

**STATEMENT**

I, **PHILLIP JOHN ASPINALL** of St Martins House, 373 Ann Street, Brisbane in the State of Queensland state as follows:-

1. My qualifications are:-
  - Bachelor of Science – University of Tasmania 1980;
  - Graduate Diploma of Religious Education (BCAE) 1985;
  - Bachelor of Divinity with Honours (MCD) 1988;
  - Doctor of Philosophy Monash University 1989;
  - Master of Business Administration Deakin University 1998.
2. I was made a Deacon in the Diocese of Tasmania in 1988 and I was ordained a Priest in the Diocese of Tasmania in 1989. I was assistant Curate at St Mark's Launceston from 1988 to 1989. I was the assistant Priest in the Parish of Brighton from 1989 to 1991. From 1991 to 1994 I was the Priest in the Parish of Bridgewater/Gagebrook.
3. I was Director of Anglicare Tasmania from 1994 - 1998. I was consecrated Bishop on St Peter's Day 29 June 1998 in St Peter's Cathedral Adelaide. I was assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Adelaide from 1998 to 2002.
4. I was elected Archbishop of Brisbane on 12 November 2001 and installed in St John's Cathedral on 2 February 2002.
5. During the 1990's allegations of sexual abuse by people connected with the Church in Tasmania were raised in the media. I became aware of the issue of sex abuse in the church at that time. Before that, I was not aware of any general culture of abuse.
6. Some time after I moved to Adelaide and became assistant Bishop, I was informed about two clerics who had been dealt with in the Diocese of Adelaide in the past. During my time as assistant Bishop we dealt with

PA

.....  
**PHILLIP JOHN ASPINALL**

one matter using a facilitated meeting between the complainant and the respondent. Another matter was begun under the tribunal process of the Diocese in Adelaide but it was not completed when I left in 2002.

**What Measures did the Synod/Church Organisation Take?**

7. In relation to Brandenburg there was a police investigation under way when I first heard of the allegations. If I recall the Diocesan Response Group ("DRG") guidelines correctly, they required that any police investigation and/or court proceedings be dealt with first prior to any investigation by the Church. In the event Brandenburg suicided before either could proceed.

In the wake of those events the following steps were taken.

- 7.1. On 11 June 1999 I attended a meeting of the Archbishop's team at which it considered a written proposal from me regarding procedures for dealing with sexual abuse allegations. Annexure A to this statement is a copy of the written proposal. The procedures in place at the time dealt only with clergy and not with lay people. I said "There needs to be in place urgently a procedure to deal with complaints against lay people." My proposal also sought to address a number of issues that had arisen – slowness of response in the past, breaches of confidentiality in the past, indirectness of access to the liaison person and a problem with the Church office being the contact point if there was a complaint about a person working in the office. The proposal also requested funds to be allocated to provide proper pastoral care to the complainants who might come forward. My recollection is that all these proposals were agreed to by the Archbishop's team. Notes of this meeting



.....  
PHILLIP JOHN ASPINALL

would have been made by the Diocesan Secretary and kept by the Adelaide Diocesan office.

- 7.2. 16 June 1999 I prepared a letter from the Archbishop to Dr Ted Sandercock, Chair of the DRG, advising him that as an interim measure, the document received by Synod and providing for complaints about clergy, be taken as referring to all complaints whether they be against clergy or lay people, with whatever minimal adjustments were necessary. In addition I asked that the DRG review the existing documents in the light of experience in Adelaide and elsewhere to develop a single integrated set of guidelines and procedures for dealing with all complaints. That work proceeded and new guidelines were adopted by the Diocesan Council. Annexure B is a copy of the letter.
- 7.3. 14 July 1999 I drafted a letter for the Archbishop to send to all clergy in the Diocese advising them of the work being undertaken. A copy of the letters sent is Annexure C.
- 7.4. 8 December 1999 Diocesan Council adopted new guidelines for dealing with all complaints. They were subsequently refined and further revisions were adopted by the Diocesan Council in June 2000 and 11 July 2001. Annexures D and E – H are copies of the correspondence leading to the further revisions of the Sexual Misconduct Guidelines. Annexure I is a copy of the written proposal considered by the Diocesan Council on 11 July 2001.
- 7.5. 16 December 1999 I wrote to other Bishops in the Province of South Australia advising them of the changes made in the Diocese of Adelaide. Annexure J is a copy of the letter sent.

PA  
.....  
PHILLIP JOHN ASPINALL

- 7.6. As far as I am aware no complaint of sexual abuse by Brandenburg was ever made to the DRG.
- 7.7. Around mid 1999 Don Owers reported to the Archbishop that a person had been abused by Brandenburg. Counselling was provided for this person and the costs met by the Diocese. Don Owers was insistent that the matter be treated absolutely confidentially, to the extent of removing the person's name from accounts for counselling. I arranged for those accounts to be paid by the Church Office in accordance with Don Owers' requests. Annexure K is copy of email correspondence between Don Owers and me relating to counselling expenses.
- 7.8. Owers wanted the Archbishop to make a public statement acknowledging abuse by Brandenburg and calling other victims to come forward and seek assistance and care. The Archbishop was happy to offer assistance and counselling to victims who came forward, but at that stage was not prepared to make a public statement
- 7.9. My view was that a public statement should be made. I believed that acknowledgment of abuse is an important part of the healing process. However, the Archbishop was very definite that he would not make such a statement.
- 7.10. I arranged a meeting between the Archbishop, myself and a psychologist Mrs Joan Chataway, whom the Archbishop trusted, with a view to her underlining the importance of acknowledgment in the healing/recovery process and perhaps encouraging the Archbishop to make a public statement. The meeting was held but the Archbishop did not change his position. Annexure L is a copy of a memorandum from me to

PA

.....  
PHILLIP JOHN ASPINALL

Don Owers which contains a summary of what was discussed at the meeting between the Archbishop, myself and Joan Chataway. I do not recall whether or not I took notes at the meeting, but I do not have any in my possession.

- 7.11. Owers ran a seminar in his parish on the issue. As a result I think two more victims of Brandenburg spoke with him. One of them later met with the Archbishop I think. I believe counselling and support was offered to them.
- 7.12. There were concerns expressed that Owers not do anything that might invalidate the Diocese's insurance cover. Specifically we were advised by the insurance broker acting for the Diocese that no one should do anything that was tantamount to soliciting claims.
- 7.13. I suggested that the Archbishop make a statement about the matter in his address to the Diocesan Synod. This was not going as far as Owers wanted, but it was a step the Archbishop was prepared to take. I drafted the statement for the Archbishop and negotiated the content of it with Don Owers. Owers wanted more specific reference to Brandenburg which the Archbishop was not prepared to make. In the end Owers agreed with the form of the statement though he would have liked more. Annexure M is a copy of the draft statement that was prepared for the Archbishop. The final statement would be found in Diocesan records.
- 7.14. The statement to Synod was a semi-public statement. Certainly it could have been picked up by the media had they seen fit to do so.

*PH*  
.....  
PHILLIP JOHN ASPINALL

- 7.15. Michels Warren were consulted for advice regarding the suitable wording of a response to the media, if that was ever required. Annexure N is a copy of a letter to Michels Warren in that regard.
- 7.16. The Archbishop visited the Parish of Magill and spoke to a meeting. I'm not sure if it was the Parish Council or a broader meeting than that.
- 7.17. I found myself as a kind of go-between between Owers and the Archbishop. Annexures L and O – W are copies of correspondence between Don Owers, myself and the Archbishop from July 1999 to 1 October 2000. Owers wanted certain things done, spelt out in his letter of 26 October 1999 (annexure F). The Archbishop was not prepared to do some of those things.
- 7.18. I participated in a number of meetings with Owers, Dr John Roffey (CEO of Anglicare SA at the time and a registered psychologist), representatives of CEBS, legal and insurance people. Annexure X, and Y are notes of two such meetings. I do not have notes of any other meetings.
- 7.19. Owers at this stage wanted to write to all past and present members of CEBS to see if any further victims or information would be forthcoming. In response the Archbishop consulted CEBS leaders but was not prepared to write to all past members of the organisation. Roffey questioned whether a letter out of the blue like that to all past members of CEBS would be a helpful way to approach people anyway. He said he was convinced that different people had found a way to cope and move on. We had no right to force them to confront any abuse

PA

.....  
PHILLIP JOHN ASPINALL

in a way that suited us. In the end the approach taken was to make it known in general terms that assistance and procedures were available to any person who wished to make a complaint of abuse. People who wished to avail themselves of such assistance could then do so.

- 7.20. Owers wrote to me, I think in early December 1999, asking what progress had been made with the proposals he had made. I replied on 6 December 1999. (Annexure M). I do not have a copy of his letter to me.
- 7.21. I assisted with the planning of special clergy conferences to address the matter of sexual abuse and misconduct.
- 7.22. I assisted with the preparation of a brochure to be available in every parish church and in all organisations detailing the Diocese's approach to sexual abuse complaints and outlining the assistance available.
- 7.23. I also instigated the development of a policy for the protection of children in the church, as I had previously done in Tasmania. Based on an original Church of Christ document developed in Victoria, it was adapted for use in the Anglican Church in Tasmania. I made that document available in South Australia and established a group to revise and adapt it for use there.

#### **When Did I First Meet Brandenburg?**

8. I met Brandenburg sometime around 1980 at a national CEBS event. It might have been in 1979 when I attended a national CEBS leaders convention in Canberra, although I am not sure if he was there or not. I attended a national CEBS meeting in Adelaide, I think in 1980, and that might have been the first time I met him. I attended the CEBS national

PA

.....  
PHILLIP JOHN ASPINALL

camp in Adelaide in 1981 with some 40 – 50 Tasmanian boys and leaders.

**Nature of My Relationship with Brandenburg**

9. We were both CEBS leaders. We both served on the national executive. I saw him at national CEBS events perhaps once per year. I visited on one other occasion in 1990 detailed subsequently in this statement.

**How Long Did I Know Mr Brandenburg?**

10. I met Brandenburg sometime around 1980 and I knew him until his death in 1999.

**Did I Ever Visit Brandenburg's Home?**

11. I stayed a few days in Adelaide in Brandenburg's home in conjunction with a CEBS national meeting in Adelaide in 1980 or 1981. I stayed with him a second time in 1990 when I visited Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney looking at what the church was doing in large public housing estates, where I was working in Hobart at the time.

**How Would I Describe Brandenburg's Personality?**

12. I always found Brandenburg to be a likeable person with a good sense of humour. As a young youth leader myself I admired the amount of time he spent with young people and the way he really gave himself to that ministry. Realising that he was a single man with no children or family that I knew of I used to think what a wonderful way to spend his life serving young people in the church and the community.

**Did I have any suspicions regarding Brandenburg's activities involving boys and young men?**

13. I had no suspicions at all that Brandenburg was involved in sexual abuse.
14. Around the time of Brandenburg's suicide in 1999, somebody told me that Brandenburg's role as Chief Commissioner of CEBS had been

*PA*  
.....  
PHILLIP JOHN ASPINALL

terminated in the early 1980's following concerns about misconduct involving alcohol, I believe at the 1981 National Camp in Adelaide. I was not aware of those concerns at the time of the camp.

**What was Brandenburg's Reputation/Standing within the Church and the General Community?**

15. I believe that he was a person in good standing in the church and community. I had no information or reason to think otherwise until a police investigation in May 1999.

**Are you able to assist in the location of any Documents relating to Allegations of Sexual Abuse (in particular, in relation to Mr Brandenburg) being provided to the Church/The Synod or anyone else?**

16. I am not aware of any documentation being provided to the Church/the Synod or anyone else in relation to Brandenburg, other than the correspondence with Don Owers. I am not aware of any complaint being made to the Diocesan Response Group about Brandenburg. I presume the documentation would be in the records of the Diocesan Response Group.
17. The only other documents of which I am aware relating to allegations of sexual abuse in the Diocese of Adelaide are those to do with the complaint referred to at the beginning of this statement that was resolved at a facilitated meeting.

**Are you able to provide the names/addresses of any people/witnesses who may assist?**

18. Don Owers told me when I was in Adelaide that he had names of other victims of Brandenburg who had identified themselves to him.

  
 .....  
 PHILLIP JOHN ASPINALL

19. Dr Ted Sandercock was the chair of the Diocesan Response Group during my time in Adelaide. Mr Gerard Menses was the Chief Executive Officer of Anglicare South Australia prior to Dr John Roffey. Dr Carol Irizzary, Mr Rob Croser, the Reverend John Stephenson and Dr Tanya Black were the members of the Diocesan Response Group, I believe.

**What was the Role/Function of the Sex Abuse Task Group?**

20. I am not sure because it was set up in 2002, after I left the Diocese.

**What was the Role/Function of the Critical Incidents Units?**

21. I cannot be sure of their function because it operated prior to my time in Adelaide which began in 1998. I don't recall any group with this title functioning during my time in Adelaide.

**What was the Role/Function of the Diocesan Response Group?**

22. The role of the DRG is spelt out in the guidelines. As at 17 July 2001 the guidelines said:

"2.8 There will be a Diocesan Response Group to investigate complaints of sexual abuse and to advise the appropriate Bishop of appropriate actions."

The detailed provisions for membership of the group are set out in section 4 of the guidelines.

The tasks of the DRG are set out in section 4.3 and include investigation, care of the complainant, care of the accused, parish support, media, advice to the Archbishop and reporting to Synod.

*Phillip Aspinall*  
 .....  
 PHILLIP JOHN ASPINALL

*19th February 2004*  
 .....  
 DATED