

## CONFIDENTIAL

## Statement to the Anglican Board of Inquiry

**Summary**

At no time did I have any evidence of paedophile activities by Robert Brandenburg.

Brandenberg was an employee of Anglicare. When I arrived his job was to manage the campsites and manage bookings for these sites. He was not at any stage involved in actually running or participating in camps.

After an investigation into occupational health and safety matters at the camps, he was relieved from this responsibility and his job became to assist is in liaising with parish councils, parish priests and parishes generally about the work of Anglicare. He was picked for this task as he was very well known and well liked and had a very good church network.

I believe appropriate processes were followed by Anglicare in responding to the unsubstantiated and vague allegations made against Brandenburg.

**Allegation of Inappropriate Behaviour**

I received a telephone call from the Archbishop late in March 1995 who advised me that he had received a telephone call from REDACTED, the parish priest of REDACTED.

REDACTED had been approached by a parishioner who was concerned that her son had had a spa with Brandenburg and she felt uncomfortable about this. The Archbishop advised me that the woman did not believe there was any untoward occurrence or any inappropriate behaviour from Brandenburg. In fact, according to the Archbishop, Brandenburg was being helpful to the family who had recently lost their father.

I was asked by the Archbishop to speak with Brandenburg about this occurrence and to advise him of the unsuitability of the action. I was uncomfortable with doing this as this activity occurred in his private life, was outside of a work context and should more appropriately have been dealt with by the parish priest. I understood Brandenburg to be the youth leader in that parish. I expressed such to the Archbishop. However he asked me to have the talk as Brandenburg was an employee of Anglicare and people would not draw any distinctions. As I am accountable to the Archbishop, I undertook to do as directed.

I spoke with Brandenburg in the company of Peter Bleby who was Brandenburg's direct manager at that time. I asked Brandenburg if the event happened. He agreed it had and confirmed that he was naked in the spa. I put it to him in no uncertain terms that this was an error of judgement on his part and he put himself and the Church in jeopardy through such behaviour. I indicated to him that if there had been an allegation of him touching the boy we would have had to report it and do a more formal investigation. On the basis of the advice I had received from the Archbishop and on the material that Brandenburg presented to me, I was confident nothing more had occurred other than Brandenburg having a spa with the young man.

As the matter was not an employment issue, I could not create a file note on his personnel file, as it was not a disciplinary. However, I wanted to maintain a record of the incident in case further allegations were made. I had no belief this would be the case; it is just common practice to record complaints of inappropriate behaviour.

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I thought the simplest matter of dealing with it was for Peter Bleby to write me a memo recording the outcome of the discussion which I could then just keep a copy of in my work with supervising Peter.

I then rang the Archbishop and advised him that we had spoken with Brandenburg, we had made it clear to him that his behaviour was inappropriate and had sought assurances that it would not happen again.

I again asked if there had been any allegations of inappropriate behaviour on Brandenburg's part apart from this error of judgement and the answer was no. The matter was therefore concluded.

In terms of a process learning I would suggest that the Parish priest was the more appropriate person to speak with Brandenburg. He was the person who had first hand information, having spoken to the complainant and having asked Brandenburg to perform certain tasks within the Parish.

**Harrowgate**Safety Issues

I have appended a report from Robert Stocks and Geoff Blackwood into an investigation of poor safety procedure at Harrowgate. You will note the date of the report is 5 June 1997 which appears inconsistent with the timeline that they have presented to the inquiry.

You will note there is no recommendation in the report or comment about paedophile activity by Brandenburg.

There is only material relating to poor safety practice.

Also appended is a memo from myself to Peter Bleby dated 5 June 1997 disciplining him for poor management practice and a copy of his memo to Brandenburg dated 10 June 1997.

Also appended is a memo dated 13 June 1997 from myself to Geoff Blackwood and Robert Stocks, outlining the actions taken subsequent to their investigation. At no time in their investigation at Harrowgate did they raise issues with me about McGlennan's allegations in relation to Brandenburg.

The material shows that the matter was dealt with well and promptly once the formal investigation had concluded. My memo to Blackwood outlines the action taken and refutes Blackwood's assertions he did not know what had occurred to the report or Bleby as a result of the report.

You will note, too, the comment to Blackwood that the report is silent on McGlennan. We felt McGlennan had also taken inappropriate action regarding the management of the campsite but that Brandenburg's inadequate management overshadowed McGlennan's actions.

Please note that in this material there is no mention of inappropriate behaviour of a sexual nature by Brandenburg.

Further, attached is a memo dated 25 June 1997 from Brandenburg to Bleby outlining the outcomes of the investigation, showing Brandenburg had accepted the consequence and was moving to a new role.

In terms of process learning I believe this exercise was a thorough and appropriate.

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Subsequent Allegations against Brandenburg by McGlennan

McGlennan's allegations re Brandenburg came to light later.

In unravelling poor management practice taking place at Harrowgate, we found that Brandenburg was in partnership with McGlennan in raising Ostriches at Harrowgate. Further the relationship between these individuals had changed from friendship to animosity.

McGlennan proceeded put in a claim for backpay. He felt he was being paid under an incorrect award. There were confused contractual arrangements between Anglicare and McGlennan as a result of Brandenburg's poor management.

Brandenburg and McGlennan's close working relationship and friendship soured considerably and McGlennan proceeded to assertively stake his claim on backpay and a confidential settlement was brokered to resolve the matter. It was in the context of these negotiations that McGlennan alleged that Brandenburg had been at the campsite on one occasion with a young man and McGlennan was uncomfortable about that. I am clear that McGlennan stated he did not witness any inappropriate activity; he was just uncomfortable.

There is some confusion in my mind as to whether there was single or multiple sightings. I understand the information came as a result of a conversation between McGlennan and Hartwig. Hartwig was the new Financial Controller who had taken over from Grant Emmett. I think Hartwig was visiting the site to see first hand the asset. I think this was in the context of him taking over responsibility from Emmett.

This change of personnel is pertinent to understanding the timelines between the safety investigation and the later allegations. This time seems confused in the transcript statements of some individuals the Board of Inquiry has supplied to me.

Hartwig communicated with Blackwood who in turn communicated with myself.

I asked Blackwood to check with McGlennan as to what his allegation actually was. Blackwood came back to me and indicated that McGlennan had no evidence just a concern that at least on one occasion he was aware Brandenburg visited the site with a young man. Blackwood also advised that he had spoken to Brandenburg who had denied any inappropriate activity. Blackwood requested what should be done.

The allegations against Brandenburg were made in the context of an acrimonious backpay claim and were no more than innuendo.

However, given the reputational risk I spoke with Michael Mills who was a lawyer at Ward and Co. I understand Michael Mills is now currently head of commercial litigation for the Crown Solicitor. Michael Mills had been assisting the church deal with another matter and I also understood he had assisted the Catholic Church in similar allegations. I indicated to him that I had spoken to Brandenburg on one previous occasion in relation to the spa and now I had this allegation. But I had no evidence or substance to allegations of inappropriate activity. I had had the matter investigated but had been advised that there was no evidence apart from McGlennan's discomfort. I wanted to ensure that we dealt with the matter as thoroughly and professionally as possible.

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Mills advised that the most appropriate course of action now was to confront Brandenburg with the allegation. Mills advised that I was obliged to indicate to Brandenburg that there was no substance to the allegation, further that I was obliged to tell him who was making the allegation. I was to seek and ascertain his response and then make a determination if further investigation was warranted on the basis of that.

I then met with Brandenburg with Blackwood and put to him the allegations. I recorded the meeting to ensure that appropriate records were kept. You have a transcript of that meeting dated 5 December 1997.

Brandenburg denied the allegations. On the basis of his body language, the fact he looked me in the eye and the manner in which he responded to the statements put, I was comfortable that his story was correct and that McGlennan's discomfort was without substance.

After the transcript was typed up, I again consulted with Mills.

I indicated to Mills that I was comfortable with Brandenburg statements, and there did not appear to be any basis to conclude inappropriate activity. I had reflected on the matter but I had no evidence to take any further action.

Mills advised that there was no basis to take further action. Mills advised on some wording in terms of communicating back to Brandenburg (these are noted on another copy of the transcript attached to the back of the signed transcript.) Mills also advised me that I needed to clarify why the interview had taken place to create a context for the transcript.

I subsequently had a further meeting with Brandenburg. I cannot remember if Blackwood was present at that meeting. I assume he would have been as he participated in the first one.

I indicated to Brandenburg that I was satisfied with his explanation and would not be taking the matter further. We needed to clarify a few points and this discussion is recorded the additional signed transcript appended.

Please note that it is clear from that additional transcript that the allegations arose in the context of the termination proceedings around McGlennan, not the safety investigation as stated by Blackwood.

I suggest the above sequence also serves to refute the timeline suggested to the Inquiry by Stocks.

There is no basis for a suggestion of an inappropriate time delay from June to December. Anglicare has responded promptly and appropriately to all matters.

**Blackwood's Allegations**

I note in the transcripts Blackwood indicates that Brandenburg had discussions with him in a threatening matter, these were not reported to myself at any stage.

At no time did Blackwood suggest to me camps were used by groups for sexual activity.

Blackwood at no time raised concerns with me re Brandenburg having young males in his presence. In fact, I cannot recall a single occasion where I saw Brandenburg with a young male in his office or the office precinct.

**CONFIDENTIAL****Tasmania**

Just before Brandenburg left Anglicare to retire, I received a phone call from the Bishop of Tasmania who told me that Brandenburg's name was in a Burnie newspaper and there were allegations of him being involved in paedophile activity. I asked for a copy of the news clipping to be faxed to me. I immediately confronted Brandenburg with this. He again denied any wrongdoing. I advised him that I believed this to be a serious matter. He would be the subject of a police investigation.

This occurred only a few weeks before Brandenburg's departure from Anglicare.

**Brandenberg's Responsibilities at Anglicare**

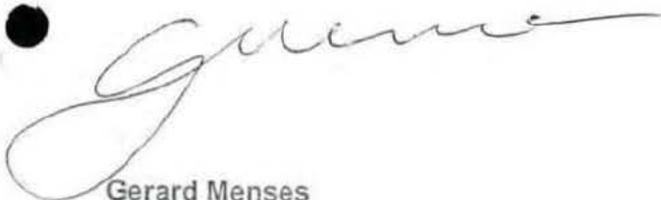
I wish to emphasise that throughout his period of employment with Anglicare, whilst I was CEO, Brandenburg was not in a position that allowed him access to young people. He was either managing the campsites in terms of booking and maintenance or working in a parish liaison capacity. He did not participate in other activities within Anglicare or any of our direct care services. He did not to my knowledge sleep over at campsites. This is not to suggest Anglicare deliberately created such a situation because of concerns re Brandenburg.

**Stocks' claim**

I find Stocks' suggestion that I knew of activities of Brandenburg and that I failed to act is defamatory and without substance. I have been an active campaigner against abuse. I am known professionally for taking strong stance in this area.

I am very angry that my integrity has been impugned in such a manner.

When I received an allegation re Brandenburg I took appropriate and immediate action. That action has been documented to ensure an openness and professional conduct. I am dismayed by and reject the allegations Robert Stocks and Geoff Blackwood appear to make in the transcripts to the Inquiry.



Gerard Menses  
18 March 2004