

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF RIVERINA
Professional Standards Board

In the matter of:

The Professional Standards Committee Applicant

And

The Reverend Robert Harris Respondent

DETERMINATION
15TH NOVEMBER 2022

Conclusions and Recommendations

113. The Board has found that the Respondent engaged in harassment, bullying and emotional abuse. Far from doing so on an isolated occasion, the Respondent engaged in misconduct against three church workers on a number of occasions over time. There is evidence of the detrimental impact this behaviour had on each of the three complainants.
114. In the Board's opinion, these forms of misbehaviour are ones that should be censured. The behaviour is not so serious that the Respondent should be deposed from Holy Orders. However, there should be significant consequences for this proved behaviour by taking into account his admitted serious misbehaviour prompting his resignation from an incumbency in the Diocese of Grafton before coming to the Diocese of Riverina.
115. It should be noted that in responding to these findings (by way of recommendations to the Bishop), the Board is not imposing a penalty or punishment. The Board's recommendations are informed by the public interest in preventing others from being subjected to such behaviour in the future by the Respondent. The Board's role is, in a sense, protective of the public, especially those who might come to work with the Respondent as a church worker.
116. Under Section 71 of the Professional Standards Ordinance (PSO), the Board makes the following recommendations to the Bishop of Riverina:
- a. That the Respondent be formally censured for his behaviour.
 - b. Noting that the Respondent has resigned his office, he should cease to hold any office he held in the Diocese of Riverina.

- c. That any license or authority of the Church held by the Respondent in the Diocese of Riverina should be revoked.
- d. That the Respondent be prohibited from being licensed to the incumbency of a parish or other position of authority in the Diocese of Riverina.
- e. That the Respondent be restricted from exercising any supervision or pastoral oversight of church workers.

117. In accordance with Section 72 of the PSO, the Board will direct the Board's Secretary to provide a copy of this Determination and its recommendations to the Bishop of the Diocese of Riverina and to the Respondent, and to forward them for entry into the National Register.

118. This case was heard in public in the sense that interested persons could log into the proceedings on Zoom. A number of people did so. Because of the history of this matter and its widespread impact within the Diocese, the Board recommends that a copy of this Determination be sent by the Bishop to the Diocesan Registrar, who should make it available to anyone on request.