**ATTACHMENT H**

**Submission that management of the Church should be performance based**

The Catholic Church in Australia has a record of very poor performance over the past 48 years. This poor performance could have been avoided or reduced if the bishops had monitored the Church’s performance by collecting statistics, analysing them and then taking action to improve performance. An important part of this approach is being transparent by making these statistics available to members of an organisation for discussion. In this way, the organisation (the Church) feels accountable to its members and is under pressure to perform.

There have been two instances where surveys have been conducted and statistics produced with some benefit: -

• The bishops have, over the years, conducted a survey showing the percentage of Catholics who regularly attend Mass on Sunday is in steep decline (see Attachment K). The Church published it, but the membership’s attention was not directed to the problem until very recently when the New Evangelism program was introduced to try to do something about the decline in attendance. The New Evangelism is the Old Evangelism limited in its scope mainly to the parish and minus any reference to achieving salvation which was the main appeal of the Old Evangelism. However, some action has now been taken and some benefits may flow from this action.

• A survey was conducted within the Archdiocese of Sydney which showed that only 5% of Catholic children attending Catholic schools continue to practise their faith after the age of 29 years. This survey was brought to the attention of the membership in a talk by Archbishop Fisher published in the Catholic Weekly in May 2015 (*see Attachment J*). Archbishop Fisher claimed that children were emerging from Catholic schools knowing almost nothing about their faith. Action was taken in 2008 by the bishops to attempt to remedy this by the development of the text books To Know, Worship and Love. These textbooks are full of information about the Church, but, although children in Catholic schools now know more about the faith, it seems that they are still not being enthused or convinced by the text books to practise the faith.

With these exceptions, it can be said that performance management techniques have not been used to maintain or improve the performance of the Church and its clergy.

During this time, it is apparent that: -

• Attendance at Mass (and the practice of the faith) have declined from about 75% to about 10% (*see Attachment K*).

• The Sydney Archdiocese survey revealed that, by age 29 years, 95% of the students of its Catholic schools no longer practise the faith (*see Attachment J*).

• Many fewer church weddings are taking place

• The Sacrament of Reconciliation, where once people had to queue up to go to confession, is very close to becoming a defunct sacrament.

• The number of Catholic children in state schools who practise their faith after leaving school is an unknown figure, as the Church does not collect figures on these children, or at least does not disclose them. However, the very small numbers of young new parishioners in parishes, suggest that the number practising their faith after being instructed by the Church in State schools is appallingly low.

• Figures are also not kept or not disclosed on how many of Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) converts continue to practise their faith after conversion.

If another organisation outside of the Church did not have regard to its performance and was getting a 95% failure rate in its major activity, the directors would be dismissed.

*Collection of statistics and Key Performance Indicators (“KPIs”)*

The Church needs to collect statistics and make them available to its membership so that they know what results the Church is achieving throughout Australia. We need to analyse these statistics to determine what is going wrong with a view to doing things better. We need to find out why we are doing so badly. These statistics need to be disclosed to members of the Church so that members of the Church can judge the effectiveness of its bishops and priests and they can judge and justify their own performance. Collecting statistics and conducting surveys can be expensive, but sampling reduces the cost.

Let us look at a few simple examples of situations where performance management techniques can assist the Church to perform better.

To begin with, parishes already have statistics which can be used to give some measure of performance: -

• If a parish is successful in taking say 10 people in a year through the RCIA process and they become Catholics, it should be an easy process to record if they join the parish congregation. One means is simply by sighting if they attend Mass in the next few weeks. The parish could ask say the Legion of Mary to follow up the 10 converts in six months to interview them and to get feedback from them on whether, and to what extent, they are practising their new faith. If they are not, they could be asked “why”. This is not a very costly or labour-intensive exercise.

• The number of new planned givers in a year for each parish and the number who have ceased to give could be recorded and a figure produced for the Diocese as a whole and on a parish basis. If the number of new givers is very low (and it probably is), it is a rough indicator of the success of our school system and the Catechist teachers in State schools in producing practising Catholics. It is an easy and not costly way of getting an idea of our success in this educational area and highlighting a major problem.

• Priests could be asked to report on how many people attend the Second Rite of confession on each occasion the rite takes place. The diocese could appoint a member of the diocese to periodically call in at each parish over a period of weeks to count the number of people attending confession (the first rite) in the times set for confession and to report back, giving a success rate for each parish. These should be published for the information of members.

Now, in these three simple instances, weaknesses in the Church’s performance can be highlighted and the question can be asked – *How can we change what we are doing to achieve a better performance*? KPI’s can be set for each of these activities which encourage a modest improvement in performance. KPIs highlight the fact that an activity is important and the need for good performance. This encouragement and expectation of better performance has been absent for the past 48 years and the Church’s problems with performance have largely been ignored.

We have raised the issue that, for many years, our priests have not been giving catechesis in parish churches on the essentials of our faith. This has led to a situation where most parishioners are unaware of many of the essentials of the faith and where there is a variety of views on these essentials which are in conflict with what is in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This lack of performance in the area of catechesis by priests has been a major reason for the weakening of faith of our membership over those past 48 years. KPIs should be set for priests in this area to ensure that in future Catechesis takes place.

It is in the area of religious education that we need to be prepared to spend some money in carrying out surveys to tell us what is going wrong: -

• in our Catholic schools and

• with the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (“CCD”) in providing religious education to Catholic children in state schools.

We need to know how we can present religious education better to children. For example, we spend a considerable amount of money teaching the faith in state schools. Figures for new parishioners in our parishes indicate that very few children are joining our local parish churches as a result of our catechists’ efforts. Surveys will help us to highlight the problems. The results which we appear to be getting would indicate that the lessons need to be drastically changed and improved. The lack of statistics and survey information leads CCD to just continue with a “business as usual” attitude where its minds should be sharply focussed on the need to improve performance.

We are told that because of “age appropriateness” and “sensitivity” requirements of education departments in the various states, instruction cannot be given on the subjects of Mortal Sin, Hell and the Last Judgement, which are essential to explaining the faith. Some means needs to be found to get around this impasse such as moving the onus for age appropriateness and sensitivity onto parents as suggested in another of our group’s submissions (*see Attachment G*). Maybe, we should find an alternative to teaching the faith in state schools. In this age of technology, internet courses could be the answer and the old Protestant Sunday school system may be more effective in teaching children from State Schools the essential of our faith. We may teach fewer children, but we may produce more practising Catholics.

The point is we need to conduct surveys, publish the results, analyse, set KPIs and be prepared to try different strategies.

All priests should have KPIs set for their main activities. If the number of confessions heard in the parish during a set confession time during the past year was 10 per session, then the KPI could be set at 13 confessions per session for the coming year and the KPI increased by a small number in each succeeding year. The Diocesan office could visit each parish twice a year at undisclosed times to make a count.

Mass attendances could be counted by diocesan officials on a Sunday not disclosed to the priest. In future years the priest could be set a KPI of the base count plus 5%.

Surveys should be conducted to establish success rates for Catholic schools and for the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, which provides religious education for Catholic children in State Schools. Lack of increased attendances at Mass currently indicates that both are achieving very low success rates.

The number of church weddings held in each parish should be published, with comparisons with past years.

The Church has not performed well during the past 48 years. It has ignored its poor performance for too long. Statistics and KPIs would seem to be a means of placing pressure on the Church to do better together with statistics being made public to its membership.