

Church embroiled in abuse claims Bishop 'deeply saddened'

Children's home boy fighting for justice

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AWARD-WINNING photographer Richard 'Tommy' Campion is ready to fight for justice after alleging he was physically and sexually abused at the North Coast Children's Home in Lismore.

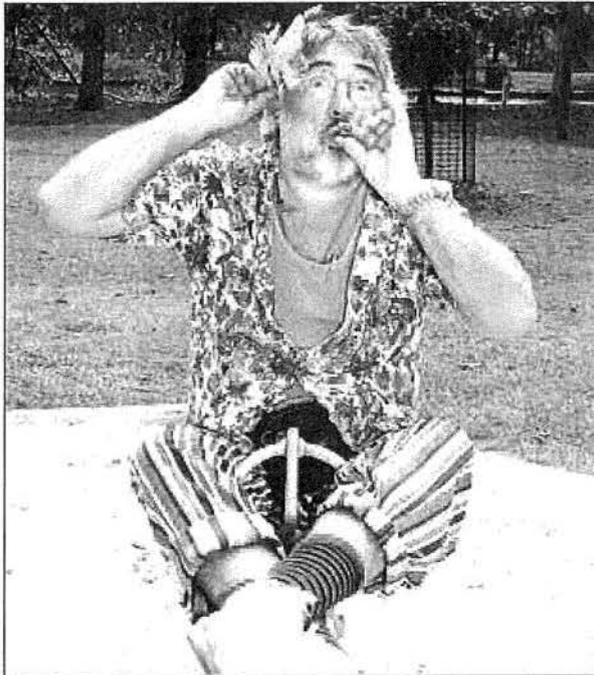
The Gold Coast-based identity was two years old when he was abandoned by his older sister and then placed in the Church of England North Coast Children's Home, where he stayed from 1949 to 1962.

It was during this period the abuse is alleged to have taken place.

Yesterday, Mr Campion told *The Northern Star* that the matter was now being handled between his Brisbane-based solicitor and the Anglican Church of Australia's Grafton Diocese.

Among the allegations Mr Campion has made include being abused by a paedophile, regular and brutal floggings at the home and children being forced to beg for food.

He described being beaten so badly on one occasion that the blood on his back split



RICHARD 'TOMMY' CAMPION: Is seeking justice from the Anglican Church of Australia over alleged abuses suffered as a child while residing at the North Coast Children's Home in Lismore.

Picture: Gold Coast Bulletin

open, leaving him with permanent scars.

"I'm ready to fight for justice for myself and the other kids," Mr Campion said yesterday.

"I not only want to make them (the Church) apologise. They have to explain to me face-to-face what happened.

"There should be some form of compensation too — it could be two bob or

\$200,000.

"The kids in that home deserve more than an apology and a prayer."

Mr Campion first wrote to the Anglican Church in August this year outlining his grievances.

On September 2, Grafton Diocesan registrar Pat Comben wrote to Mr Campion: "I am unable to adequately express my personal feelings of

revulsion, sorrow and helplessness which the letter raises inside me.

"I have no hesitation in speaking on behalf of the Diocese in saying that we will do all that we can to assist you."

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BISHOP Keith Slater, the Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Grafton, has responded to the allegations first raised on the ABC North Coast program concerning the North Coast Children's Home.

"I am deeply saddened and concerned about Tommy's story regarding his experience of the North Coast Children's Home. I understand that this happened when Tommy was there between 1949 and 1962 — not from the present



BISHOP KEITH SLATER: 'Profound concern'.

their childhood, in relation to matters of abuse which may be connected to the Church, it is of profound concern to me.

"These matters, I can assure you, are taken seriously. They are not simply swept aside.

"When a person makes a formal complaint then a recognised process is put in place to investigate the allegation.

"I understand that the matter reported is before the Diocesan Professional Standards Committee."

time," he said.

"Whenever people publicly make known events from their past, especially from

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