

**MEDIA RELEASE FROM  
BISHOP MICHAEL KENNEDY & BISHOP ANTHONY FISHER OP**

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23 July 2012



**Terms of Reference  
for the Independent Inquiry commissioned by  
Most Rev Michael Kennedy,  
Catholic Bishop of Armidale &  
Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP,  
Catholic Bishop of Parramatta**



The Terms of Reference for an Independent Inquiry established jointly by the Bishop of Armidale and the Bishop of Parramatta have been announced.

The Inquiry will examine the processes related to the management of former priest, the then "Fr F", who is the subject of allegations of abuse of children and complaints received from alleged victims.

"Fr F" was incardinated in the Diocese of Armidale and, for a period of time, was also engaged in ministry in the Diocese of Parramatta.

The Terms of Reference for the Inquiry have been developed in consultation with the former Federal Court Judge Hon. Antony Whitlam QC, who has been appointed to conduct this Inquiry. The Inquiry will commence immediately and at its conclusion a report will be available for public access.

This is not a statutory inquiry and will therefore not take the form of a public hearing. Consistent with standard processes related to a privately commissioned inquiry, Mr Whitlam will gather the information required in order to respond to the terms of reference.

The Diocese of Armidale and the Diocese of Parramatta will continue to cooperate fully with the police and all relevant authorities to ensure that any criminal conduct is investigated and dealt with appropriately.

Bishop Kennedy and Bishop Fisher are committed to ensuring that victims of abuse and their families receive justice and are treated with compassion and respect. Once again, the Bishops encourage victims to contact the police.

To ensure that the integrity of the Inquiry is not compromised, Bishop Kennedy and Bishop Fisher will not be making further comment about this matter until a report from Mr Whitlam is received.

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**For immediate release**

**Media inquiries should be referred to:**

Ms Jennifer Harman, Diocese of Armidale on REDACTED  
jharman@armidale.catholic.org.au

Ms Jane Favotto – Communications Manager, Diocese of Parramatta  
on REDACTED, 02 8838 3409 and editor@parra.catholic.org.au



**Independent Inquiry  
on behalf of the  
Catholic Diocese of Armidale  
&  
the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta**



### Terms of Reference

The Bishop of Armidale and the Bishop of Parramatta have jointly commissioned an independent inquiry of the processes related to the management of "Fr F" who has been the subject of media reports in relation to allegations of abuse of children. "Fr F" was incardinated in the Diocese of Armidale and, for a period of time, was also engaged in ministry in the Diocese of Parramatta.

Taking into account the historical context within which the activity under consideration occurred, the inquiry shall examine:

1. The history of appointments, ministry and activities of Fr F during the period of his priesthood in the Dioceses of Armidale and Parramatta
2. The nature and quality of the management of complaints received by alleged victims of Fr F when they were received by the Diocese of Armidale or the Diocese of Parramatta including the response of Armidale and Parramatta to:
  - 2.1 the complaints received by alleged victims
  - 2.2 those who were responsible for supervising Fr F's ministry
3. The nature and quality of the processes that facilitated Fr F's transfer to the Diocese of Parramatta in 1989.
4. The sequence of events that led to Fr F's termination from ministry.
5. Information related to the 1992 meeting(s) of the Catholic Bishops Special Issues Resource Committee held in respect of Fr F's ministry
6. Whether the action taken by each of the Dioceses of Armidale and Parramatta in the management of Fr F was appropriate.
7. Comment on any other matters deemed relevant.