

I offer this statement in response to many media inquiries I have received concerning the 4 Corners programme...(name).

Unfortunately due to commitments in the United States I have not been able to respond in a more timely way.

Contrary to some media statement I have not said that the person in question made no admissions.

This is the full text of my email response to a the 4 Corners inquiry

While overseas i received a further email inquiry which together with my reply is as follows.

In the light of the first response the "no" refers to the second qualifying part of the first question.

What is important to understand is that my best recollection of the meeting some 20 years ago is that the person's acknowledgement of wrongdoing was vague and generalised and he was cautious in not incriminating himself by naming any victims. It is common ground with Monsignor Peter's letter that no names of victims were mentioned. On that basis I did not consider that there was anything to report to the police that would assist in any prosecution.

Fortunately today there are now protocols with the NSW police where information such as this can be shared for intelligence gathering purposes without the need to identify victims. This is especially valuable in cases where a victim does identify to a church authority but explicitly does not want police involvement.

I note that even as at today other alleged victims of the person concerned have not come forward. I strongly urge them to do so. This will be the best way for justice to be done.

Contrary to some media assertions that we did nothing, we recommended to Bishop Manning that the priest be suspended from all ministry. That happened.

The very point of the meeting Bishop Manning asked us to have was to persuade him to resign from ministry and petition the Vatican for laicisation. As Mgr Peters' letter notes we did our best to explain that there was no possibility of future ministry as a priest.

Since I was a young solicitor engaged in representing child victims of abuse in Sydney children's courts I have been aware of the tragic consequences of physical sexual and emotional abuse of children. It is completely contrary to my values to ever allow a known offender to be in a position of trust with children or to interfere with the processes of justice. For a more complete account of how I believe the Church, and all other institutions which deal with children, should respond, I refer media to my sworn evidence to the NSW Wood Royal Commission in 1995.

My final comment is a request for groups who wish to advocate for victims of abuse to work with institutions to find a common ground for good processes. The current combative approach is not helpful.