



## The Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

The Right Reverend Gregory Thompson  
Bishop of Newcastle

7 January 2016

Mr Keith Allen

REDACTED

Dear Mr Allen,

My letter to you on 20th May 2015 followed on from a series of conversations and correspondence between us.

I have no doubt that you understood at the time that the term professional standards is used in the Diocese to describe the wide range of clergy and lay misconduct which can be considered under the Professional Standards Ordinance and the processes outlined in Faithfulness in Service.

For part of the time in which these conversations occurred, you were a member of the Corporate Trustees, Diocesan Council, Synod and Parish Councillor. In these offices, you were expected, among other duties, to act in the best interests of the Diocese and its purposes, and to disclose conflicts of interest.

In the conversations between us which began in June 2014, you advised that you may have material which may assist the Diocese and me respond to the Royal Commission. You had previously communicated to the Diocesan Business Manager and the Assistant Bishop (when he was the Administrator) knowledge of certain matters. Despite a number of requests, you have not provided this material. Further, you indicated verbally that you were unable to work with our professional standards process and our professional standards director. I regarded and still regard the failure to provide assistance in this matter as a failure to act in the best interests of the Diocese.

In the deliberations of the Diocesan Council around Professional Standards matters, you had not disclosed your association with Fr George Parker. I regarded and still regard that as a failure to adequately disclose a conflict of interest. I infer from your letter of the 16th December 2015 that you have acted for other clergy in criminal matters. If those matters were those generally referred to as professional standards matters then they should also have been disclosed.

To reiterate what occurred in May 2015, the rules of the Diocese in place at the time allowed me to consider whether or not you were a responsible person as defined in the Diocese of Newcastle (Responsible Person) Ordinance 2015. That Ordinance allowed me to seek such assistance as I may require in making my decision.

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On 4th and 20th May 2015 I communicated to you that I had formed the view that you were not a responsible person to hold office in the Diocese. I provided you with the relevant portion of the advice by way of assistance to me from the Professional Standards Committee. I advised you that you could seek a review of this decision by the Diocesan Council by making a request in writing by 1 June 2015. These were the fair procedures that were afforded to you.

I do hope that you will not place your new Rector in the invidious position of having to direct an annual meeting that your election would be invalid. You are not entitled to be elected or appointed to any governance body in the Diocese for two years. I also hope that you will not test him by seeking a pastoral or liturgical role. I have no doubt about the authority of the Bishop to give directions in this regard but, if I do not receive assurance from you about your proposed conduct, I will have no alternative to reserve to myself the necessary authorities when your new Rector is licensed.

I note that your letter is not clear about the nature of the file you have located in relation to Fr George Parker. It would appear from your letter that it is a client file and that Fr George is your client. The Diocesan Business Manager is writing to you separately about this file and any other diocesan file you may have.

Keith, my desire would be that you would understand that your spiritual and pastoral welfare as well as the spiritual and pastoral welfare of the Diocese would be best served by your choosing to provide the assistance requested of you. I will be away from the Diocese in the coming weeks but I urge you to meet with the Director of Professional Standards or a solicitor appointed by us promptly. You can arrange this through the Diocesan Business Manager or the Assistant Bishop.

If you have material which you believe should be with the Royal Commission then you should send it to them forthwith.

You have been part of my prayers. I invite you now to that deep reorientation that will assist the healing of the Church.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory Thompson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Gregory Thompson**  
**Bishop of Newcastle**