



COPY

BISHOP OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF GRAFTON

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

Ms Rena Sofroniou
 Director
 Episcopal Standards Commission
 Level 3
 235 Queen Street
 Melbourne Victoria 3000

Dear Ms Sofroniou,

Re: Complaints by Mr Richard Campion to the Episcopal Standards Commission

I write in response to your letter of 27 May 2008 concerning the above matter.

The Episcopal Standards Commission's (ESC) request for information or background material will be more fully addressed as soon as I am clear on the material you require and am able to gather whatever you believe to be the relevant material from a very full correspondence file containing letters from Mr Campion concerning the North Coast Children's Home.

The underlying subject of the letter, allegations of abuse at the North Coast Children's Home, has been a long and complex matter. Mr Campion, a former resident of the North Coast Children's Home at Lismore has waged a major media and legal campaign against this Diocese alleging wide spread abuse at the Home. He gathered 41 potential litigants and instructed a major Brisbane law firm to seek damages from the Diocese of Grafton. After some 18 months the matters were settled with 39 of the individuals receiving modest Pastoral Care Packages. Mr Campion and his sister remained adamant that they would take no part in the compromised action and have not settled.

Mr Campion, who is no longer legally represented, continues to maintain a substantial and at times vitriolic correspondence to the Primate, to Archbishop Jensen and to myself. He seeks to make this Diocese responsible for actions within the North Coast Children's Home in a way which his legal team could not apparently do. Although Mr Campion did not accept the settlement offer he has been the beneficiary of considerable sums spent on his counseling and paid for by the Diocese of Grafton.

Another four former residents, including [CD] have come forward since the original settlement and have all recently and apparently amicably settled for amounts similar to those received by the first group of complainants. I understand from Registry Office staff that [CD] made no complaints of the nature found in Mr Campion's letter whilst the matter was being finalized.

At the time of receiving Mr Campion's August 2007 letter concerning [CD] I immediately made the material available to the Secretary of the Grafton Professional

The Right Reverend Keith Slater
 Bishopsholme
 35 Victoria Street
 PO Box 4 (50 Victoria Street)
 GRAFTON NSW 2460

Telephone:(Office) (02)66424122
 (Home) REDACTED
 Facsimile: (02)66431814
 Email: bishopgraffton@nor.com.au

Standards Committee with the expectation that it would be handled similarly to the original group claim and the individual matters coming forward at about that time.

I understand that there was no immediate action as there was valid concern over the apparent lack of authorization for Mr Campion to act for CD [redacted]. Similarly there was no clear request in CD [redacted] letter for action to be taken or support given by anyone. Considerable concern was felt over the issue of whether privacy considerations had been breached by Mr Campion in forwarding an intensely personal letter which appeared to be a private letter to him from CD [redacted]. This was a realistic concern as the letter contained comments such as "I just want to forget all about it. When I left the home I felt free from the torment and safe from the people that hurt me physically, emotionally and sexually. If I am lucky I will never hear or see them again."

The status of the CD [redacted] letter was apparently further coloured by the fact that there had previously been adverse comments to Registry staff about Mr Campion's "too ready" representation of others (by those others). The letter also stated that CD [redacted] had never told his wife or others precisely what had been his North Coast Children's Home experiences, with the consequence that there was further considerable hesitation in seeking to make direct contact.

Awareness of the concern which existed as to the status of the letter and Mr Campion's possibly gratuitous offers of assistance led me to reiterate in my next letter to Mr Campion the suggestion that all people with complaints should immediately telephone the Abuse Hot Line the telephone number for which I supplied.

Since that time the matter has been dealt with by Registry staff, the Professional Standards Committee and (in terms of approving a settlement) the Bishop-in-Council of this Diocese. I am happy to provide further and better particulars should they be needed.

However, for the present I am in the same quandary as your letter appears to indicate the ESC finds itself in with respect to what exactly is being alleged. For me an additional matter is who precisely is alleging the matters for what reason.

I note the Authority of CD [redacted] dated 22 February 2008 which authorizes actions which will "help me to file a complaint," but the actual complaint appears to have been filed by Mr Campion without any disclosure of any further discussion or authority by CD [redacted]. A similar authorization directed to me in early February was revoked by CD [redacted] a week later.

Has the ESC established that CD [redacted] is aware of this complaint and that the authority (such as it is) remains "live"?

The other concern for me is what exactly is being alleged against me. Whilst I accept oversight for all matters in the Diocese this matter was largely handled by others. Additionally, the letter from Mr Campion refers to the handling of a complaint by a former resident of the North Coast Children's Home. Yet Mr Campion's complaint "form" actually alleges against me:

- Wilful violation of the Church's Constitution
- A breach of faith, ritual or ceremonial
- A breach of General Synod Canons
- A breach of Provincial or Diocesan Ordinances
- A breach of discipline
- Unchastity
- Conduct disgraceful if committed by a cleric
- Wilful disregard of my vows

Such a list leads me to ask what are the matters which the ESC wishes me to provide information on and in particular what are the matters within Mr Campion's letter which the ESC believe fall within its constituting Canon?

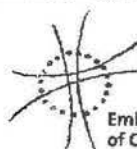
My own initial view is that many of the complaints alleged may, in the terms of the Canon, be vexatious or misconceived but I shall await your further advice as to how I may further respond and properly assist the Commission.

Blessings,



The Right Reverend Keith Slater
Bishop of the Diocese of Grafton

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Bishopsholme
35 Victoria Street
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GRAFTON NSW 2460



Embracing the Spirit
of Christ in our time

Telephone: (Office) (02)66424122
(Home) REDACTED
Facsimile: (02)66451814
Email: bishopgrifton@nor.com.au