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# Anglican bishop Greg Thompson sexually abused by late Bishop Ian Shevill

JOANNE McCARTHY

Oct. 26, 2015, 10:35 p.m.

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Newcastle Anglican Bishop Greg Thompson. Picture: Ryan Osland

NEWCASTLE Anglican Bishop Greg Thompson was 19 when he was groomed by “boy bishop” Ian Shevill and a Hunter Anglican priest in the 1970s and sexually abused.

Bishop Thompson’s critics – and you gather critics by saying your diocese has allowed 30 perpetrators to commit crimes against children over decades – will no doubt seize on the fact he was an adult when the abuse occurred.

But abuse it is.

Sexual abuse and sexual assault – against children or adults – is ultimately an abuse of power that takes a sexual form. It is always an abuse of trust.

In the case of Greg Thompson it was the charming, colourful and powerful Bishop Ian Shevill singling out a devout young man, using religion as a cover, gradually introducing a sexual element – the grooming – and another priest, and then the sexual abuse.



It is why priests are defrocked for taking advantage of women – often when they're distressed and at their most vulnerable – who seek help. It's why doctors and psychologists are subject to the same sanctions.

Bishop Thompson is leading Newcastle Anglican diocese as it prepares for a Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse public hearing in 2016, where the actions, and inaction, of bishops in the past, including Bishop Shevill, will be exposed.

The tragedy of child sexual abuse in Australia has been about powerful people abusing their power in a most despicable way against the most vulnerable – children. It has been about other powerful people putting their own ambitions, or the status of their institutions, above what should have been their first priority – protecting children.

Bishop Greg Thompson knows what it is like to be abused by the powerful, and silenced.

He is the right man to be speaking out now.

By JOANNE McCARTHY

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