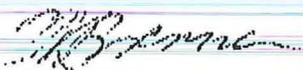


Statement to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Response

1. My full name is Francis Anthony Brennan.
2. I have been provided with a file note which refers to a conversation between a Mr Allan Duroux and myself. A copy of the file note is attached.
3. The file note, dated 3 March 1986, refers to a conversation said to have taken place on 26 February 1986. I do not have any recollection of the conversation, nor of Mr Allan Duroux. I do not recall any conversations about such incidents. I do recall hearing, sometime after I had left Lismore, that Brother Gregory had been charged with offences. My wife taught at St Cathages for some of our stay in Lismore and was surprised at this news.
4. From early 1982 until early 1989 I worked at the Regional Office of the Department of Community Services (DOCS) at Lismore as the Child Protection Specialist. My role included staff development, monitoring child protection programs in DOCS District Offices, development of a multidisciplinary approach to child protection, consultation on complex cases, planning and policy development. My area of responsibility extended from Tweed Heads in the north to Taree in the south and to Moree and Gunnedah in the west. It included approximately 17 DOCS District Offices, one of which was Lismore, at a different location to the Regional Office.
5. The role of the District Office, amongst other things, was to receive reports, or notifications, of child abuse/neglect, make an initial intake assessment, decide on further involvement eg no action, referrals, liaison with Police, investigation and case management. Reports related to individual children. DOCS saw to the protection of the children, the Police dealt with the alleged perpetrator.
6. My role and geographic area of responsibility precluded me, as a rule, from having involvement with individual schools. I do not remember any specific, professional involvement with St Cathages.
7. The record of interview states that "Mr Brennan was informed concerning a number of the reported, now documented, incidents involving bro Gregory during 1985 and 1986". It is unclear as to who reported the incidents to whom, nor is there any description of the "Incidents involving bro Gregory".
8. My practice, whenever anyone began to report suspected child abuse to me, was to immediately refer the person making the report to the local District Office because that was the point at which a full intake was taken and a decision about allocation for investigation and case management made. The local District Office was the point at which the reporting person had to establish a relationship and pursue any ongoing issues. In those relatively early days of management of child protection it was important to reinforce those processes.
9. There is no detail as to the nature of the "incidents" which occurred, apparently, over the previous year. It is possible that they were too subtle or ambiguous to provoke notification, but, together, over time, gave rise to concern. It is possible that a report to DOCS was made

but did not elicit Police involvement and action against brother Gregory. In such circumstances, the school authorities are better placed to protect children at the school, through disciplinary processes, than is DOCS. In this context, it is possible that the school sought my advice as to what other avenues were open to them.



Francis Anthony Brennan

5 June 2014



Kim Bellamy