



## Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

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CKR

22 August 2003

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**PRIVELEGED & CONFIDENTIAL**

Dear CKR

Greetings and Peace.

Thank you for making the time to meet with me and for bringing me up to date on the matters concerning CKU. I recognize the real anger and frustration you feel in several areas concerning this deeply hurtful matter – for CKU for yourself, the immediate family and for others who could be involved.

I take it from your expectation to have the discussion placed under a seal of confession that you do not desire any aspect of the conversation to be divulged to anyone. My sense is that you would want some record and response kept and made. My understanding of the seal of confession suggests that it involves an avowal of penitence, request for forgiveness and that Godly counsel and absolution are expected as the outcomes. It would appear to me that these aspects were neither sought nor expected and that your conversation was not a confession but a desire for strict confidentiality to be kept.

I reiterate that all matters you raised will be treated with the strictest confidence and as privileged information. This is the protocol observed by me and those who work for me in this office regarding matters that are of a personal and or sensitive nature.

### **1 The Police/DOCS investigation**

I am profoundly distressed to hear of your experience with these two departments. This matter is serious not only in what has been described as taking place but also in the ongoing risk of potential harm and danger to others. The pain of mind/heart caused to all involved is anguish enough. The delay and attitude taken only adds to the pain.

On 22 August I received a call from Detective John Mongan who informed me that the investigation is now in its final stages and that the case will come before the courts in around six weeks time. Detective Mongan wanted me to inform The Reverend Dr Don Saines the Acting Principal of St John's Ministry Centre that he will require access to the place in which the alleged incidents occurred. As per our telephone conversation on the same day, I am glad to hear that Detective Mongan has been in touch with you as well. The Acting Principal of St John's Ministry

Centre informed me on 22 August that he has been contacted by the detective concerned.

## **2 Non –involvement with CASM**

I must take full responsibility for the Chair of CASM and the committee not being notified officially regarding this matter. I was acting as per the protocols and procedures set out by the Diocese and agreed to by the Synod that 'cases constituting serious sexual offences' come 'outside the province of the church' and usually require involvement with the police and or other civil authorities.'

I judged this complaint involving a minor to be of a serious criminal nature and that the police and DOCS should be involved from the very outset, hence my calling a meeting with you and with officials from the police and DOCS soon after I had been informed of the allegation.

I was under the impression that the Archdeacon of the time who was in contact with you was offering you regular pastoral support, as was your spiritual director.

I believe that you have raised a valid issue which we will need to consider in that CASM may have a significant support role to play for those whose cases require the process to be taken up outside the given protocols. This will need to be done with utmost care as we would not wish to interfere in any way with the criminal investigation and judicial process. Your case has highlighted the need for additional support particularly in light of the delay that has ensued by people professionally skilled in this area.

I confirm that the Diocese would be willing to contribute towards pastoral and/ or professional counselling that<sup>CKU</sup> and you may require.

## **3 Litigation**

I note that you have seen your lawyers and that you will seek to institute a case of negligence against me, the Principal of St John's Ministry Centre and the College Council. As I have indicated to you had to inform the Diocesan Manager, Diocesan Secretary and Diocesan Solicitors regarding this possibility.

## **4 Evidence**

I acknowledge the serious nature of your observations that the complaints made by<sup>CKU</sup> may be reflective of a deeper malaise which could represent a culture that allows for such criminal activity. I am aware of how concerned you are regarding the nature of such allegations particularly when there is no material evidence to substantiate such accusations. I reiterate my comment to you that if a complaint is made with evidence I will act in a swift and direct manner to bring such persons to account. I cannot recall an occasion in my time as Bishop when allegations that

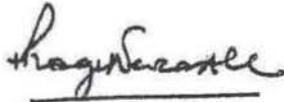
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have been made and substantiated have not received due attention. You will appreciate that I cannot act on rumour or innuendo however widespread it may be.

Please be assured of my fervent prayer for <sup>CKU</sup> you and the family as this matter proceeds towards a determination within the criminal justice system.

With every blessing, good wishes and prayers.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Herft', written in a cursive style.

**The Right Reverend Roger Herft**  
**Bishop of Newcastle**