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BISHOP OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF GRAFTON

Monday, 24 December 2007

Mr Richard Campion

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Dear Richard,

Thank you for meeting with me a couple of weeks ago in order that I might receive the material that you wanted to hand to me.

My legal adviser has perused the material and has reminded me of the previous Advice we had received from Mr Garth Blake S.C.:

"In the relevant period (between 1942 and 1983) neither the Bishop of the Diocese of Grafton nor The Corporate Trustees of the Diocese of Grafton had any control or responsibility for the management of the North Coast Children's Home. The staff were employed by the Executive of the North Coast Children's Home. Clergy who occupied the office of Chaplain were not employed by The Bishop or The Corporate Trustees. The Corporate Trustees were bare trustees of land upon which the Children's Home was erected."

Whilst acknowledging the abuse which you suffered at the Children's Home there is still the legal opinion which I have had to take into consideration. Despite that opinion the Diocese of Grafton sought to respond out of compassion.

My role as Bishop is to act in the best interests of all the individuals and to take into account all the circumstances. This is what I have had to weigh carefully in the balance. My hope, in becoming personally involved, was to enable closure for you.

After reading your recent letter the only thing that seems possible is to offer to you the apology that was offered to all those who signed the Deed of Release. It was, and is, heart-felt.

I understand that while you were at the North Coast Children's Home as a child, you experienced abuse. I am sorry to hear that this was your experience in this community based facility which was established for the care and support of children in various situations and need.

As the Home was established as a place of compassion, the Anglican Church sought to offer support and chaplaincy, as we continue to do so in various chaplaincies throughout the diocese. Whilst I am advised by the lawyers that the Home was not our responsibility, we have sought as a Church exercising compassion, to respond to the pain of those who have come forward with their story.

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I personally am saddened when any abuse of children takes place. My heart goes out in sorrow and regret to those who are affected in such a manner, and particularly in this case to those who lived in the North Coast Children's Home - and most particularly yourself.

Please accept this as an apology for what was your experience - which fell short of the full expression of love and care.

My personal prayer is for healing and wholeness for yourself and for all who were negatively affected by their time in North Coast Children's Home.

I hope that you may be able to accept this apology.

Peace and blessings,



The Right Reverend Keith Slater
Bishop of the Diocese of Grafton

