

# **Responding to the recommendations:**

## **First steps in implementing the review of the seminary.**

1. **Develop Position Description for Residential Formators** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Action:** Bishop Edwards will write to the bishops whose dioceses have a seminary requesting position descriptions for roles of Rector, vice rector, propaedeutic role, and for the proposed Human and Pastoral Director roles. He will then ask those currently in those positions to draft a PD for Consultors to review. The incoming formation staff can develop the position descriptions further.

2 **That the Processes and Policies for Vianney College be reviewed** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Action:** An *ad hoc* committee headed by a Consultor be appointed to review policy documents. Bishop Edwards to write to the Rector to include a request for a list of current policies and invite suggestions for who would be helpful on such a committee.

3. **That a system for the regular meeting of staff be developed.** Clarification required - does this refer to Academic staff or Formation Staff?

**Action:** Bishop Edwards to ask reviewers to provide clarity on this point.

4. **That human formation plan be developed.** This recommendation is accepted.

**Comment:** Human and Pastoral formation are closely aligned.

**Action 1:** Bishop Edwards will write to the bishops whose dioceses have a seminary and to some Religious Congregations requesting a copy of their human formation plan.

**Action 2:** Frs Micallef and Rafter to visit Sydney seminaries and view the Human Formation Plan they have in action.

**Action 3:** First Year Formator Courses exist and Fr Rafter will enrol in one of these as soon as practical.

5. **Acculturation/inculturation plan to be formed** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Comment:** Understanding of cultures is two-way. Those born in Australia have the opportunity to learn other cultures and those who are born elsewhere learn something of the Australian culture. The Divine Word Missionaries and the Sisters of St Joseph were identified as potential resources for guidance in this field. Divine Word Missionaries are deliberately intercultural. The Sisters of St Joseph offer an intensive course to priests and religious who come to Australia for ministry. Our seminarians need a minimum standard of English as this is another platform for inculturation.

**Action:** Bishop Edwards to write to Srs of St Joseph re the Winter Acculturation Program, and to Fr Asaeli Raass SVD to enquire about the Divine Word Missionary approach.

6. **Spiritual Director to be a full-time position** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Comment:** The current Spiritual Director also has heavy lecturing responsibilities and generously attends to both roles. A role description will be helpful for the new Spiritual Director. The role could contribute to Human Formation and Pastoral Formation but must not conflict with spiritual direction.

**Action:** Bishop Edwards will write to the bishops whose dioceses have a seminary requesting their Role Description for the Spiritual Director, and to clarify whether the Spiritual Director attends formation meetings and if so what input is he able to contribute.

7. **Spiritual Formation program have a deeper inclusion of the biblical foundation of Catholic spirituality alongside the sacramental life.** Clarification required

**Action:** Bishop Edwards to write to reviewers to seek clarification on this recommendation - what issue is being addressed here?

8. **Pastoral Director be appointed** and professionally trained team of formators to work within the seminary and the diocese. – This recommendation is accepted.

**Comment:** The diocese of Wagga is developing pastoral priorities and these will inform the direction in the pastoral formation plan. The Pastoral Director might usefully be involved in ongoing formation for under five-year ordained priests.

**Action:** Bishop Edwards will write to the bishops whose dioceses have a seminary requesting their Role Description for the Pastoral Director

9. **The Pastoral Team is to include clergy and lay men and women** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Comment:** This team would be advisory to the Pastoral Director.

**Action:** Ask the Pastoral Director, when appointed, to develop this team and its role description.

10. **Use of CPE be continued and developed** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Comment:** Our seminarians usually complete Unit 1 of CPE in intensive mode over 3 months. There are also units 2, 3 and 4. Newly-ordained priests could continue CPE in a different mode, for example, one day a week.

**Action:** This program would be the responsibility of the Pastoral Director. The Pastoral Director will be tasked to determine what courses are available. Fr Thompson could offer some information on available courses.

11. **Collaborative program between diocese and seminary be explored and developed for ongoing formation for priests after ordination.** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Action:** An ongoing formation program to be developed by the Pastoral Formator/Director to incorporate the annual Clergy Conference, the Under 5's & Under 10's formation days, and contributions from local Bishops and Priests.

12. **Vianney College to remain a house of formation for priests.** – This recommendation is accepted.

13. **Consider a theological and pastoral centre to operate from the library complex for collaborative studies for students, clergy, lay faithful.** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Comment:** There are currently no lay students at Vianney College and the connection to CSU is no longer in place. Offering courses to future teachers of the diocese has long-term benefits.

**Action:** A committee chaired by a member of the College of Consultors to be established around Easter 2022 - possibly with Fr Paddy Sykes, Matthew Tan & CEDWW Faith & Mission Director - to carry out this recommendation.

14. **Vianney college to affiliate with CIS** – This recommendation is under consideration by staff and Consultors.

**Action 1:** The questions posed at the staff meeting to be put to CIS for response.

**Action 2:** Priests and students in the diocese to be invited to share their thoughts on this issue.

**Action 3:** The staff to have an opportunity to submit further questions on or before Oct 13

**Action 4:** The Consultors to consider this issue on October 14.

**Action 5:** Bishop Edwards to make a decision.

15. **Consideration be given to :**

a. **Updating library** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Comment:** Traditional libraries are phasing out, society is moving away from books and using on online resources more heavily. If Vianney College affiliates with CIS, there will be many online resources available through CIS and Notre Dame.

**Action:** After the decision on affiliation, Deacon Rod, the current Librarian, is to consult with experts in the field and with them to develop a plan and cost for updating the library.

b. **Establish trust/fund** – this recommendation is accepted.

**Action:** The diocese will investigate the establishing of a fund to support the ongoing costs of the library and of Vianney College. The Diocesan Finance Committee will be asked for advice on how this is best established. We need to give consideration as to how the Seminary will be funded in the future. It is currently largely funded by land sales and that income stream will eventually slow down. A significant Trust Fund would potentially perpetually fund the Seminary. Consider a Fundraising drive, perhaps on Vocations Sunday. Encourage donations and involve the community. This would be the responsibility of the Seminary Finance Council.

c. **Open the library collection to the broader diocese.** – this recommendation is accepted in principle.

**Action:** Deacon Rod, the current Librarian, is to consult with experts in the field and with them to develop a plan for and understand the cost opening the library collection to the broader diocese.

16. **Strategic plan of governance be developed, including independent audit of the seminary portfolio**

- a. **To undertake the necessary financial planning and budgeting**  
b. **To base future financial planning on accurate financial data** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Comment:** The current diocesan budget for Vianney College (July-June) allows for an overall amount, but it is not a forensic, itemised budget. DWW accounting team can provide the historical data to form the basis of such an itemised line-by-line budget.

**Action 1:** Establish a Seminary Finance Committee as a sub-committee of the Diocesan Finance Council in early 2022, with administrative support from Tige Brown or Belinda Donohue. As it is new, meetings might be held monthly or two-monthly initially, with the aim to be quarterly meetings once it is established. Dennis Purcell to propose names for the Seminary Finance Committee.

**Action:** The Seminary Finance Committee to develop a budget with Fr Micallef before end of April 2022.

17. **Norms governing the Seminary Finance Council be reviewed and updated as a subcommittee of the DFC**– This recommendation is accepted.

**Action:** Either the Seminary Finance Council of the Diocesan Finance Committee will be tasked to review and update their norms and present these including the change of name to Seminary Finance Committee to the Diocesan Finance Committee which will recommend them to the Consultors.

18. **That a Seminary Council be established and that the members be drawn from the clergy and Christ's lay faithful.** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Action 1:** Bishop Edwards will write to the bishops whose dioceses have a seminary and to some Provincials whose Religious Congregations have a seminary to request a copy of their statutes for a seminary council if they have one.

**Action 2:** Bishop Edwards, Frs Micallef and Rafter to meet in 2022 to discuss the statutes and to commence a process to identify suitable candidates for membership on such a council.

**Action 3:** In the second half of 2022, the Bishop will establish such a Council to provide structured governance and support for the Rector and for the Bishop, and will bind the Bishop more closely to the seminary.

19. **That Vianney College consider the possibility of collaboration with Corpus Christ College and Good Shepherd Seminary for shared resources, curriculum, formation modules, teaching and formation staff, and pastoral supervisors.** – This recommendation is accepted.

**Comment:** One of the challenges for Vianney College and its students is isolation. I note that Vianney College already collaborates with Corpus Christi College for celibacy seminary and is already involved in the national soccer competition.

**Action:** Frs Micallef and Rafter to investigate other seminaries' resources and activities and explore further collaborations to foster and promote.

20. **Develop a program for ministry to Aboriginal people to be resources at Vianney.** This recommendation is accepted.

**Comment:** There is no program for ministry currently offered to seminarians in Australia. Wagga Wagga, as a rural diocese, is best placed of all dioceses with a seminary to promote engagement with aboriginal people and ministry to them. This is one of the agenda questions of the Plenary Council.

**Action:** This will be the responsibility for the Seminary Council. It will be tasked to help the Rector develop such a program.