

NOTE FOR FILE

15 May 2013

On Good Friday, 6 April 2012 I telephoned Tom Blackburn SC, Chancellor of the Diocese of Grafton.

My original handwritten notes of that conversation cannot now be located. This file note records my recollection of that conversation.

In the course of the telephone conversation I attempted to convince Mr Blackburn of my proposal to involve Tony Fitzgerald in facilitating a meeting between Tommy Campion and Bishop Slater and Garth Blake. The purpose of the meeting was for Garth to provide a layman's explanation of Grafton's position on who had the duty of care in the North Coast Children's Home. Tony Fitzgerald's involvement, based on his public reputation for justice-seeking and commitment to victims, would have put the explanation beyond reproach in the public eye.

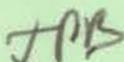
I did not persuade Mr Blackman to this view. He believed the involvement of Tony Fitzgerald would, if anything, heighten the probability of Mr Campion taking legal action against the Diocese or the lone individual remaining who had been a member of the Home's Committee of Management at the time, now an elderly woman.

Mr Blackburn expressed the view that Mr Campion would sue that elderly woman, that the Diocese of Grafton could not 'throw her to the wolves' and so the Diocese would be left bearing the responsibility and having to meet the cost of any compensation awarded and claimant's costs.

For this reason copies of the relevant Constitutions of the Home during Mr Campion's residence were also being withheld from Mr Campion.

I endeavoured to persuade Mr Blackburn that Mr Campion had assured me that he was not interested in suing anyone. He simply wanted to understand who owned and ran the Home and who had the duty of care for the children in the Home. I did not succeed in persuading Mr Blackburn. He expressed the view that involving Tony Fitzgerald heightened the likelihood of ensuing legal action by Mr Campion.

Mr Blackburn reminded me that Mr Campion had received a payment from the Diocese of Grafton in full settlement of any claim against the Diocese of Grafton. He expressed his view that the most Christian thing to do was not to re-open the matter with Mr Campion.



The Most Reverend Dr Phillip Aspinall
Primate