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2nd March, 2002

Rt. Rev'd John Harrower
 Bishop of Tasmania
 GPO Box 748
 Hobart, TAS, 7001

Dear John

I am writing to you to discuss being sexually abused by 2 Anglican priests whilst I was a teenager in Tasmania.

A few years ago, Lou Daniels was charged with paedophilia and sentenced to jail. My mother knew of my long standing relationship with Lou as Diocesan Youth Officer through Youth Synod, Camps etc. Kindly, she sent me the newspaper clippings to keep me informed – not knowing that he had sexually abused me. All this kept reminding me of my abuse, and then whilst watching a video at my current church leaders meeting re: screening of church workers (police clearances and the like), I broke down in tears. I then started to suffer from depression which manifested itself very strongly in 2001. I was placed on anti-depressants. I attempted suicide through taking on overdose of sleeping tablets, waking up in the emergency department of the hospital. I wanted to die, but had failed. I began seeing a therapist, who worked through my abuse issues. This was the first time that I had confronted this dark chapter of my life. He delved very deep, and for the first time ever I recounted what had happened to me. As a consequence I had a complete breakdown, curled up in bed, crying non-stop, and wanting to die. I was admitted to a psychiatric clinic in Perth where I stayed for 3 weeks, undergoing intensive therapy the whole time, with the main focus being coming to terms with the abuse I had been subjected to. I was off work for many days during 2001, and from September 2001 through to the end of January 2002, and have had a number of days off on stress leave since returning to work. The recent media blitz re: the Governor General and sexual abuse within the church has again set my mind racing, and I am at the stage in my healing where I need to do something. After phoning Phillip Aspinall, currently Archbishop of Brisbane, he suggested I write to you and take things from there.

1. Rev'd Lou Daniels

Sometime during the year from April 1980 – April 1981 (I was on my P plates) whilst I was 17, I was staying at Rev'd Lou Daniels home after a Youth Synod Committee Meeting. As the guy who shared Lou's house had a party on, 2 of us who were staying shared Lou's bedroom. I was the "lucky" one and got to share the bed, whilst the other youth slept on the floor. Lou gave me a good night hug in bed, and then placed his hand down my pyjama bottoms and onto my genitals. I was horrified, and pushed his hand away. Again, he placed his hand on my genitals and began moving it around. I was in complete shock, stunned, horrified. I pushed his hand away, and

then moved to the furthest side of the bed I could reach. I lay there for what seemed like an eternity, quaking with fear, plotting ways of escaping, crying. I imagined that if I got out of the bed, he would get to me before I could get out the door. I thought of getting my car keys, but they were in my bag, and again he would get to me. If I did get out, I had nowhere to go (Lou lived in Glenorchy, and I am from **REDACTE**). I truly believed that he would kill me, rather than letting me escape. As my mind raced, my fear increased. After forever, I needed to go to the toilet. I waited as long as possible, and then got out of the bed and went out to the outhouse. All the party goers had left by now. I went to the toilet, and then stood outside Lou's back door, shivering in the cold, crying from fear, unable to re-enter the house. After another eternity, I was freezing cold, I managed to enter the back door into the kitchen. But then I had nowhere to go. I couldn't go back into his room, but my keys and clothes were there, so I had no escape. Eventually, Lou came out to the kitchen, where he came and got me and took me into the lounge room, where he made up the couch. He warned me never to tell anyone, and went back into his room. The first person I ever told was my wife, some years after we were married, and then it was only the word "abused" without any detail. It was too scary for me to relive. I never did tell anyone the story until last year, and it was then after therapy that I told my parents and close friends. My poor old mum blamed herself for letting me go to all those camps, and youth synods, and youth synod committee meetings, but in reality I loved all that stuff, and am so glad that I was able to go. It's just the abuse stuff that was not enjoyable. When Bishop Newell spoke to the Youth welcoming service on his induction in Tasmania, he said that we were not at church for him, or for any other person. If we looked to the people, then we would always be disappointed. It was only God who is perfect, and to whom we can look and find no fault. This has been the reason that my faith has stayed intact (apart from the very dark time last year when I was not functioning and was stuck at the bottom of a very deep, dark, pit).

2. Rev'd Garth Hawkins

My dates for this are a bit hazy, but here's what I can remember. We had a youth synod event (committee meeting perhaps?) in Devonport, and Phillip Aspinall and I were staying in the rectory of Garth Hawkins in East Devonport, sleeping on the floor of his study. At night, we were in our sleeping bags, and Garth came in to say goodnight. He sat next to me, playing with my hair, and giving me lots of compliments. He then said that he had a big bed with lots of room for another, and invited me in. After my experience with Lou, there was no way in hell he was going to get me into his bed, and so I refused and stayed put in the study. The next day I discussed this with Phillip Aspinall, who had been present the whole time. He fobbed me off, not believing this could be possible. This was the only time I tried to talk to someone about sexual abuse, and was not listened to, I never tried again.

Having seen Phillip Aspinall on the news, A current affair, Sunday program, etc. lately, has led to my mind racing, racing, racing. I have been unable to control my thoughts, and my depression has become worse. I phoned him on Thursday, 28th February, 2002, and discussed this with him. He remembers the conversation very well, and has some memories of the subsequent events. It is at his suggestion that I am writing to you.

Garth Hawkins moved to a parish on the east coast of Tasmania, Orford I think. A group of young people were going to stay with him and go sailing on his large yacht – me amongst them. We were camped out on his lounge room floor. He came out at night when we were all in our sleeping bags, and said that he had a big bed and someone could share it with him instead of the floor. Phillip Aspinall volunteered me. I believed it to be deliberate, as I had told Phillip of my fears regarding Garth, and Phillip was trying to prove a point to me and have a joke at my expense. I said no, I would not go. Phillip made a big thing of it and told me to go, and not to be daft basically. In front of all those other people I did not want to look daft, and so I begrudgingly went into his room. From a photo I have from further up the coast on my return trip home, it would seem the date was January 1982. I would have been 18. Once in his room, Garth commenced sexually abusing me; he sodomised me, holding my legs down around my ears as I lay on my back (I thought my legs would break off) with the pain of being sodomised excruciating and the mental anguish something else again; he clawed my back with his barbarous fingernails (I had long scratches from one end of my back to the other – as one friend later noticed and enquired how I got them. Of course, my reply was that I knew nothing); made me perform fellatio on him – at which I was not very good, as I was biting him. GOOD, hope it hurt! After it was over, he was very excited and said how he wished he had met me years ago. I curled up on the side of the bed feeling sick, sore, and sorry for myself. The next morning I got up very early, had a long, scrubbing shower, and left before breakfast, not speaking to anyone. I didn't go sailing. I went to church on the Sunday morning (where I stayed Saturday night I don't know, but I had my tent with me. Also, why I went to his church I don't know) and looked on incredulously as Garth officiated in his robes looking holier than thou, with me dying to stand up and scream out what had happened to me. That was the last time I ever saw him. I had not mentioned his name to anyone until this last Thursday when, as I say, Phillip Aspinall's face kept goading me into dealing with this issue that I had put in a box and left there.

3. I'm up to this

Well, after having had the worst year of my life dealing with my depression, suicide attempt, therapy digging and dealing with these deep seated abuse issues, having had more time off work than ever before in my life, financial strains (lost pay, extensive sick leave, hospital and therapist bills, my wife not working to stay home and look after me, selling her car to keep ahead of the bills) – this is where I am up to.

I would be happy to meet with the appropriate person/s to discuss this matter further, knowing that we are on opposite sides of the country and this may be difficult. I am seeking some closure for myself, and also want to try and prevent this happening to anyone else. Archbishop Aspinall is happy to back up what I have said regarding his involvement (I'm not sure if he was Diocesan Youth Officer then or not – we think so).

I am looking forward to a prompt response, as I am sure that you realise how painful this is for me. Now approaching 40, I would like to be able to sleep again, without any more nightmares and unresolved issues swirling through my head. for another 20 years.

Thank you for listening,

Yours sincerely,

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