

The Right Revd Keith Slater
Bishop of Grafton
Anglican Church of Australia
PO Box 4
Grafton 2460

Dear Keith

I have received a letter dated 24 October 2007 from Mr Richard Campion in relation to the North Coast Children's Home.

A copy of the letter is attached for your information.

In the letter, Mr Campion raises a number of issues which he considers are yet to be resolved.

As I understand his letter, the issues are:

- Mr Campion's need for an acknowledgement from Grafton Diocese that the Diocese 'owned and ran' the Home;
- an acknowledgement that abuse did occur – and particularly to Mr Campion and his sister;
- a perceived lack of sensitivity and pastoral care from the Diocese towards him and his sister;
- an inadequate offer of financial settlement;
- a lack of confidence in the Revd Pat Comben to sensitively deal with victims;
- an apparent change of attitude by the Diocese regarding to the continuing involvement of the Revd Pat Comben in these matters; and
- although not specifically mentioned but implied in the inadequate financial offer and acknowledgement of abuse – an apology from you.

I would be pleased if I could assist you in some way to achieve resolution of this difficult matter. While I acknowledge that this is properly a matter for your Diocese, the following suggestions may be of help to you.

While I have listed the issues of concern to Mr Campion as I understand them, it may be helpful to confirm them directly with Mr Campion. Perhaps, one pastorally caring way of doing this would be for a suitable person to meet personally with Mr Campion to clarify and confirm the issues. That would then allow you and Pat Comben to consider whether they should be accepted as proper concerns and what the Diocese may be prepared to offer Mr Campion in relation to each.

It may be that some of the issues have already been addressed; and if so, some further discussion may be necessary with Mr Campion to establish an acceptable starting point.

In any case, assuring Mr Campion that you wish to resolve the matter I'm sure would be helpful. Mr Campion may choose to accept in principle any or all of the offers; if any were unacceptable, further discussions may lead to agreement.

Experience in the Diocese of Brisbane has consistently demonstrated the healing value to victims of an opportunity of sharing their experiences with senior clergy and of receiving a personal apology for the harm and long-term effects caused by the abuse. Any meeting of this kind could include a presentation of an appropriate financial settlement, an acknowledgement of diocesan involvement in the North Coast Children's Home and the occurrence of the abuse, and any other matter which is fair, reasonable and helpful in achieving resolution.

There is considerable value, too, in engaging an independent and highly regarded professional mediator to settle these claims. A mediator with both eminent legal skills and a commitment to justice and integrity would be most appropriate. The application of this approach in contentious matters faced by several dioceses has assisted in achieving resolutions which have been helpful both to the victims and to the dioceses.

I appreciate that matters of this kind are often complex and difficult to resolve. I offer these suggestions in the hope they may be of assistance to you in your consideration of a response to Mr Campion.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I assure you of my continuing prayers.

Yours faithfully



The Most Revd Dr Phillip Aspinall
Primate

21 November 2007