

## Northern Star



Richard Campion ... rejected payout offer

### Church payouts rejected

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By WILL JACKSON [news@northernstar.com.au](mailto:news@northernstar.com.au) THE Anglican Church is continuing to deny liability for alleged abuse at the North Coast Children's Home in Lismore despite offering an \$825,000 payout to 41 former residents. The instigator of civil action over the abuse, Richard 'Tommy' Campion, yesterday said he had refused to take any of the money because the church would not admit responsibility. The claims date from the 1950s right up to the 1980s and involve serious sexual abuse, continual violent assaults and mental torture at the Keen Street orphanage. The NSW Sex Crime and Child Protection Squad has been asked to investigate claims made against two retired clergymen at the home. Mr Campion said he had been sexually abused by one of the men and violently beaten with a belt by the other. One of the men is believed to be living in NSW and the other in the ACT. Anglican Church spokesman the Reverend Pat Comben said allegations had also been made against former residents of the home, but the church had not forwarded them to the police. Rev Comben said the church had no legal duty of care to any of the former residents of the home and the payout was simply an act of compassion. He said the home was a community-run facility on land owned by an Anglican Church-controlled trust. While there were Anglican clergymen working there, the church never appointed staff, managed the home nor exercised any control over its operations. If it had been a church home, it would have been officially incorporated like similar facilities, he said. "The church was connected to the home but not responsible for it," he said. He was also not convinced of the truth in some of the claims. "There's two sides to every story," he said. Rev Comben said the litigants would receive payouts on a three-tiered scale depending on the severity of their claims. Mr Campion, who lives on the Gold Coast, his sister CA and another man in Toowoomba have refused payouts. Mr Campion said the offer he had received of \$10,000 was insufficient after 12 years of abuse but he couldn't afford to continue the legal action on his own. The terms of the payout mean recipients forfeit the right to continue civil action against the church. However, the lawyer for the claimants, Simon Harrison, of Brisbane firm Nicol Robinson Halletts, said civil and legal action could still be taken against the perpetrators of the claimed abuses.

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