

Answers to questions by Carol Altmann, The Australian
provided 21 May 2003.

- **Did you read the Tasmanian diocese report (released 1998) into sexual abuse in that state, in which Bob Brandenburg was named. If so, what action was taken, if any, to alert the Magill diocese about Brandenburg?**

The report I read was the publicly released version which was also made available to the bishops at the time – complaint details, including the names of alleged perpetrators and victims were removed from that version. Brandenburg was not named in the version of the report that I read nor was any other alleged perpetrator. I neither read nor had access to, the unexpurgated version of the report. I am unaware of who is named in it.

I believe that the inquiry report included a recommendation that the then Bishop of Tasmania write to the bishops of other dioceses where alleged perpetrators lived and alert the bishops to allegations that emerged in the course of the inquiry.

- **Do you believe the Adelaide church response to the Brandenburg case was/has been adequate, despite claims to the contrary from church members including Magill priest Don Owers.**

Following Brandenburg's being charged, failure to appear in court and death, a number of meetings were convened by the Archbishop of Adelaide involving myself as Assistant Bishop and senior pastoral, legal and insurance advisers. This group considered and planned appropriate responses to the matter.

CEBS leaders participated in some of the meetings and enquired about other possible victims. None was identified.

Other steps had been taken in Adelaide including the adaptation for Adelaide of a comprehensive child protection policy, production and dissemination of a brochure regarding making complaints, a special telephone number for complaints was established, education for clergy was conducted.

I am aware that Don Owers wanted to see other initiatives taken and I met with Don on several occasions and was a kind of go-between between him and the Archbishop. Don conducted a seminar in the parish of Magill on sexual abuse.

At this time I was sympathetic to the proposal of Don Owers that a public statement be made calling for any victims of Brandenburg to come forward.

The Archbishop was at that stage not disposed to make such a statement because of advice from insurers that the church should do nothing that could be regarded as tantamount to inviting claims. The Archbishop was, however, prepared to make a statement in general terms to the Synod of the diocese. I drafted such a statement for him which was made in 2000.

In late 2001 a Queensland supreme court decision criticised the church for failing adequately to seek out further victims of abuse and for relying too much on conservative advice from insurers and lawyers. This ruling paved the way for a more direct and open approach by the church in Brisbane and also opened the way for a public statement to be made in Adelaide in February 2002.

- **What has been your personal response to the victims of Daniels, Hawkins and Brandenburg?**

After I became Archbishop of Brisbane in February 2002, two people contacted me and reported they had been abused by Daniels. I encouraged both to report the

matter to the police and to the Tasmanian Church authorities. One followed this suggestion. In the other instance, I reported the matter to the police myself. There is documentation demonstrating this. I also offered pastoral support to these people and explained fully the options open to them, including counselling, reporting the matter to the police, taking civil legal action and taking action under the church's tribunal system. These are the only two victims of Daniels with whom I have had personal contact.

Two third party reports were also relayed to me alleging abuse by Daniels. In March 2002, a person relayed to me a third party report of abuse by Daniels. The whereabouts of the alleged victim was unknown. I reported that matter to the Bishop of Tasmania.

In December 2002 a third party reported to me another incident involving Daniels. I ascertained from the person making the report that the matter had already been reported to the police. I reported everything I had been told to the Bishop of Tasmania and asked him to ensure appropriate care for the alleged victim.

One victim of Hawkins contacted me in February 2002. I encouraged the complainant to report the matter to the police and understand that was done. I reported the matter to the Bishop of Tasmania and did what I could to offer pastoral support to this person. I outlined the options open to the person as listed above.

I knew of one victim of Brandenburg in South Australia. I liaised with the victim's father to provide professional counselling to the victim at the expense of the Diocese. As Brandenburg was deceased the question of reporting the matter to the police did not arise.

- **Do you maintain contact today with Daniels or Hawkins?**

No.

The last time I saw or spoke with Daniels was when he attended my installation as Archbishop of Brisbane in February 2002. This was following his jail sentence for convictions in Tasmania and prior to the further reports of abuse being made to me as detailed above. I have had no contact with him since those reports.

When church tribunal proceedings commenced against Hawkins in the first half of 2002 Hawkins telephoned my office. I told him that I could have no contact with him and terminated the telephone call. I have had no contact with Hawkins since, nor otherwise since he ceased parish ministry in Tasmania.

- **When did you become aware of the allegations against Daniels, Hawkins and Brandenburg?**

I first learnt of an allegation against Daniels around the time I was a theological student, in Melbourne, (1985-1988) or shortly after my ordination. I was in my 20s. A young woman visited me and told me she'd seen Daniels behave in a sexually inappropriate manner. She said that she'd already reported the matter to the Bishop of Tasmania.

The allegation was inconsistent with my experience of Daniels whom I'd known since childhood and who had prepared me for Confirmation aged 10.

Given the matter had been reported I expected it would be dealt with appropriately.

Chris Griffiths of the Courier Mail reported in 2002 that Daniels so effectively concealed his offences that even the police dropped their investigations in 1994 and that they didn't resume until after the Tasmanian Church's own inquiry.

In the mid 1990s, Daniels resigned without notice. Daniels told me on the telephone that he had resigned but did not answer my questions as to the reason for his resignation. Several years later he was charged with sexual offences. I was not informed of that by Daniels or the police but became aware of it through media reports.

As indicated above, I first learned of allegations of abuse by Garth Hawkins in February 2002.

As I recall it, I became aware that there were allegations against Brandenburg around the time he was charged and was to appear in court.

- **Why have you never spoken publicly of your historical connections to all three of the four CEBS men since found guilty of abuse?**

I have never attempted to hide those connections.

Daniels and Hawkins I knew because they were clergy serving in the Diocese of Tasmania where I grew up and where I also served as an employee of CEBS, of the diocese and later as an ordained person myself.

For some years between 1980 and 1984 I was a member of the CEBS National Executive and it was in that context that I met Brandenburg along with others involved at the national level.

- **Have you ever personally reported alleged child sex abuse claims against these 3 men (or others) to the police on behalf of victims?**

See above in relation to my personal response to victims of abuse.

In addition, during my time as Archbishop of Brisbane around 40 allegations of child sexual abuse have been reported to police. This is a direct result of requests or instructions made or given by me or policies and principles I have put into place.

There is no difference in the way I have treated allegations made against these three men and any others that have been made.

- **Do you feel a national independent inquiry is necessary into the extent of the activities of the apparent church pedophile ring that operated in three states?**

I am aware of allegations made in media reports of a paedophile ring that operated in these three states. I am not aware of any evidence put forward to substantiate such allegations but believe, both in this case and as a principle, that evidence should be put into the hands of the police in the first instance.

The police are the best equipped to handle investigations of alleged criminal behaviour.

In my view the potential benefits of a national inquiry or some other national process lie elsewhere. Differences exist among the various state laws that make it difficult if

not impossible for organisations like the Anglican Church to develop comprehensive systems for child protection that are uniform across the nation. As Professor Freda Briggs has pointed out on more than one occasion, the states don't even agree about the definition of 'child'.

- **Do you believe victims are entitled to compensation?**

While every case is different and should be treated on its merits, during my time as Archbishop of Brisbane 31 cases have been settled by voluntary mediation involving provision of apologies, counselling and pastoral support as well as financial payments.

This illustrates the approach I believe is appropriate.

There is no doubt that the church has much more work to do in relation to complex questions around compensation and the broader ways to best assist victims to achieve healing.
