

NEWCASTLE HERALD

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VOICE OF THE HUNTER

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Board rules out complaints

By JOANNE MCCARTHY

THE Anglican Church's peak national disciplinary body has dismissed all complaints against Newcastle Bishop Brian Farran after a tumultuous two years for the diocese.

The episcopal standards commission ruled that allegations in at least 10 complaints about his leadership did "not constitute examinable conduct, nor are they a breach of discipline or an offence specified by Canon".

The complaints were laid after controversial professional standards board hearings against five prominent Anglicans, including former Dean of Newcastle Graeme Lawrence, over sexual misconduct allegations, which



BRIAN
FARRAN



GRAEME
LAWRENCE

were denied by the men.

The board hearings and recommendations to remove three of the men from the priesthood, including Reverend Lawrence, led to protracted NSW Supreme Court proceedings that ended in the diocese's favour.

Complaints against Bishop Farran also came after controversy over the direction of the Cathedral parish under

the new Dean James Rigney.

In a statement to clergy earlier this month Bishop Farran said the commission's ruling and the Supreme Court decision meant he could now act on the recommendations to defrock the priests.

Reverend Lawrence confirmed the bishop invited him to respond to the recommendation by 5pm yesterday, and he had responded in time.

He declined to comment about submissions he had made to the bishop.

Bishop Farran also declined to comment, apart from confirming he would make public his decision about the priests within a month.

The diocese is reviewing its professional standards ordinances.