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Media Release from the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane

"The reference I wrote for consideration by the court has been a matter of public record for close to three years," said the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane, Dr Phillip Aspinall, 42.

"It was not tendered in secret. It did not minimise the damage caused nor the gravity of Daniels' abusive behaviour. I do not intend to do that now.

"I wrote it after being contacted by Daniels' solicitor, who, in making the request for a reference, informed me Daniels had pleaded guilty. The reference acknowledged the nature of the charges, that I was told Daniels had pleaded guilty and outlined what I had personally experienced of his ministry.

"Sentencing hearings are held before a judge who is privy to all facts of the case presented. It involves weighing the bad done along with good done in a person's life. It is a standard part of the judicial process.

"I have known Lou Daniels since I was eight.

"As a child under his leadership in the Church of England Boys Society, I experienced nothing other than appropriate care and guidance. I do not seek to excuse or explain his proven abuse. I raise my experience as just that.

"As a young adult, then while doing youth and education work in Tasmania, and again after my ordination, I had regular contact with him through various meetings and church activities. Again, I saw nothing which gave any indication of abusive behaviour.

"I recall only once, prior to charges being laid, hearing an allegation that Daniels was involved in inappropriate behaviour. This came from a woman, who told me in that conversation she had taken the matter to the Bishop of Tasmania.

"The allegations struck me, then in my early 20s (a student at theological college in Melbourne), as inconsistent with my experience of Daniels. Abuse allegations against clerics, back then, were rare and struck most members of the community as difficult to believe.

"She had reported the matter to the proper authority, however, and I presumed that those matters would be properly addressed."

Archbishop Aspinall will endeavour to make himself available for media follow-up today. He is meeting long-standing commitments to interstate meetings.

Members of the media should make direct contact with diocesan media co-ordinator, Angela Whitaker Telephone 3835 2229 or 0419 701 445.

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