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29 May 2002

The Most Rev'd Dr Ian George,
Archbishop of Adelaide
Anglican Church Office
26 King William Rd,
North Adelaide 5006

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Archbishop,

Re: Robert Brandenburg

I write to ask you to give your most urgent consideration to making some form of clear, public announcement of the Church's knowledge of the abuse suffered by numbers of boys at the hands of Bob Brandenburg. I am sorry to put this before you again on the eve of your Long Service Leave but I really think we cannot leave things as they are.

I realise that, because Brandenburg died before the case came to court, no charges were proved. I realise also that we do not know how many boys suffered abuse from him. Nevertheless, I believe we have sufficient knowledge (and have had since 1999) to warrant such an announcement.

The main reason for an announcement is, as I have said before, the need for the Church to act with compassion and urgency to alert survivors and their families of our awareness of what has taken place and to offer appropriate support.

There are two further reasons, both to do with risk management, for the Church to act with urgency.

Firstly, we have seen in the Toowoomba case that exemplary damages were awarded against the Diocese of Brisbane because of its failure to act in the best interests of the victims. It is now three years since the disclosure of Brandenburg's abusive behaviour. Our failure to make a clear and specific announcement about our knowledge of this abuse may be seen as an attempt to protect Church interests while allowing victims and their families to continue to suffer. If any of this should come to court (and it is foreseeable that it could) the Diocese (or Anglicare) may be subject to a claim for exemplary damages as well as for compensation.

Secondly, questions put to me recently indicate that the press has some information about the situation. This could break at any time. Again, it is foreseeable that it will break sometime. This would further damage the credibility of the Church.

Sincerely,

Don Owers