is blessed with some outstanding professional and experienced administrators and directors. From the Episcopal Vicars and Chancellors, to the Chief of Operations and Finance, to the Executive Directors of diocesan agencies, and to the chairs and members of diocesan boards, the reviewers found an exceptionally capable group of people advising the Bishop. There is a three-year set of financial objectives set out in the *Diocesan procuration budget 2019-2020*, and well-informed property and business management essential to the continuity of funding of the ministries identified by the Bishop.

5.4 Synodality

A number of interviewees believe that synodality is very much a work in progress, due to the prevailing clerical culture, underdeveloped conceptions of co-responsibility, uncritical conceptions of current parish models, and many of the laity not feeling authorised for action. The growing spirit of service in the Chancery; the understanding of good governance and appetite for innovation amongst heads of diocesan agencies; the calibre of most board and committee members; the expansion of the City of Parramatta's borders; and the visionary spirit of the Bishop – these features of the diocese lay a platform for growth and strong ecclesial and civil governance practice.

The Light from the Southern Cross report describes 'synodality' as the active participation of all members of the Church in its processes of discernment, consultation and co-operation at every level of decision-making and mission. It quotes theologian Daniel Horan as saying:

To embrace synodality is not a call to do away with hierarchical leadership. The Church is not a democracy. But neither is the Church a monarchy wherein local bishops, bishops' conferences, or even the Pope rules by fiat.⁵¹

Bishop Vincent has clearly communicated his vision of a synodal diocese with lay people working alongside their ordained ministers to communicate God's word and work to create just and caring communities. As noted in our summary of findings, those lay staff, members of committees and boards, and clerics working with the Bishop, all understand his preference for all the baptised (lay and ordained) to co-responsibly walk together to be a true expression of Christ's vision for humanity as expressed through scripture.

The Light from the Southern Cross Review report notes that synodality offers the most appropriate framework for understanding the hierarchical ministry itself, and that there is scope within the structures for co-responsible approaches:

The Code of Canon Law allows ecclesiastical offices to be conferred upon laypersons. Examples of such offices are the finance officer of a diocese, the chancellor, the notary, the delegate for religious or for schools, etc. The current canon law thus not only allows laypersons to cooperate in the exercise of jurisdiction, but should also be interpreted and implemented in light of legal provisions that have occurred since the promulgation of the 1983 Code. Such an understanding calls for revisiting how laity can exercise their responsibility, which originates from their baptism in the governance of the Church which sees synodality as the most appropriate interpretative framework for understanding the hierarchical ministry.

Canon law, properly interpreted and understood, is therefore not an impediment to a true participative partnership between laity and clergy in the governance processes that are integral to the decision-making processes of the Church. Rather it actually enhances it. If best practice in governance, which includes transparency, accountability and the critical notion of stewardship, is to be utilised, there is room for the ultimate canonical responsibilities of a bishop to co-exist in harmony with the

*collaborative participation of the laity in a sense of partnership aimed at fulfilling the prophetic mission of the Church.*⁵²

The LSC Report recommends ‘That for ecclesiastical offices for which ordination is not required (and without limiting the right of clerics to take up those positions), the bishops of Australia commit to appointing suitability qualified lay persons where practicable.’⁵³ We support this recommendation.

The obverse of synodality is clericalism, which Pope Francis describes as a view of vocation that ‘leads us to believe that we belong to a group that has all the answers and no longer needs to listen or learn anything.’⁵⁴

The preference for a synodal approach is difficult where there is residual clericalism, where the hierarchical structures of the Church militate against it, and where lay people feel ill-equipped to engage as co-workers due to insufficient formation and respect for their ministry. These factors are present to some degree in Parramatta. The deanery structure and the creation of Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Councils are good first steps in addressing these structural and cultural elements. The greater the communication between the Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Councils and the deaneries and the Council of Priests, the better the opportunity to improve mutual understanding.

The reviewers were struck by the number of people who commented unsolicited on the benefit of the forum organised by the diocese in July 2019 for key diocesan personnel to hear directly from the Bishop his aspirations for the diocese, to get to know more of each other’s work, and to get to know one another. This kind of initiative strengthens the synodal capacity in the diocese. In addition, the diocese could strengthen access to formation for lay people to support their knowledge of ecclesiology and increase their confidence that they can engage on an equal footing of knowledge with the clergy.⁵⁵

Recommendation 30: The diocese provide access to formation activities for lay people to deepen their understanding of ecclesiology to support their synodal approach.

5.5 Consultation

Advice is provided in *The Light from the Southern Cross* report on consultation, drawing on Canon 127:

The delegation by bishops of aspects of their administration to expert lay people has enhanced good governance practices. Canon law requires bishops to consult on many things to ensure the validity of their action. At present, bishops need to consult or get consent for large financial matters... The true nature of ‘consultation’ in the context of co-responsibility in the exercise of power involves a meeting of minds for purposes of discussion and collaboration so as to gain information. It is more than simply taking advice and has some constituent elements, including that:

- *the body to be consulted should be convened, not necessarily joining together in the same place (technology allows more flexibility in the manner in which minds can meet);*
- *there should be an opportunity for a full and frank exchange of views; and*
- *the body to be consulted should be provided with all necessary and pertinent information to enable this to occur.*⁵⁶

It is a truism that those who are satisfied with a decision, generally believe there was adequate consultation; and conversely, those who are unhappy with the decision will often critique the authenticity or adequacy of the process. During the conduct of the review, the RE curriculum was released for consultation. This was not a matter of scrutiny for the review. However, we did note that those who had difficulties with some of the content critiqued the consultation.

There was a range of views expressed to us during the review process on the adequacy of consultation in the diocese. For those advisory bodies that meet only on a quarterly basis there is difficulty with the adequacy of consultation without routine out of session consultation. However, others felt that mechanisms put in place to

speedily manage the COVID-19 outbreak were evidence of an inherently consultative approach. Each advisory body in its self-assessments of effectiveness should consider whether they consider consultation is adequate and how it might be improved.

Some of the priests felt that there was insufficient turnover of priests in leadership roles, structurally limiting the breadth of involvement of all the priests and creating the impression of an inner circle. However, the Council of Priests and College of Consultors were averse to including lay members on these bodies when it was put to them in 2020.⁵⁷

The consultation undertaken for their preparation for PC2020 by the Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Councils (and many Parish Pastoral Councils) was viewed very positively. This was an opportunity for all members of the diocese to contribute to their preparation as a diocese for a unique event in the life of the Church in Australia, and was well done.

Given the potential to generate an authentic and good practice approach to consultation, there would be value in the diocese developing a consultation policy so there is clarity regarding the approach that will be taken to substantive decisions such as a new parish or school, or future models of parish. Where communities can be impacted by commercial or government decisions, it is common for consultation to be undertaken. It is also common for government departments to have consultation policies to give surety to constituencies on matters such as the minimum period for consultation, the circumstances when written submissions will be called, the protocol for publishing submissions, the circumstances when face to face sessions will be used, and so on.

Recommendation 31: A consultation policy detailing the matters on which people will be consulted and the processes for consultation be developed for the diocese.

5.6 Accountability and transparency

The Light from the Southern Cross report also paid attention to transparency and accountability as dimensions of good governance practice:

Within Australia, under episcopal leadership committed to improving governance practices, some dioceses have also introduced measures for greater public accountability in ecclesiastical governance through instituting more transparency in diocesan governance and administration. They have done so by, for example:

- *developing strategic and pastoral plans for the diocese and publishing them online;*
- *publishing diocesan annual reports and financial accounts;*
- *documenting and making publicly available the remit of diocesan offices, terms of reference for diocesan councils and committees, as well as diocesan policies and procedures; and*
- *the assurance that all relevant documents will not be destroyed and will be kept in archive. Such transparent practices are longstanding and common within the Catholic education and social services branches of diocesan governance.*⁵⁸

The Light from the Southern Cross report made two recommendations in relation to public accountability and transparency:

That as a statement of general principle, diocesan agencies and advisory bodies should maintain the highest standards of accountability and regular and transparent public reporting (Rec 62) and That fiduciary concepts and governance principles be included in professional development programmes for diocesan agencies and advisory bodies.,

Many Parramatta Diocese board members interviewed believe that the diocese could be more accountable and better at demonstrating how it is performing overall to keep faith with its constituency – clergy and

congregations. It is noteworthy that the Vatican produced a high-level set of accounts in 2020 and has made commitments to strengthen its anti-money laundering practices.⁵⁹ There is a common view amongst board members of the benefits of such an approach:

**In this new era of transparency and accountability, the Diocese also needs to think about how it engages with people who may have concerns about the operations or outcomes of diocesan services. If we publish information, it should definitely go to the parishes. Prior to publication we should take the audience on a journey to explain the new material. The Diocese could produce a high-level set of accounts and a dashboard to demonstrate progress.*

It is not uncommon for Catholic dioceses in the US and New Zealand to publish their accounts, however, it is still not the norm in Australia. We are mindful that a Catholic diocese moving in this direction would likely not want to blindside other dioceses, and that there would be value in considering engagement between peer Diocesan Financial Administrators and fellow Bishops as part of a transition to any such move. This would take time, and a staged approach would enable adequate consultation within and beyond the diocese.

As outlined in Section 4.2.1 we see benefits in enhanced transparency. It would be wise to provide advice to Parish Priests on how to interpret any financial material provided, and to develop a means of demonstrating progress over time such as a dashboard, or like-comparisons such as data comparing expenditure, project budgets and reserves of comparable parishes. One Parish Priest observed that the parishes had done fund-raising for World Youth Day but had little knowledge of how the Diocese spent the money. Timely publication of high-level accounts would provide this information back to the parishes.

The reviewers note that a diocese does not operate like a business where consolidated accounts are the norm. For example, the income provided by government for the conduct Catholic education would completely skew the accounts. Instead, financial information on a ministry or agency basis would be more intelligible.

Concerns about the transparency and good stewardship of money can stifle generosity in giving, and, conversely, confidence in these matters can lead to greater generosity. As with other governance practices, open communication will generally have the respect of right-thinking people and any lack of information can lead to suspicion. A change management process would need to be developed in the phased move to greater transparency to ensure that key groups have been provided with adequate guidance to sensibly interpret the information as it is rolled out. We do not envisage a 'data-dump', but high-level material arranged to maximise its utility for those with an interest in the material.

Recommendation 32: That the Diocese adopts a posture of transparency in its financial reporting so that unless there is an imperative for confidentiality, high-level financial information will generally be published.

Another dimension of accountability, rarely mentioned, is that of the clergy being accountable enough to the people and to their bishop, primarily in their pastoral work. There is already mandatory financial auditing of parishes, but pastoral accountability could be improved – this doesn't have to be a 'top-down' accountability, from the diocese, as it is for the finances. It could be a local survey distributed among a cross-section of parishioners. This could be discussed at the level of the Deanery Pastoral Councils to pool ideas and create suitable approaches that could be selected and used by Parish Priests in individual parishes, preferably with input from the Parish Pastoral Council. The feedback generated could identify any gaps and help shape parish pastoral planning.

Unlike people in most other walks of life, once ordained, priests (and bishops) get very little feedback. Feedback is standard practice in almost all other commercial, NFP and government settings and provides opportunities for communication, growth and improvement. Further, the RCIRCSA recommended this kind of practice as a means of supporting priests. Given that it is not commonly adopted within the Church, the reviewers would recommend an opt-in system where priests could volunteer for review sessions where they receive objective and independent advice to promote their own self-development.

Feedback can be daunting and confronting. However, it can also be a valuable tool to provide self-awareness and reflection and to address 'blind spots'. It ought to be conducted with sensitive and pastoral moderation so that the subject of the feedback has opportunity to process it in the context of pastoral support.

Recommendation 33: Parish Priests implement a means of gathering parishioner feedback on the pastoral, liturgical and support services of the parish as a means of receiving feedback and guiding good practice.

Recommendation 34: The Diocese introduce a professional review and feedback service for priests to voluntarily opt in to receive independent advice on their strengths and areas for improvement.

5.7 Access to information

Good governance practice adopts the default position of providing access to information unless prevented by barriers such as confidentiality or privacy provisions, or commercial-in-confidence clauses. Furthermore, the importance of boards getting access to adequate information in properly prepared papers was noted by the Financial Services Royal Commission.⁶⁰

Only one committee in Parramatta believed it was not getting adequate access to relevant information: the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The reviewers believe this was partly due to their indeterminate agenda as a relatively new body. Now that they have a Vision and Mission Statement to guide their priorities, they will be better able to articulate their information needs.

While other boards and committees were broadly satisfied, we noted in 4.4.2 that some committees wanted to see improvements in the length, content and style of some papers. These are matters that should be easily rectified. They will be identified if the process of reflection on the effectiveness of each meeting (using a Mission Discernment Framework) that we have recommended as good practice.

A number of diocesan agencies have excellent access to information, particularly online access. The CEDP is to be commended for the information provided on its website which offers real insights into the conduct of its system of schools. This transparency makes it easy for prospective and current parents, teachers and community members to learn about the Catholic schools in the diocese. The reviewers were particularly impressed with the *Annual Report* published by CEDP.

Commendation 12: The CEDP is commended for its transparency, accountability and access to information on a variety of platforms.

Similarly, CatholicCare and the Office for Safeguarding have easily navigable websites that assist people wanting information to access their services. The diocese could improve its transparency by determining those matters not bound by privacy or confidentiality, or by commercial-in-confidence measures, which could be provided on its website and in regular web-based communications to stakeholders.

5.8 Proper attainment of clerical and lay men and women's participation and co-responsibility in the decision-making processes in the diocese.

Depending on the committee there will be differing kinds of expertise needed – pastoral, financial, educational, safeguarding and so on. A diocese wanting to encourage the full participation of lay women and men working with their ordained pastor will seek ways to enable this to happen. The Diocese of Parramatta has a lay man and two women on the Curia which sets a pattern for synodality. While the priests currently do not desire lay people on the Council of Priests or on the College of Consultors, there are many other opportunities for lay participation. In addition to the many committees already including lay women and men, there is merit in encouraging inclusion in predominantly clerical committees such as the Board of Management, given the benefit from specialist expertise.

Those bodies seeking greater lay involvement should ensure that procedures and meeting times take into account the needs of lay members, for example, meeting at times that do not interfere with external work or family commitments.

The Light from the Southern Cross report considered the appointment of senior lay leaders and noted:

The Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops acknowledges, ‘the bishop freely appoints the heads of the various curial offices from among those who distinguish themselves by competence in their respective fields of expertise... In making these appointments, the bishop would be well advised to consider the opinions of certain priests and lay people through opportune consultation’.

A synodal bishop today would consult the council of priests and the diocesan pastoral council about pastoral planning and involve representatives of these bodies on appointment committees. In relation to all senior diocesan positions, there would be value in all these offices having clear role descriptions and clarity regarding length of term. The benefit of fixed-term appointments (for example five years) is the educative element in working in diocesan administration is shared broadly and that talents of a wider pool of ordained and non-ordained (where appropriate) people could be used.⁶¹

To assist a synodal approach, greater participation of lay women and men, and an overall diocesan capacity to make a broad range of appropriate appointments to boards and committees, there would be value in the diocese creating a ‘talent pool’ of potential candidates, as discussed in Section 4.4.

The reviewers did not find systemic local factors that would prevent the full participation of suitable clerical and lay people. The impediments are the canonical provisions which give authority and pre-eminence to parish priests and the bishop in decision-making, and also residual elements of a culture of clericalism where some priests are not intuitively disposed to co-responsibility, and some lay people are overly deferential to the clergy, leaving the onus of responsibility with them.

5.9 Cultural practices or symbols that have led to the appropriate use (or abuse) of power

The review did not assess practice at the parish level. In interviews, descriptions were provided of governance practice at the deanery and diocesan levels, and these were assessed against the statutes of committees and observations of their meetings. There is evidence of collegial practice in boards and committees and a proper understanding of their authority and delegations. This is in a context where the Bishop is the sole decision-maker in the diocese. However, his personal low-key style of operating in meetings, his known preference for the full participation of lay women and men, and his championing for social justice, send powerful messages within the diocese and encourage a sense of authentic engagement amongst those volunteering their time and expertise in the governance of the diocese.

Commendation 13: The dedicated voluntary involvement of expert laypeople to the various advisory bodies in the diocese is a rich contribution which adds high levels of professionalism and assurance to the governance of the diocese.

Commendation 14: The stance of inclusive respectful listening of the Bishop in meetings contributes to effective decision-making.

There are certain practices and symbols that do signify power, such as the wearing of vestments, the separation of the altar from the congregation and the priest leading Eucharist celebration - and these are right and proper. We can find civil equivalents in the uniforms worn by first responders or medicos, the structure of parliaments, and the protocols of courts. In both ecclesial and civil settings these garments, architectural features and reserved powers, signify an authority and difference from the routine roles of regular community members. These distinctions can be managed properly so that formal deference is given in settings such as during Mass, or a court case. However, when the judge or the priest is around a table with colleagues working together on a project or committee a more relaxed mode of interaction is appropriate.

We did not see or hear of practices which led to the abuse of power. Certain practices, such as a reported tendency to use the same firms and individuals for projects, could lead to lax attention to value for money, independence of thought or to related party transactions, but there was no evidence produced that this was the case. In contrast, there was evidence of robust risk identification and management, including

strengthening procurement practice. Certain personality types can lead to an abuse of power, especially if the person is in the role of a parish priest or agency head where great authority is invested in the role. As discussed in section 5.6 the use of pastoral assessments of parishes, and the availability for appraisal for priests, should militate against this kind of practice if it emerges.

We can see benefit in more transparent practice as one clear means of symbolising a co-responsible diocese. Transparency in the following areas (by way of example), will enable parishioners to see practice matching proclamation:

- Access to the Statutes of all the diocesan committees and their membership;
- Ability to apply through an open process to be put in a talent pool for consideration for a board appointment when one becomes available; and
- Visibility of high-level diocesan accounts.

5.10 Strengthening existing governance models

Australian inquiries of failed governance from the 2003 HIH Royal Commission,⁶² through to the 2019 Financial Services Royal Commission, have identified many shortcomings in common, including an inappropriate or weakly expressed culture; lack of clarity regarding related values and ethical norms; perverse incentives driving behaviour; and a failure to implement governance principles, including a perfunctory approach to regulatory compliance. It is universally accepted that culture is articulated, modelled and driven from the top, and that to ensure a deeply embedded culture it must be widely expressed and understood, and that there must be consequences for nonconformance with the culture of the enterprise.

In the case of the Catholic Church the culture, or ecclesial purpose, is driven by the bishop. The Diocese of Parramatta has the benefit of an articulate Bishop whose vision for the diocese is in accord with the guidance of Pope Francis, and is widely understood and respected.⁶³ There is an expectation in Bishop Vincent's diocese of a synodal Church; for inclusive and active participation of the laity; and for ministries that contribute to just and fair outcomes for beneficiaries. We found that there is an effective balancing of the civil governance and prophetic leadership roles of the Church in Parramatta as advocated in *The Light from the Southern Cross* report:

*As a guiding force in the human activity of the Church, those in leadership must take seriously the expectations of contemporary culture in terms of transparency, accountability, inclusion, participation and diversity. This is not to forgo the Church's prophetic role as an advocate for a good society that respects basic freedoms, and cares for its most vulnerable people. Indeed, leadership in good governance is likely to enhance the credibility of voices lifted in the Church's prophetic role.*⁶⁴

We have concluded that the structures of governance in the diocese are strong. Areas for consideration are:

- Transparency and accountability in relation to the financial performance of the diocese;
- Transparency in relation to diocesan Statutes and membership of diocesan bodies;
- Systematic and regular self-review and independent review of the effectiveness of each governance body;
- The legal status of the Parramatta Schools Council and the CatholicCare Advisory Council;
- Streamlining the number of direct reports to the Bishop;
- The relationship between the Council of Deans and the Deanery Pastoral Council;
- Improvements to induction and ongoing professional development;
- Creation of a talent pool of potential board and committee members; and
- Development of a short-term or interim diocesan Pastoral Plan, mindful of the forthcoming Plenary Council and the possibility for local Church change.

We have also compiled a set of ideas for governance improvements which were provided by interviewees in Attachment 13.

5.11 Appropriate principles of governance for the diocese

The Review TOR highlighted the principles of synodality, consultation, accountability and transparency, and these have already been addressed. In addition, suggestions from interviewees for administrative and governance improvements have been included within the text of the report, and the additional suggestions are included in Attachment 13.

The reviewers believe that the ecclesial and civil governance principles outlined in *The Light from the Southern Cross* report and summarised in Attachment 6 are good guidance for governance at parish, agency, board and Chancery levels. We support the claim in the LSC report that contemporary civil governance principles such as integrity, accountability and transparency, risk management, culture and ethics, consultation, inclusiveness and the participation and genuine responsibility of men and women are central and that the undervalued elements of effective governance practice such as clear communication and right relationships also should be included.

These principles are reflected in governance structures that are clear regarding authority, accountabilities, roles, and reporting relationships. They are also reflected in processes, and policies that seek to be open, transparent, respectful, honest and fair.

Good governance is as much about character as capability, about discernment as judgement, about integrity as compliance, and about ethics and values as processes and protocols.⁶⁵

We note the general adoption of these principles throughout the diocese and urge those entities where they are not fully adopted to embrace them. In addition, the reviewers note that the RCIRCSA *Final Report* singled out the governance practice of Church education, health and welfare agencies as exemplars of good governance for dioceses and parishes to consider. These agencies are required to comply with accreditation requirements and to satisfy prudential, probity, quality and personnel standards to remain eligible to operate and to qualify for government funding. In contrast Church entities and individuals have few ongoing standards to meet and are not subject to annual appraisal in the same way as personnel in commercial, NFP and government agencies. However, comparable approaches to those singled out for commendation by the RCIRCSA are being adopted by the Diocese of Parramatta through the administrative practice of the Chancery, and the governance practice of the various advisory bodies. For example, there is oversight of all the ACNC reporting entities to ensure they are compliant with the governance standards. Similarly, we observed excellent governance practice in the conduct of most meetings, notwithstanding the benefit of a couple of bodies making the improvements suggested within the report.

Commendation 15: There is general adoption of ecclesial values and norms, and civil governance principles across governing bodies and agencies in the Diocese.

Commendation 16: There is a generally high standard of governance practice in the advisory and decision-making bodies in the diocese.

The RCIRCSA also recommended the governance principles of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) for consideration by dioceses and parishes. These principles are summarised in Attachment 7.⁶⁶ They are based on regulatory requirements and have undergone extensive consultation. The reviewers recommend that any entity in the diocese considering their governance practice review themselves against the AICD NFP Governance Principles, or the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Governance Standards (set out in Attachment 8) or the set of ecclesial and civil governance principles outlined in *The Light from the Southern Cross* report (see Attachment 6).

5.12 Diversity, consultation and synodality in governance and management

The examination of diocesan structures identified a chart which provides an overview of the governance relationships between entities (Attachment 14).⁶⁷ As noted above, the organic design of this chart is useful in outlining the points of communication and relationship between the canonically designated individual roles, and the civil and canonical bodies in the diocese. However, it does not assist an understanding of where decisions are made and this is a point of confusion for some in diocesan agencies and on deanery or diocesan bodies as discussed in Section 5.3 (where we includes strategies to address any lack of clarity).

We commend the emphasis of the Bishop on diversity, consultation and inclusion which underpins the organic model of relationships in the diocese and encourage progress on existing pathways toward their full implementation. We encourage Bishop Vincent to continue to conceptualise diversity as inclusion of lay people into a range of roles within the Church, as well as ensuring that minority groups are broadly represented in staffing and on boards and committees. Strong signals are sent when these kinds of appointments are made, when an open process for board and committee appointments is established, when minority groups are selected for some of these roles and when people are publicly affirmed and encouraged in these roles.

5.13 Leadership and decision-making

There is a discernible model of leadership in the Diocese of Parramatta based on scripture, the findings of Vatican II, and the teachings of Pope Francis. Bishop Vincent embodies and leads the Parramatta model of leadership. It is one in which the dignity of each person is placed at the heart of ministry; where every effort is made to bring God's message to life through word and deed. It is also a model of leadership which embraces engagement with the society in which it operates alongside fidelity to ecclesial norms and teachings. It respects and adopts civil governance principles and strives to implement regulatory requirements and risk-based approaches. And it is a model where social justice principles such as a preferential option for the poor, solidarity and commitment to the common good are in evidence.

A number of interviewees spoke of a distinctive Parramatta leadership style – that of the Good Shepherd. It was observed that successive Bishops have demonstrated a concern for the spiritual and temporal needs of the laity and fellow priests, especially those in need, along with respect for good governance practice.

With his episcopal motto, *'Go further into the Deep'*, Bishop Vincent has stretched the Good Shepherd conception to more explicitly draw on the approach of Pope Francis, to seek those at the margins, and to reference the diocese in relation to the directions of Vatican II. While this approach calls for the clergy and laity to work together, and explicitly calls for the church to identify and respond to the needs of the vulnerable and marginalised, it does not eschew good administration and governance.

The Church as understood and articulated by the Second Vatican Council sees itself as a pilgrim People of God, incarnate in the world. It is a new paradigm – one that is based on partnership, collaboration, participation and empowerment as opposed to the old way of clerical control, and monopoly at worst, or lay subservience and passivity at best... Pope Francis constantly calls us to move beyond the security of [the] status quo and take the risk of going to the periphery. The Church must be the Church of the poor. The Church must go out of itself in order to be close to those in need... As the Church, we must divest the old ways of being Church which is steeped in a culture of clerical power, dominance and privilege. We must abandon the old paradigm of a fortress Church which is prone to exclusivity and elitism. We must learn to rise to [the] Christlike way of humility, inclusivity, compassion and powerlessness.⁶⁸

Section 6: Conclusion, Commendations and Recommendations

This independent review of governance in the Diocese of Parramatta conducted during 2020 - 2021 primarily revealed high-quality, well-informed, well-conducted practice in diocesan entities. From the elements to be examined set out in the Terms of Reference, to the opinions expressed in interviews, to the observations of meetings, we identified a clarity of purpose, a commitment to the Bishop's vision for the diocese, and excellent levels of professional expertise and governance understanding. There is outstanding long-term financial planning complemented by prudential oversight and excellent risk management.

Bishop Vincent's communication of a Vatican II Church living in the modern world and seeking to respect all, and to include those at the margins, is understood and supported by those in leadership and governance roles in the diocese. His stance of genuine listening encourages full contributions from those volunteering their time and expertise to the many governing bodies, and draws a committed involvement from them. We noted the very high calibre and deep experience of most board and committee appointees which contributed to the successful conduct of these bodies.

Amongst areas for improvement are matters relating to reporting and accountability including improvements to some of the charters and founding documents of bodies, streamlining the number of direct reports to the Bishop, and increasing levels of information regarding governing bodies and financial performance. We also recommend improved assessment of the conduct of parishes through locally adopted tools. There is some confusion about how and where decisions are made and we anticipate the recommended Governance Authority Matrix will address this.

As with many other Church and NFP bodies, there is a need for improved induction and ongoing professional development. The turnover of board and committee members generates the ongoing need for governance training – both civil and ecclesial. Similarly, if there is to be thorough co-responsibility with the laity, there need to be opportunities for laypeople to learn more about the Church. Equally, providing ongoing opportunities for clerics to increase their knowledge of civil governance is commendable.

We can see value in a dedicated governance role in the diocese, similar to that of a company secretary. This would ensure committee terms were maintained, a talent pool of potential new members was available, an annual calendar of compliance obligations was maintained, and full induction was provided. As much of this work is already part of other roles, it could be consolidated within an existing role, or could be a new role.

We interviewed some outstanding leaders of diocesan agencies and were impressed with their levels of professionalism and commitment to their ministry. These agencies are overseen by advisory bodies. A substantial recommendation is to engage in a broad-based discernment process to consider the reviewer's recommendation to replace the Parramatta Schools Council with an incorporated body. We also see value in exploring the benefits of moving the CatholicCare Advisory Council to this legal form in the future.

The review was undertaken during a global pandemic, and this impacted the conduct of key elements such as face-to-face interviews and meeting observations. We do not believe this has eroded the quality of input. Indeed, much of the conduct of the review might be regarded as the 'new normal'. The general unease of 2020 was exacerbated in the diocese with dispute over the new Religious Education curriculum, including some public disagreement by a member of the clergy. We observed the disquiet had settled somewhat by the end of 2020, and urge all people in the diocese to adopt the model of respectful listening modelled by their bishop.

One gap identified in the conduct of the review was a current Pastoral Plan, due in part to the delay of the Plenary Council caused by pandemic restrictions. We have recommended a modified interim Pastoral Plan, given the uncertainties associated with COVID-19 and the benefits of a Pastoral Plan for setting direction in the diocese. There could be a role for the Diocesan Pastoral Council in the development of such a plan, and in supporting the Bishop's response to this Review Report. In keeping with his preference for synodality and inclusion, the Bishop may want to formally release the report in a Governance Forum which would also underscore his commitment to transparency and subsidiarity.

Finally, we note the measures identified for improvement are far outweighed by the generally outstanding governance practice in the diocese. This is led by a clarity of vision and purpose from the Bishop, high-calibre people in senior governance and administrative roles, and excellent appointees to governing boards. Ecclesial and civil governance norms and principles are mostly understood and adopted. There is observable energy and enthusiasm to build an inclusive, welcoming and sustainable Church in the West of Sydney. The reviewers commend the Bishop and his senior advisors and staff for their commitment to exemplary ecclesial and civil governance practice and encourage them to continue with an ear to engagement and an eye to inclusion. This is the way of the Good Shepherd.

Attachment 1: Review Terms of Reference

The Bishop of Parramatta, Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, has commissioned a Governance Review of the organs of administration that currently provide the structures for governance and administration of the Diocese of Parramatta.

These organs of administration are grouped as follows:

- Diocesan Administration including the Vicars General, College of Consultors, Chancellors, Council of Priests, Episcopal Vicars, Vicars, Diocesan Curia, Personnel Board.
- Diocesan Finance Council and its relevant Sub-Committees.
- Chancery Administration.
- Other Diocesan Committees including Liturgy, Safeguarding.
- Diocesan Pastoral Council, Deanery Pastoral Councils, Parish Councils and Administration.
- The Diocese of Parramatta Schools Council (Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta).
- Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains Advisory Council.
- Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Services Limited Board. (CDPSL Board presides over an incorporated Diocesan entity).

The Terms of Reference for the Review of Governance for the Diocese of Parramatta are:

1. To identify areas in which the governance and management structures of the Diocese and parishes in the Diocese of Parramatta assists or impedes accountability, transparency, consultation and synodality and the proper attainment of clerical and lay men and women's participation and co-responsibility in the decision-making processes of the Diocese.
2. To identify any cultural practices or symbols that have led to appropriate use of power as well as to any serious or widespread abuse of power in the governance and management practices of the Diocese or Parishes of the Diocese of Parramatta.
3. To identify any lack of consistency or weaknesses in the current application of good governance practices within the Diocese of Parramatta and propose any additional structures or governance applications that will strengthen the existing governance models operating within the Diocese of Parramatta and its major Agencies and Parishes.
4. To identify principles of governance that will facilitate best practice in management and administration within the Diocesan Administration, Parish Administration, Catholic Education, Diocese of Parramatta and Catholic Care, Western Sydney, and the Blue Mountains.
5. To identify best practice examples of governance and management in the Diocesan structures and other models within the Church, including regulatory models, with special emphasis on diversity, consultation and synodality.
6. To draw on the work of world-class researchers in matters of ecclesiology and governance for the purposes of this review.
7. To recommend changes to governance and management structures to achieve the goals of best practice as outlined in these terms of reference.
8. Such other matters as may arise through the course of this Review.

Attachment 2: Curriculum vitae, Adjunct Professor Susan Pascoe AM, FAICD, FIPAA, FACE

Board Chair, Consultant, Non-Executive Director

Susan Pascoe is Adjunct Professor at the University of Western Australia. She chairs the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), the Community Director's Council, and the Advisory Board of Catholic Emergency Relief Australia (CERA), and is co-chair of the Charities Crisis Cabinet, created as a consortium of peak bodies to liaise with governments during the COVID-19 pandemic. She is a Trustee of St John of God Health, a Board Member Mercy Health, a member of the AICD's NFP Chair's group, and was a member of the ACBC-CRA's Implementation Advisory Group's Governance Review Project Team and its Safeguarding Steering Committee. Ms Pascoe is Principal of Kadisha Enterprises which provide consultancy services primarily to government and the NFP sector in the areas of governance, review, strategic planning, and leadership.

Ms Pascoe was the inaugural Commissioner for the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), Australia's first national, independent regulator of charities from 2012 – 17. She led the Taskforce to create the ACNC in 2011 working across Commonwealth agencies, with the sector, and with states and territories to win consensus for a workable model.

Prior to this appointment, Ms Pascoe was Commissioner of the State Services Authority in Victoria. In this role she chaired or co-chaired reviews into the regulation of the not-for-profit sector (2007-08), the design and governance of regulatory bodies in Victoria (2008-09), and Victoria's Indigenous Employment Strategy (2008-09). Ms Pascoe was appointed in 2009 as one of three Commissioners for the Royal Commission into Victoria's Black Saturday Bushfires.

In 2017 Ms Pascoe and Professor Deborah Brennan chaired a review into Early Childhood Education for the Council for the Australian Federation, culminating in the *Lifting our Game* Report.

Ms Pascoe's earlier career was in education. She participated in state, national and international efforts to improve the quality and equity of education. She served as President of the Australian College of Educators, CEO of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and Chief Executive of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. Ms Pascoe chaired the Australian National Commission for UNESCO, and was a Patron for the Melbourne Parliament for the World's Religions. She has chaired or served on several national and state health and education boards.

Ms Pascoe is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, the Institute of Public Administration of Australia and the College of Educators. Her significant achievements and leadership were acknowledged in 2007 when she was appointed Member of the Order of Australia for service to education through a range of executive roles, and international initiatives for educators in the Pacific region. In November 2016 she was awarded the Leadership in Government Award for her outstanding contribution to public administration in Australia.

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Attachment 3: Curriculum vitae, Adjunct Professor Murray Baird FAICD

Legal Practitioner, Director and Adviser on Law, Governance and Regulation of Charities

Murray Baird is an Australian Legal Practitioner and an independent advisor on the Law, Governance and Regulation of Charities in Australia. He has acted for many of Australia's prominent charities and been involved in several leading cases defining charities in Australia.

Mr Baird was the inaugural Assistant Commissioner General Counsel at the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission from its inception in 2012 until 2019. In this role he was responsible for Registration, Compliance, Reporting, Legal and Policy functions of the national regulator. Prior to that he was Senior Partner and Leader of the Not-for-Profit Law Group at Moores Legal in Melbourne.

Mr Baird also serves as a:

- Member of the Advisory Council of the International Center for Not-for Profit Law
- Adjunct Professor at the University of Western Australia
- Senior Fellow of the Melbourne University Law School where he teaches Charity Law and Governance
- Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors where he was on the steering committee for the development of the AICD Not for Profit Governance Principles 2019
- Member of the Law Council of Australia Legal Practice Section, Not-for-Profit Legal Practice and Charities Committee
- Member of the Law Institute of Victoria Not for Profit and Charities Law Committee.
- Founding Director and Company Secretary of the Charity Law Association of Australia and New Zealand.

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Attachment 4: List of Diocesan Entities Registered with the ACNC

Catholic Parish Of Holy Spirit St Clair
Catholic Parish Of St Anthony Of Padua Toongabbie
Catholic Parish Of St Monica Richmond
Catholic Parish Of Our Lady Of The Rosary Kellyville
Catholic Parish Of St Nicholas Of Myra Penrith
Catholic Parish Of Sacred Heart Blackheath
The Trustees Of The Roman Catholic Church For The Diocese Of Parramatta
Catholic Parish Of Our Lady Of The Way Emu Plains
Catholic Parish Of Our Lady Of Mount Carmel Wentworthville
The Trustee For The Trustee Of The Roman Catholic Church For The Diocese Of Parramatta As Trustee For Emmaus (Disabled Persons Catholic Services)
Catholic Parish Of St John The Evangelist Riverstone
Catholic Parish Of Sacred Heart Westmead
Catholic Parish Of Our Lady Of The Angels Rouse Hill
The Trustee For The Trustees Of The Roman Catholic Church For The Diocese Of Parramatta
The Trustees Of The Roman Catholic Church For The Diocese Of Parramatta As Trustee For The Confraternity Of Christian Doctrine Diocese Of Parramatta
Catholic Parish Of St Aidan Rooty Hill
Catholic Parish Of St Bernadette Lalor Park
Catholic Parish Of St Bernadette Castle Hill
Catholic Parish Of St Matthew Windsor
The Trustee For Catholic Parish Of St Paul The Apostle Winston Hills
Mary, Queen of the Family, Blacktown
Catholic Parish Of The Holy Family East Granville
Catholic Parish Of Our Lady Of Lourdes Baulkham Hills South
Catholic Parish Of St Margaret Mary Merrylands

Catholic Parish Of St Patrick Guildford
St Bernadette's Catholic Church Dundas Valley
Catholic Parish Of St Joseph Kingswood
Catholic Parish Of St Monica North Parramatta
The Trustee for The Catholic Foundation - Diocese of Parramatta
Padre Pio Parish Glenmore Park
Catholic Parish Of Christ The King North Rocks
Catholic Parish Of Holy Trinity Granville
Catholic Parish Of Sacred Heart Warragamba
Catholic Parish Of Sacred Heart Mt Druitt South
Diocese Of Parramatta House Of Priestly Formation
The Trustees Of The Roman Catholic Church For The Diocese Of Parramatta As Trustee For The Diocese Of Parramatta Vocation Centre
Diocese Development Fund - Catholic Diocese Of Parramatta
St John XXIII Parish
Catholic Parish Of St Andrew The Apostle Marayong
Catholic Parish Of Our Lady Of Lourdes Seven Hills
Catholic Parish Of Upper Blue Mountains
The Trustee For The Roman Catholic Church For The Diocese Of Parramatta
Catholic Parish Of Holy Name Of Mary Rydalmere
Our Lady Of The Rosary Catholic Church St Marys
Catholic Parish Of St Patrick Parramatta
Catholic Parish Of Our Lady Queen Of Peace Greystanes
The Trustee For Plumpton Catholic Church Housie
The Trustees Of The Roman Catholic Church For The Diocese Of Parramatta As The Trustee For The Tribunal Of The Catholic Church Diocese Of Parramatta
Catholic Parish Of Holy Family Mt Druitt
The Trustee For The Trustees Of The Roman Catholic Church For The Diocese Of Parramatta As Trustee For The Marian Nursing Home

Catholic Parish Of St Michael Blacktown South
Catholic Parish Of St Michael Baukham Hills
The Trustee For The Roman Catholic Church For The Diocese Of Parramatta
Catholic Parish Of St John Vianney Doonside
The Trustees Of The Board Of Management Clergy Remuneration And Retirement Plan - Diocese Of Parramatta
Catholic Parish Of St Oliver Plunkett Harris Park
Catholic Parish Of The Good Shepherd Plumpton
Catholic Parish Of St Finbar Glenbrook
The Trustee For The Trustees Of The Roman Catholic Church For The Diocese Of Parramatta As Trustee For Ministry To Solo Parents & Their Families
The Trustees Of The Roman Catholic Church For The Diocese Of Parramatta As Trustee For The Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
Catholic Parish Of Corpus Christi Cranebrook
Catholic Parish Of St Madeleine Sophie Kenthurst
Catholic Parish Of Mary Immaculate Quakers Hill
Catholic Parish Of St Thomas Aquinas Springwood
Catholic Parish Of Our Lady Of The Nativity Lawson
The Clergy Support Foundation for the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta
Catholic Diocese of Parramatta
Holy Spirit Seminary Building Fund
Holy Spirit Seminary Scholarship Fund
The Trustee for The Catholic Fund Diocese of Parramatta
Mamre Plains Ltd
The Trustee for Holy Spirit Seminary
Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Services LTD
The Trustees Of The Board Of Management Clergy Remuneration And Retirement Plan - Diocese Of Parramatta
The Clergy Support Foundation for the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta

Attachment 5: List of Interviewees for Diocesan Governance Review

Members of the Curia	
Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bishop of Parramatta
Fr Peter Williams <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vicar General & Moderator of the Curia
Fr Chris de Souza <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, Vicar General, Episcopal Vicar
Msgr Ron McFarlane <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest and Chancellor for Administration
Sr Ailsa McKinnon <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chancellor for Ministries and Vicar for Religious
Geoff Officer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief of Operations and Finance
Sue Walsh <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Curia Member and Member of Catholic Diocese Parramatta services Ltd Board
College of Consultors	
Fr Peter Williams <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson
Fr Chris de Souza <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, Vicar General, Episcopal Vicar
Fr Wim Hoekstra <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, Episcopal Vicar, Vicar for Clergy
Fr Fernando Montano <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, Secretary for the Council of Priests
Fr Peter Blayney <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Deputy Chair, Council of Priests, Episcopal Vicar, Parish Priest
Fr John Hogan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rector of Holy Spirit Seminary
Msgr Ron McFarlane <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chancellor for Administration and Parish Priest, St Andrew the Apostle Marayong
Council of Priests	
Bishop Vincent Long <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bishop of Parramatta
Fr Chris de Souza <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson, Vicar General, Episcopal Vicar
Fr Peter Blayney <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Deputy Chair, Episcopal Vicar, Parish Priest
Fr Paul Marshall <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Greystanes
Fr Paul Roberts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest and Director, Institute for Mission
Fr Ian McGinnity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, Christ the King Parish, North Rocks and Dean Northern Deanery
Fr Suresh Kumar <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, Padre Pio Parish, Glenmore Park
Fr John Hogan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rector, Seminary
Fr Peter Williams <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vicar General
Fr Brendan Kelly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, Holy Family Emerton
Fr Brendan Murphy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, Our Lady of the Rosary, St Marys

Fr Fernando Montano <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, St Bernadette, Castle Hill
Mons Ron McFarlane <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chancellor and Parish Priest, St Andrew the Apostle Marayong
Fr Wim Hoekstra <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, St Michaels Baulkham Hills and Vicar for Clergy
Deans	
Fr Jolly Chacko <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mountains Deanery
Fr Paul Marshall <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Central Deanery
Fr Andrew Fornal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Western Deanery
Fr Ian McGinnity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Northern Deanery
Fr Peter Williams <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eastern Deanery
Diocesan Finance Council	
Chris Maley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chair, Diocesan Finance Council
Elizabeth Crouch <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Member – Diocesan Finance Council and Diocesan Audit and Risk committee
Mark Holyoake	Finance Councillor, Director Enterprise CEDP
Diocesan Development Fund	
Donna Vinci <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chair of Investment Advisory Committee and Deputy Chair of Diocesan Finance Council
Royce Brennan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Manager, Diocesan Development Fund
Diocesan Property Council	
Alan Zammit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson
Diocesan Audit and Enterprise Risk Committee	
Patrick Tuttle <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson
Chancery Administration	
Geoff Officer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief of Operations and Finance
Tony Jose <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head of Financial Services
Royce Brennan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Manager, Diocesan Development Fund
Jasmine Sammy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head of Risk, Compliance and Assurance

Safeguarding	
Paul Davis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson
Tracy McLeod Howe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head of Office of Safeguarding
Diocesan Pastoral Council	
Padmi Pathinather <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson
Len Blahut <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Deputy Chairperson
Richard McMahon <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Director Pastoral Planning
Deanery Pastoral Council	
Vic O'Callaghan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson – Mountains Deanery
Bill Ryan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson – Central Deanery
Michael Blair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson – Western Deanery
Wendy Goonan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson – Northern Deanery
Lawrence Mockler <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson – Eastern Deanery
Diocesan Liturgical Commission	
Robert Barden <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson
Parramatta Schools Council	
Fr Chris de Souza <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson
Maree Nicholson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Associated Professor
Greg Whitby <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Executive Director
Fr Walter Fogarty	Member
Lynn McKinnon <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Member
Assoc. Prof. Judy Anderson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Member
Peter Webster <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Member
Louise O'Donnell <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Member
Lara Thom <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Member
Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Services Ltd	
Patrick Tuttle <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson and Diocesan Finance Council Member and DAERC Chair
Anthony Goonan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief Executive Officer

CatholicCare Social Services	
Paul McMahon <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chairperson
Vera Visevic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Member
Helen Emmerson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Deputy Chairperson
Peter Loughnane <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Executive Director
Personnel Board	
Paula Kerr <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Director, Tribunal Office
Additional Clergy	
Fr Walter Fogarty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish Priest, Sacred Heart Parish, Westmead
Fr Peter Confeggi <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clergy

Legend

- ☒ Interview organised
- ☒ Unable to participate
- Contacted for interview

Attachment 6: Ecclesial and Civil Governance Principles: *The Light from the Southern Cross*

Summary: Examples of ecclesial & civil governance principles

Ecclesial	Civil
Synodality	Engagement
Subsidiarity	Responsibility and liability
Discernment	Right decision-making
Integrity	Integrity
Dialogue	Transparency
Accountability	Accountability
Morality	Ethics

Attachment 7: Ecclesial and Civil Governance Principles from Other Core Documents

The Diocese of Parramatta Governance Review Terms of Reference

- accountability, transparency, consultation and synodality and the proper attainment of clerical and lay men and women's participation and co-responsibility in the decision-making processes of the Diocese;
- cultural practices or symbols that have led to appropriate use of power as well as to any serious or widespread abuse of power in the governance and management practices; and
- special emphasis on diversity, consultation and synodality.

AICD Revised Not-for-profit Governance Principles 2019

1. Purpose and Strategy
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Board Composition
4. Board Effectiveness
5. Risk Management
6. Performance
7. Accountability and Transparency
8. Stakeholder Engagement
9. Conduct and Compliance and
10. Culture

<https://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/resources/not-for-profit-resources/not-for-profit-governance-principles/>

Attachment 8: ACNC Governance Standards and Responsibilities of Governance Bodies Registered with the ACNC

Registered governance bodies must comply with ACNC governance standards:

1. To maintain not-for-profit status, which includes avoiding unacceptable private benefit.
2. To be reasonably accountable to members. As most of the entities in the Diocese are not membership based this is not a relevant consideration.
3. To stay compliant with Australian Laws. This concerns serious offences such as fraud.
4. To ensure members of the governing body are not disqualified from acting as directors.
5. To ensure members of the governing body understand and carry out duties such as:
 - a. acting with reasonable care and diligence
 - b. acting honestly and fairly in the best interests of the charity, and for its charitable purposes
 - c. not misusing their position or information they gain as a Responsible Person
 - d. disclosing conflicts of interest
 - e. ensuring the financial affairs of the charity are managed responsibly, and
 - f. not allowing the charity to operate while insolvent.

Also note that 'basic religious charities' (known as BRC) are not subject to the governance standards. These are entities with the sole purpose of advancing religion which are not incorporated under Corporations or Associations legislation, do not report as a group, are not tax deductible and do not receive government grants. For example, education and welfare bodies are unlikely to be basic religious charities, whilst churches are likely to be basic religious charities.

In addition to ACNC governance standards there are also ACNC external conduct standards which apply to all registered charities who send resources overseas or provide services overseas regardless of BRC status. There are four external conduct standards covering aspects of a charity's overseas operations:

1. To take reasonable steps to ensure that resources are used for a not-for profit purpose.
2. To keep records and conduct an annual review of overseas activities.
3. To have processes and procedures to avoid fraud and corruption in overseas operations.
4. To protect vulnerable people working in overseas operations.

Attachment 9: Meetings Attended by Reviewers, June 2020–February 2021

23 June	Curia
20 August	Council of Priests
26 August	CatholicCare Advisory Council Meeting
27 August	Diocesan Development Fund/Investment Advisory Committee
26 September	Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting
6 October	Diocesan Finance Council Meeting
13 October	Diocesan Property Council
15 October	Council of Priests
21 October	Parramatta Schools Council
19 November	College of Consultors

Only the meeting with the Curia was attended in person. All others were observed virtually using Zoom as the technology platform.

Attachment 10: Groupings for Analysis of Findings

Bishop Vincent Long

Group 1: Senior Clergy and Religious

Fr Chris de Souza (VG); Very Rev Peter Williams (VG); Fr Ron McFarlane (Chancellor); – Sr Ailsa McKinnon RSM; Fr Ferdinando Montano (Social Services Vicar); Fr Wim Hoekstra (Vicar for Clergy); Fr Peter Blayney (Judicial Vicar); Fr Fernando Montano, and Fr Peter Confeggi.

Group 2: Deans, Deanery PC Chairs, Diocesan PC Chair and Deputy Chair

Deanery PC Chairs: Wendy Goonan; Bill Ryan; Larry Mockler; Michael Blair; and Vic O’Callaghan.

Diocesan Pastoral Council Chair and Deputy Chair: Padmi Pathinather; and Len Blahut.

Deans: Fr Jolly Chako; Fr Andrew Fornal; Fr Ian McGinnity; Fr Paul Marshall; and Very Rev Peter Williams.

Group 3: Board Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Members

DFC - Chris Maley; Donna Vinci; Elizabeth Crouch.

Diocesan Pastoral Council – Padmi Pathinather; Len Blahut.

CCAC – Paul McMahon; Vera Visevic.

Office of Safeguarding - PD – Paul Davis

PSC – Fr Chris de Souza; Peter Webster; Judy Anderson; Marea Nicholson; Greg Whitby; Lara Thom; and Lynn McKinnon.

DLC - Robert Barden.

Diocesan Property Council – Alan Zammit.

CDPSL – Patrick Tuttle.

Group 4: Council of Priests

Fr Paul Marshall; Fr Walter Fogarty; Fr Suresh Kumar; Fr Paul Roberts; Fr John Hogan; and Fr Ian McGinnity.

Group 5 – Lay Leaders

Geoff Officer; Royce Brennan; Anthony Goonan; Jasmine Sammy; Tony Jose; Richard McMahon; Paula Kerr; Tracey McLeod-Howe; Peter Loughnane; and Greg Whitby.

****Many of the interviewees had dual or multiple roles such as Dean and Member of the Council of Priests, or member/chair of more than one committee. In these instances, the responses relevant to the other role or body were transcribed across.***

Attachment 11: Governance Review Feedback Workshops

Date	Time	Dept/Council/Deanery
Monday 15 February 2021	10.00am – 12.00pm	Heads of Agencies, Chairs of Boards Greg Whitby - CEDP Peter Loughnane - CCSS Anthony Goonan - CDPSL Tracy McLeod-Howe - Safeguarding Cecilia Zammit – CCD Royce Brennan – DDF Paula Kerr – Tribunal Paul McMahon – CCSS Padmi Pathinather – DPC (Pastoral)
Tuesday 16 February 2021	8.00am – 10.00am	Curia
	5.00pm – 7.00pm	Diocesan Finance Council
Wednesday 17 February 2021	10.00am – 12.00pm	Senior Chancery Staff Tony Jose Lee Netana Joseph Younes Melisa Kheirallah Jasmine Sammy Mark Buhagiar Dianne Wigan Richard McMahon James Camden Patrice Moriarty Adrian Middeldorp Diane Van Aken Mark Jamieson
Thursday 18 February 2021	10.30am – 12.30pm	Council of Priests College of Consultors
Friday 19 February 2021	10.00am – 12.00pm	Deans & Chairs of Deanery Pastoral Council Mountains Deanery Dean - Fr John McSweeney Chair – Vic O’Callaghan Central Deanery Dean - Fr Paul Marshall Chair – Bill Ryan Western Deanery Dean - Fr Andrew Fornal Chair – Michael Blair Northern Deanery Dean - Fr Ian McGinnity Chair – Wendy Goonan Eastern Deanery Dean - Fr Peter Blayney Chair – Lawrence Mockler

Attachment 12: Role of Diocesan Bishop: Extract from *The Light from the Southern Cross Report*

Canon law states that a diocese 'is a portion of the People of God entrusted to a bishop to be shepherded by him with the cooperation of the priests'¹ and states in relation to a diocesan bishop that they:

- should lead the diocese with the collaboration of the clergy, religious and laity;²
- are not the delegate of the Pope but govern the particular church as 'the vicar and ambassador of Christ';³
- are immediately subject to the authority of the Pope and are accountable to him for the pastoral governance of the diocese;⁴
- are required to minister until they attain the age of 75 years of age when they are required to submit their resignation;⁵
- govern by their 'counsel, exhortations and example, but also by his authority and sacred power' that he exercises 'personally in the name of Christ';⁶
- have all the powers of governance – legislative, executive and judicial – required for the exercise of his pastoral office, 'except in those matters which the law [universal of the Church or promulgated by the bishops' conference, plenary or provincial councils] or a decree of the supreme pontiff reserves to the supreme pontiff or to some other ecclesiastical authority';⁷
- can exercise legislative powers⁸ of governance either personally or in a diocesan synod (discussed at [section 6.5.1]);
- make financial and management decisions with the advice and consent of the diocesan finance council and the college of consultors;⁹
- make important decisions for the diocese with the assistance of the council of priests;¹⁰
- plan the pastoral activity in the diocese with the assistance of the diocesan pastoral council composed of a representative group of laity, religious and clergy, where they exist;¹¹ and
- are required to make five-yearly visitations to the Pope to formally report on the condition of their diocese and to discuss issues of concern to their local church (known as quinquennial or ad limina reports).¹² These visits occur now less regularly, every 7 or 8 years.

¹ *Christus Dominus*, [11]; *CIC*, c. 369.

² *CIC*, cc. 384 and 394.

³ *Lumen Gentium*, [27].

⁴ *CIC*, c. 333 § 1.

⁵ *CIC*, c. 401.

⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 894

⁷ *CIC*, cc. 381 §1 and 391.

⁸ *CIC*, cc. 391 §1 ("The diocesan bishop governs the particular Church entrusted to him with legislative, executive and judicial power, in accordance with the law.") and §2 ("The Bishop exercises legislative power himself. He exercises executive power either personally or through vicars general or episcopal vicars, in accordance with the law. He exercises judicial power either personally or through a judicial Vicar and judges, in accordance with the law.")

⁹ *CIC*, cc. 1292 and 1277.

¹⁰ *CIC*, cc. 515, 461, 1215 and 1742.

¹¹ Dantis & Reid 2019: [add reference to page with relevant data from the survey]; *CIC*, cc. 511-514.

¹² *CIC*, c. 399 §1.

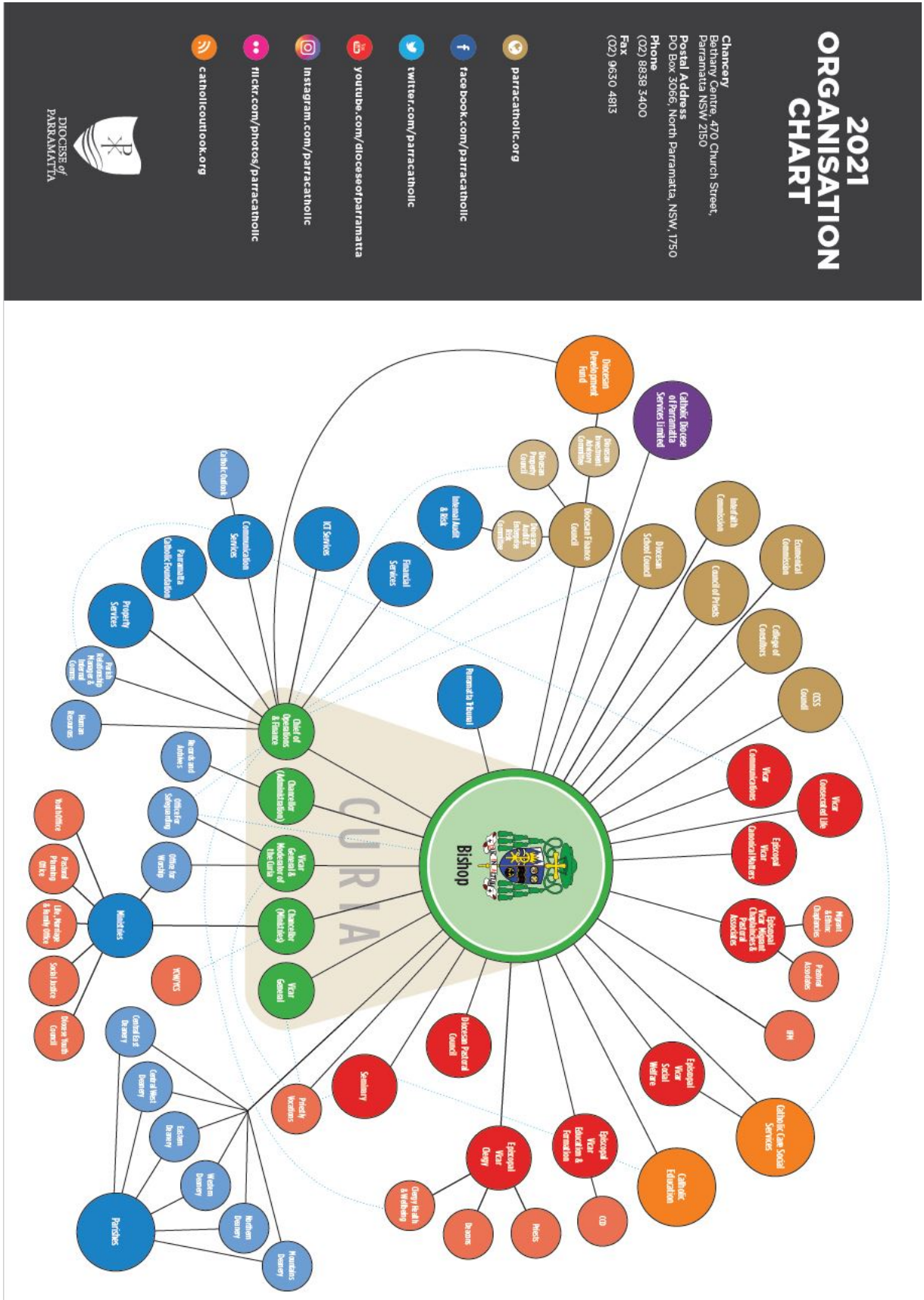
Attachment 13: Ideas Provided by Interviews for Governance Improvement

- Tie in the Diocesan Pastoral Council framework with the College of Consultors, and where relevant with the DFC, and
- Decrease duplication in the diocese, for example, one finance manager for a deanery who looks after a collection of parishes.
- Coordinate the approach to safeguarding across the Dioceses of Sydney, Parramatta and Broken Bay.
- Improve papers provided to committees e.g. CEDP papers are too long
- Clarify lines of reporting and accountability to committees and where decisions are made
- Strengthen the capability to deal with adverse media events e.g. JobKeeper
- Interact more with other agency heads to learn of other ministries, and have the opportunity for peer support
- Provide data relevant entities to enable evidence-based pastoral planning on matters such as the supply of priests, possible amalgamations of parishes and so on.
- There needs to be a diocesan operational plan – vision/mission/top level strategies to see diocese through to conclusion of plenary in 2022/3. Once in place, this operational plan could offer guidance through curia, operational team, councils, agencies and into parishes etc. Attendance is variable at the Deanery and diocesan pastoral councils. This might be related to frustration to lack of clarity of purpose.
- Would be helpful to have clearer understanding about the strategic intent of agencies and ministries for optimum allocation of responsibilities.
- Procurement and other administrative practices such as project management;
- Wider dissemination of the financial snapshot;
- Communication from and to the Chancery;
- Greater clarity on how decisions are made and relative responsibilities;
- Clear and consistent processes for dealing with misconduct; and
- Introduction of a formal induction process for board and committee members
- Induct committee members with improved on-boarding arrangements;
- Clarify structures and escalation re decision-making possibly graphically represented;
- Develop protocols for dealing with disputes that might emerge;
- Explore new ways to engage with and report to stakeholders in the diocese;
- Create a central repository of policies and practices, that can be widely accessed by diocesan agencies and parishes;
- Improve committee charters, including spelling out the interplay between bodies with comparable functions;
- Enhance the annual strategic exercise with external thinking;
- Ensure standard practice of a governance cycle of reviews for constitutions and policies, for membership vacancies, and a calendar for when entities should report and to whom;
- Provide more opportunities to hear what is going on across the diocese and the programs they are running to break down siloes;
- Better induct new leaders, and provide ongoing formation especially in Church governance;
- Ensure greater involvement of women and minority groups in key roles;
- Provide clear statements on the power of advisory bodies, and commit to considering their advice;
- Produce a high-level set of accounts and a dashboard to demonstrate progress, sharing this with the parishes after providing advice on interpreting the figures; and
- Consider opportunities for cooperation and consolidation amongst Catholic agencies across NSW.
- Enhanced orientation for parish priests into their role, responsibilities and administrative requirements;
- Greater consultation from the Chancery during policy development;

- Communication of decisions between the Diocesan, Deanery and the Parish Pastoral Councils and to the general effectiveness of the communications department;
- Support for parishes in the post-JobKeeper world when homelessness, access to food and accommodation will arrive on parish doorsteps;
- Advice for leaders at the deanery and parish level on local fund-raising and connecting them with other key community service agencies;
- Formalisation of a diocesan mission and vision statement to guide the diocese, deaneries and parishes to mobilise the administrative resources in a common pastoral mission;
- Implementation of a role for the Pastoral Planning Office in integrating the many facets of the diocese, deaneries and parishes;
- Equipping more people for leadership at deanery and parish levels to achieve the Diocesan Pastoral Vision; and
- Adopting Zoom technology as one effective mode of gathering people for meetings.

Attachment 14: Diocese of Parramatta Organisational Chart

Please refer to parracatholic.org for a PDF version of the Diocese of Parramatta Organisational Chart



Glossary of Acronyms

ACBC	Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
ACNC	Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
AICD	Australian Institute of Company Directors
CCSS	CatholicCare Social Services
CCAC	CatholicCare Advisory Council
CEDP	Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta
CoF	Chief of Finance and Operations
CRA	Catholic Religious Australia
CDPSL	Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Services Limited
CoP	Council of Priests
CSNSW	Catholic Schools New South Wales
DAERC	Diocesan Audit and Enterprise Risk Committee
DDF	Diocesan Development Fund, also known as Diocesan Investment Advisory Committee (DIAC)
DFC	Diocesan Finance Council
DLC	Diocesan Liturgy Commission
DPC	Deanery Pastoral Council
DPC	Diocesan Pastoral Council
NFP	Not-for-profit
LSC report	<i>The Light from the Southern Cross</i> report
OfW	Office for Worship
OoS	Office of Safeguarding
PJP	Public Juridic Person (and MPJP - Ministerial Public Juridic Person)
PC2020	Plenary Council 2020
PPC	Parish Pastoral Council
PP	Parish Priest
PSC	Parramatta Schools Council
PPO	Pastoral Planning Office
RCIRCSA	Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

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The Light from the Southern Cross. See Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (2020).

Endnotes

¹ The parochial district is led by a married deacon with the active involvement of his wife. This is a living example of the exhortation of Pope Francis following the Synod on the Amazon for the Church to try different pastoral models to meet the challenges of the times.

² RCIRCSA *Final Report*: Volume 16, Religious institutions, Book 2, p 682: Rec 16.7,

³ Susan Pascoe was one of the reviewers appointed by the ACBC-CRA to conduct the review of church governance and provide advice in the form of a written report.

⁴ A list of the entities registered with the ACNC is provided at Attachment 4.

⁵ Australian Institute of Company Directors, *Not-for-Profit Governance Principles*, Second Edition, January 2019, pp 10-11.

⁶ *The Light from the Southern Cross* report [henceforth *LSC* report], p 38.

⁷ For a further discussion of the church in the context of church administration see B. Lucas, P. Slack and W. d'Apice, *Church Administration Handbook*, Second Edition, St Pauls Publications, Strathfield NSW, 2018, pp 26-27 and following.

⁸ *Evangelii Gaudium* n.25, citing Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops, Aparecida Document 29 June 2007, 201 cited by Lucas, Slack and d'Apice, *Church Administration Handbook*.

⁹ *LSC* report, s. 5.4.4.

¹⁰ *LSC* report, s. 6.11.4.

¹¹ *LSC* report, pp 109–10

¹² Notwithstanding the fact only 10 of the 30 dioceses in Australia surveyed in 2019 have a Diocesan Pastoral Council.

¹³ *LSC* report, Rec. 76.

¹⁴ *LSC* report, Rec. 77.

¹⁵ It is noteworthy that there is a range of helpful professional bodies with freely available materials to assist people with civil governance, but limited resources available for ecclesial governance. This could be a contribution of the Diocese of Parramatta over time.

¹⁶ *LSC* report, s. 6.11.1.

¹⁷ *LSC* report, p. 145.

¹⁸ *LSC* report, p. 145.

¹⁹ This in part explains the controversy associated with the release of the Draft Religious Education Curriculum in 2020.

²⁰ *LSC* report, p. 183.

²¹ By way of example, civil regulators such as the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission require additional compliance and reporting, Church entities such as Catholic Safeguarding Australia oversee nationally agreed and audited standards, and the *motu proprio Vos Estis Lux Mundi* requires episcopal compliance.

²² Diocesan Financial Administrator, Can 494.

²³ The Bishop has the ultimate sign-off for remuneration after recommendation from line managers, HR and COF.

²⁴ Most notably CatholicCare Social Services and the Office for Safeguarding have new CEOs addressing governance and operational issues.

²⁵ Plenary Council #5, p. 6.

²⁶ *LSC* report, p. 137.

²⁷ *LSC* report, p. 148.

²⁸ *LSC* report, p. 149.

²⁹ *LSC* report, p. 150.

³⁰ Despite the calibre of members of the Diocesan Property Council, the reviewers observed a meeting which was predominantly updates of the sort generally provided in a management meeting.

³¹ Discernment Group #4, p. 2.

³² We see greater diversity on the Diocesan Pastoral Council than on those in the financial area.

³³ Examples of committees with a reliance on technical expertise are the DFC, the DIAC, the DAERC and the Property Council.

³⁴ Catholic Professional Standards Limited has national standards written at the level of principles to be adopted according to the local context in church settings across Australia.

³⁵ Plenary Council #2, p.2.

- ³⁶ The Reviewers note that is akin to the impact of the values of a Minister on a Government Department.
- ³⁷ This was noted in the final Report of the RCIRCSA in the commentary that dioceses and parishes would do well to observe the practice of education, health and welfare agencies which operate on more contemporary civil governance practices.
- ³⁸ Australian Business Number assigned by the corporate regulator to each registered business entity.
- ³⁹ The Trustees who constitute the College of Consultors are appointed by the Bishop.
- ⁴⁰ The core documents included the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, the ACNC Act (Cth 2012) and the Charities Act (Cth 2013), the Corporations Act (2001), and relevant diocesan handbooks, codes, delegations and statutes.
- ⁴¹ The 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si* and the 2020 encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* provide guidance on ecclesial and social teachings of relevance to the Governance Review.
- ⁴² The Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse contains findings on poor governance practice in Australian Catholic parishes and dioceses. The creation of a governance review group by the ACBC and CRA to investigate parish and diocesan governance was a response to Recommendation 16.7 of the RCIRCSA *Final Report*. Susan Pascoe was one of the members of this group which deliberated for 18 months in 2019-2020 and wrote the report, *The Light from the Southern Cross* which contains guidance on good ecclesial and civil governance practice. The Report of the 2019 Financial Services Royal Commission and the 2018 Australian Prudential Regulation Authority's Inquiry into the Commonwealth Bank of Australia also provided useful identification of poor governance practice and helpful advice regarding good governance practice.
- ⁴³ Key texts included the *Church Administration Handbook*.
- ⁴⁴ Good governance advice can be found on the websites of the Australian Institute of company Directors, the Governance Institute of Australia, Our Community, the ACNC, JusticeConnect and many legal and accounting professional bodies.
- ⁴⁵ Explosive allegations in late 2020 regarding financial malfeasance, and the related resignation of Cardinal Becciu, illustrate the Pope's resolve to see this through.
- ⁴⁶ It is prescient that the Pope's 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si*, foreshadowed the devastating impact on the world's poorest, of these kinds of crises.
- ⁴⁷ See article by Miranda Devine in the *Daily Telegraph* on 27 August 2020 and <https://www.change.org/p/diocese-of-parramatta-remove-bishop-vincent-long-from-the-office-of-parramatta?fbclid=IwAR2C8wgQIQZXIfSlvvfypHHOgLTWT8j9D2a9dJSvuYiOHsjpB2gjpqyp4Mxg%3chttps://www.change.org/p/diocese-of-parramatta-remove-bishop-vincent-long-from-the-office-of-parramatta?fbclid=IwAR2C8wgQIQZXIfSlvvfypHHOgLTWT8j9D2a9dJSvuYiOHsjpB2gjpqyp4Mxg>
- ⁴⁸ Francis, 20 August 2018, *Letter to the People of God* <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2018-08/pope-francis-letter-people-of-god-sexual-abuse.html>
- ⁴⁹ The DFC has close to a decision-making function when advising the bishop on acts of extraordinary administration.
- ⁵⁰ Many of the Ministerial PJPs and corporate boards use a Governance Authority Matrix to be clear about thresholds for expenditure, delegations, points of escalation and controls.
- ⁵¹ LSC report, s. 5.2.3.
- ⁵² LSC report, pp. 71-72.
- ⁵³ LSC report Rec. 14.
- ⁵⁴ *Pope Francis' Address to the Synod Fathers at Opening of Synod 2018 on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*.
- ⁵⁵ In a complementary way, the reviewers have recommended continued access to training in civil governance for the clergy.
- ⁵⁶ LSC report, pp 69-70.
- ⁵⁷ The Archdiocese of Brisbane added two women to its Council of Priests as non-voting observers in 2019.
- ⁵⁸ LSC report, p. 69.
- ⁵⁹ See reports in *La Croix* and other news outlets.
- ⁶⁰ This is properly titled the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry.
- ⁶¹ LSC report, p. 63.
- ⁶² The HIH Royal Commission was chaired by Justice Neville Owen, who has given great service to the justice system in Australia as well as the Catholic Church. He chaired the ACBC and CRA's Truth, Justice and Healing Commission to assist the Church's response to the RCIRCSA. He was a member of the Implementation Advisory Group to advise the ACBC-CRA on their response to specific issues for the Church from the RCIRCSA *Final Report*,

and chaired the Governance Review Project Team which investigated the governance of dioceses and parishes following recommendation 16.7 of the RCIRCSA *Final Report*.

⁶³ The discord of a vocal minority is difficult to manage in a pastoral manner.

⁶⁴ LSC report, p. 40.

⁶⁵ LSC report, p. 38.

⁶⁶ The AICD Governance Principles can be found at <https://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/resources/not-for-profit-resources/not-for-profit-governance-principles/>

⁶⁷ This chart can be found at <https://www.parracatholic.org/diocesan-organisational-chart/>

⁶⁸ Long, V. (2019), Address to 2019 Diocesan Forum.

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