



# Anglican Church of Australia

## Diocese of Tasmania

THE RIGHT REVEREND JOHN D. HARROWER, O.A.M.  
BISHOP OF TASMANIA

### BISHOP'S LETTER

Dear Friends

24<sup>th</sup> June 2002

At Synod I announced that two men had brought complaints against Garth Hawkins, a retired priest, and that in accordance with our Ordinance, Assessors had been appointed and subsequently a Diocesan Tribunal called. That Tribunal brought in a guilty verdict on a number of serious sexual abuse charges.

Allowing the necessary time and not receiving any appeal, I have now decided to accept the recommendation of the Diocesan Tribunal and depose Garth Hawkins from Holy Orders.

I have taken time to carefully consider such a step, and have certainly not done this lightly. I have taken particular note of the age of the victims.

This is a sad day for those who have been abused. I have personally expressed to both men how sorry I am. When someone who is commissioned and trusted to do good, abuses that trust and power to do harm, it is particularly destructive. The legacy of pain for victims can go on for many years.

It is also a sad day for all you faithful clergy in the diocese. I know some of you feel tarnished by every new revelation of clerical misconduct around the world. Let me encourage you to read Psalm 115 verses 8-12.

Rather than feeling discouraged and powerless in the face of these issues, each one of us can help make a difference by getting behind safe ministry with children. The lay people are looking to us for a lead in fostering a culture that is much more attuned to child safety.

Reinstatement is not an option in cases like these, but forgiveness where there is genuine repentance is always an option. So pray for Garth, and if some of you feel a burden for him, your assistance could be most helpful at this time.

I also request your prayers for myself and the Registrar as dealing with these issues is both stressful and time consuming.

Please pray that I may have wisdom.

Yours sincerely in Christ's service

Shalom  
John Harrower

C:\Sandra's work folder\Complaints against clergy & laity\Bishops letter re Hawkins 24June 2002.doc

email: [bishop@anglicantas.org.au](mailto:bishop@anglicantas.org.au)

Postal Address: G.P.O. Box 748, Hobart TAS 7001

email: [bishop@anglicantas.org.au](mailto:bishop@anglicantas.org.au)

1st Floor, Church House  
125 Macquarie Street Hobart TAS 7000

Telephone: (03) 6223 8811  
Fax: (03) 6223 8968