

16 December 2019

The Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was presented to the Governor-General on 15 December 2017, following a five year long inquiry.

In early 2018 the University of Divinity commenced the process of developing a new University Strategic Goal: *'Responding to the Royal Commission'*.

In August 2018, around 250 participants attended a two and a half day Conference in Melbourne, *Health and Integrity in Church and Ministry*, co-sponsored by the University of Divinity. The Conference issued a communiqué with 14 resolutions, and a media release. The Conference Papers were subsequently published and are also freely available in pdf through the University's website.

As part of the University's Strategic Plan, the Strategic Goal *Responding to the Royal Commission* was accepted by the Strategic Planning Committee in August 2018 and ratified by University Council in October that year. The Goal's Vision and Objectives include, "to foster and implement best practice in theological education, ministry formation, supervision, and professional development."

In February 2019 a Project Officer was employed by the University at 0.5 FTE to work on implementing the Strategic Goal.

During 2019, the University of Divinity revised its *Code of Conduct* and associated policies, including new *Conduct and Misconduct* and *Safeguarding* Policies. The Code of Conduct and Policies come into effect on 1 January 2020. They will be strongly promoted, with familiarisation opportunities and learning modules available at the start of the 2020 Academic Year.

From March to July 2019, a Framework was developed for all Supervised Theological Field Education Units across the University in order to have common standards of best practice in learning and teaching of practical ministry in the field, including safeguarding, and supervision. This Framework was supported by the Academic Board and will be implemented for new Units from 2020 with existing Units fully compliant by the start of 2021.

There was a *Responding to the Royal Commission* strand of three presentations at the annual University Research Day in June 2019, with one paper from the Project Officer encouraging further research in Royal Commission-related areas. The University's Library Hub now has a specific Subject Guide for *Responding to the Royal Commission*, with lists of books, articles, resources, and websites, regularly updated.

In August 2019, a Ministry Colloquium was held, attended by a range of representatives from the University's Colleges and their governing bodies. Each College reported on how they currently train ministers (lay, ordained or accredited), with helpful cross-discussion. A selection of focus papers followed, with open dialogue about the responsibilities and challenges involved in ministry education now and in the immediate future. Key issues included ongoing regular supervision of

ministers and the need for trained supervisors; leadership and power; and enabling different, more life-filled cultures. These will be followed up in 2020.

The University of Divinity was a major sponsor of the National Council of Churches in Australia's two day Safer Churches Conference: *Transforming Cultures, Listening, Reflecting, Acting* held in September 2019. The University's Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Sherlock spoke on the Conference title topic as part of a panel of academic and church leaders.

In December 2019, the University Council adopted and implemented the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations effective from 1 January 2020. The University's Strategic Goal *Responding to the Royal Commission* continues in 2020.

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