



REDACTED

13 April 2016

The Proper Officer  
The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses  
to Child Sexual Abuse  
PO Box 5283  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

We understand further consideration by the Royal Commission of the Diocese of Newcastle is to occur this month or shortly thereafter and that the Rt. Rev. Greg Thompson, the current Bishop of Newcastle, may be giving evidence to the Royal Commission or otherwise assisting in the investigation stage.

We write as a group of Anglican laypersons, most of whom have held office in one capacity or another in the Diocese of Newcastle. We wish to stress at the outset that we are fully committed to the Anglican Church, and that our reason for writing arises out of a serious concern for the good governance of the Church and not from personal animus of any kind.

Our concern relates to the behaviour of, and statements made by, the current Bishop of Newcastle, the Rt. Rev. Greg Thompson which may be relevant to the Royal Commission in its deliberations, namely, in a news item written by the journalist Joanne McCarthy, published in the *Newcastle Herald* of 26 October 2015 and entitled 'Anglican Bishop Greg Thompson Sexually Abused by late Bishop Ian Shevill', Bishop Thompson is reported as stating that, at the age of 19, he was 'groomed' by the then Bishop of Newcastle, the Rt. Rev. Ian Shevill and another senior priest of the Diocese. We are gravely concerned: -

- (a) that, if the allegation were correct, Bishop Thompson apparently took no action at the time, and until recently, to report the supposed abuse, thus potentially exposing younger members of the Diocese to the danger involved;
- (b) that the unsubstantiated claim that another, unnamed, 'senior priest' of the Diocese was also involved in sexually improper behaviour has created a climate of suspicion and speculation within the Diocese as to the potential identity of such a member of the clergy. That other 'senior priest' could have been one of three or four senior priests, mostly now deceased yet only one is the person to whom improper conduct is imputed. Again if his claim were correct, Bishop Thompson apparently took no action at the time, and

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possibly not until recently, to report the supposed abuse, thus potentially exposing younger members of the Diocese to the danger involved.

- (c) that further announcements have been made in the Diocese's Anglican Encounter of further abuse in the past. What was Bishop Thompson's knowledge in the past of such matters of abuse and what actions did he take, as a priest (initially ordained in 1976) and later as a Bishop in the Church since 2007, to possibly protect children in this diocese?

It is acknowledged that many of these matters are deeply distressing to the Bishop and we pray that he is eventually able to find peace. The good of the Diocese, however, must also be an overriding concern.

We trust these matters may assist the Royal Commission in its work.

Yours faithfully,

Simon James Adam  
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Robert Norman Caddies  
and Jocelyn Caddies  
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Robert N Caddies  
Jocelyn Caddies

Pamela Dowdell  
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Suzanne Joy Evans  
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John McNaughton AM and Margaret McNaughton AM  
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Margaret McNaughton  
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*L. Scanlon*

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David and Mary Stewart

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*Mr Stewart*

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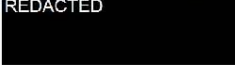
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