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Mr Simon Harrison
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Dear Mr Harrison

Further to my letter of 8 March 2007, Archbishop Aspinall has asked me to ensure the Diocese has provided you a plain language version that explains the structure of the Anglican Church as it impacts upon the Grafton negotiations.

You may provide the details to your Grafton clients with confidence that it accurately explains Archbishop Aspinall's powers or jurisdiction in this matter. Please feel free to do so without reference to me.

Each Anglican diocese is separate and autonomous, in the way the Queensland Government is separate from the New South Wales Government, for example, or the Brisbane City Council is separate from the Gold Coast City Council.

This autonomy applies to each diocese's finances and assets which have been built by local congregations to fund the work and meet the obligations of their own diocese.

Archbishop Aspinall as Primate has no power or rights in terms of the running of any Australian diocese apart from Brisbane. That includes the Diocese of Grafton with which you have been negotiating. This structure has existed since the Church's beginnings in Australia.

These severe limitations aside, as Archbishop and Primate, Archbishop Aspinall has been unambiguous about what the Church should have learned from past mishandlings of historic abuse complaints.

His principles have been supported by actions he has taken or led his Diocese to take which include:

- repealing the previous requirements for confidentiality clauses in deeds of settlement;
- establishing non-adversarial legal options for victims to use if they wished;
- trying a Bishop before a Church Tribunal;
- dealing with many historic abuse complaints;
- establishing an independent Enquiry into his own Diocese;
- having the Enquiry's report published in the Queensland Parliament; and
- removing licences from offending priests.

Moreover, the Archbishop has taken these actions in the face of internal and external criticism. Police and prosecutors have publicly acknowledged the assistance given by the Diocese under Archbishop Aspinall.

There is no sense of triumphalism in relaying some of the actions Archbishop Aspinall has taken. They have been borne of the suffering of victims, are evidence of what resolve can bring about and constitute an active contribution to safe-guarding future generations of children.

Yours faithfully



Rod McLary
Director of Professional Standards

9 March 2007