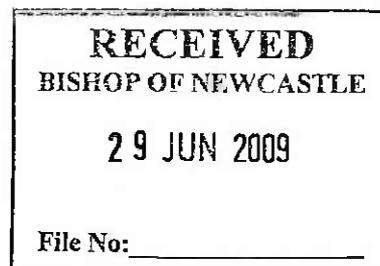




PRIMATE OF AUSTRALIA

24 June 2009

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
The Right Rev'd Dr Brian Farran
Bishop of Newcastle
PO Box 817
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300



Dear Brian,

You will be aware that on Wednesday 17 June the Child Protection Report prepared at the request of the General Synod was made public.

In a letter regarding the report Professor Patrick Parkinson made mention of what he termed the "Morpeth Issue". I quote the relevant section of his letter:

There was much discussion at the Bishops' conference, quite rightly, about the apparent overrepresentation of Morpeth. We were careful in our draft report just to point it out without drawing any inferences. We made efforts to try and find out the numbers of ordinands from each theological college over the last 40 years or so, but were informed by the General Synod Office that no such records exist. We also did not have identifying information on alleged offenders. The data was supplied, on a de-identified basis, by dioceses. It was not possible, for that reason, to examine whether a number of alleged offenders were all at Morpeth at the same time. There was also a lot of missing data on the theological training of the accused clergy....

The figures for Morpeth certainly look like a significant overrepresentation, even though the College was producing substantial numbers of ordinands in its heyday. It was only one of many theological colleges around the country, some of which, like Moore College, have long been of a substantial size also. Having presented the information that we have to the Standing Committee of the General Synod and to the Bishops' Conference, we consider that we have fulfilled our responsibility to draw this matter to the attention of the Church. As I indicated both at Standing Committee and in the Bishops' Conference, we are content for it not to form part of the final published report. [emphasis in original]

It was important, however, that the information be presented to the Church and not buried by the research team. It is a disturbing statistic. We do think it warrants some form of further inquiry, if only to determine whether there may

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have been some kind of network that had its origins in that theological college. Such a finding might at least provide further insights into the patterns of child sexual abuse in the Church and shed some light on cases that currently might be seen as disparate events without any connection between them. This is a matter that the Professional Standards Commission or the Bishop of Newcastle might wish to consider further. Consultation with former Principals or lecturers at the College might also shed some further light on the matter, particularly if the names of the alleged offenders were able to be shared.

At its meeting on Saturday 13 June, the General Synod Standing Committee requested that I draw these comments to your attention and that of your Director of Professional Standards. You may wish to consider whether it is appropriate or possible to take the matter further. I have also asked my Director of Professional Standards to advise the police of the information.

Yours in Christ,



The Most Rev'd Dr Phillip Aspinall
Primate