



Diocese of Armidale

Ph: (02) 6772 4971
 Fax: (02) 6771 1772
 Email: chancery@armidale.catholic.org.au

Catholic Chancery Office
 128 Dangar Street
 PO Box 93
 Armidale NSW 2350

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Ms Mary Ann Jolley
 ABC 4 Corners
 via email - Jolley.Mary.Ann [REDACTED]

Dear Mary Ann,

Your email of the 14th June mentions the tragic case of [REDACTED]. Whilst I have only recently become Bishop of the Diocese, I have been made aware of his plight. I offer my deepest sympathies to his family and friends.

As far as I can ascertain, the Diocesan Authorities became aware of alleged incidents of abuse by John Farrell on the 13th August 1987 when he was arrested. He was immediately stood down from all public ministry. The Church paid for his legal fees since every person accused of a crime is entitled to a defence.

John Farrell was later permitted to undertake ministry in the Parramatta Diocese since the charges against him were dismissed and since a Clinical Psychologist's 1988 report indicated that he did not present any problem to children. I have no knowledge of any sessions between John Farrell and Rex Brown as you mention.

John Farrell last worked as a priest in 1992 when on the 1st of July his priestly faculties were removed by the then Bishop of Armidale and he was forbidden from undertaking any public ministry. The diocese took this course of action because, although the charges against him were dismissed, there were continued rumours about him. Subsequently the Church's Special Issues Resource Group (forerunner to Towards Healing) formed the opinion that he should not undertake public ministry due to these continued rumours.

John Farrell was formally laicised on the 18th November 2005 and no longer has any priestly status in the Church.

Yours faithfully,

Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
 Bishop of Armidale