

**The Right Reverend John Noble  
Bishop of North Queensland**

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19<sup>th</sup> February 2003

Mr Peter O'Callaghan QC  
Owen Dixon Chambers West  
18/15  
205 William St  
Melbourne Vic 3000

Dear Mr O'Callaghan

I am responding to your letter emailed on the 18<sup>th</sup> February, and your request for clarification.

- (i) Yes that reference is to Bishop Clyde Wood. His address is REDACTED REDACTE Qld RED. His telephone number is REDACTED
- (ii) The meetings of the Archbishop with the Regional Bishops took place each Thursday morning, between 9.15 am and 12.00 noon. They were held in the Archbishop's office in St Martin's House. Unless one or another of the Bishops was away on other business and out of reach, we were expected to be in attendance. The Bishops included; Archbishop Hollingworth, Bishop Wood, Bishop Ron Williams [still Bishop of the Southern Region] and myself.
- (iii) My memory of first hearing of what was to be done about The Rev'd John Elliott, was that it was in such a meeting. I cannot be sure if we were all present, but I think so. The Archbishop explained the course of action that had been decided. My impression was that he was not asking our views as to a proposed course of action, but that he was informing us of a decision. I cannot be sure that he had previously discussed it with Bishop Wood, but it was my impression that this had happened. It would be usual in such a pastoral matter for the Archbishop to discuss the matter with the individual bishop outside the general meeting context, if it involved a priest in our Region. We would be told of what had been discussed between the Archbishop and the Regional Bishop when we were all assembled.

All the Bishops listed above therefore knew of the Archbishop's decision to continue Elliott in the ministry subject to the precautions mentioned.

- (iv) As I have said, I had made it plain that I felt unable to offer the Archbishop advice about what to do about Elliott, for the personal reasons advanced in my previous statement. I think at the time I remained silent and introspective.
- (v) I do not remember any discussion at the time of that decision about the wisdom of otherwise of it. I do not remember it as having been a "cabinet decision". I remember my own reaction [negative] that this was the decision reached, but could not differentiate my own feelings from what a more objective view may have been. I do not remember any specific comment from the other two Regional Bishops present at the meeting. I suspect we listened as the Archbishop set out what he was to tell [or had already told] Elliott. I would remember if there was vigorous discussion or dissent, but there was none. I think we accepted it fairly passively whatever personal misgivings we may have had.

Yours sincerely

The Right Reverend John Noble  
Bishop of North Queensland