

## Extra Report for noting

### Professional Standards Unit interactions

During the course of this review, the matter of the role of the Professional Standards Unit was raised in relation to specific incidents. While these incidents fall outside the brief of this review both in topic and timeframe, the need to address child protection and sexual misconduct policies as well as workplace bullying policies was highlighted. The incidents bring attention to confusion around clear lines of reporting and response by GFS, and a lack of an agreed understanding as to the relationship and authority of the Professional Standards Directorate to GFS.

It is recommended in relation to child protection and sexual misconduct that clear lines of reporting be established and promulgated across participants, leaders and contractors. The establishment or reiteration of the clear guidelines in the Policy and Guidelines Manual Version 4 2016 as well as strong relationships will prevent misunderstandings. The recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse regarding Church agencies have begun to provide clear guidelines. Policies and principles should be updated as the Royal Commission updates their recommendations.

The authority of Professional Standards to intervene or mediate within GFS as a workplace needs to be clearly defined. If it is the case that Professional Standards cannot mediate or intervene, it is important that a strong relational basis is defined in a Letter of Agreement/MOU with appropriate remedies for any such future experience. It is also recommended that an employee assistance programme be provided for staff of GFS.

#### Recommendations:

- ❖ A strong relationship should be built with the Professional Standards Directorate where training is provided to GFS officers and volunteers so all are clear about policies
- ❖ A strong relational basis is defined in the Letter of Agreement/MOU which provides for remedies for disputes etc.
- ❖ A confidential employee assistance programme be provided for staff of GFS