

Statement

Name Bishop Ronald Francis Stone AM
Address Bendigo
Occupation Bishop of the Anglican Church
Date October 13th, 2014

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I am prepared to give to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
2. I am currently aged 76 years.
3. I was ordained a priest in the Anglican Church of Australia in 1963 in the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn and consecrated a Bishop in 1992 in the Diocese of Tasmania. I have held a variety of positions in the Anglican Church during this time including from 1992 to 1996 Assistant Bishop of Tasmania. I left Tasmania at the end of 1996 to take up the position of Diocesan Bishop of Rockhampton. I held this position until I retired due to health problems in 2003. I currently exercise ministry in the Diocese of Bendigo.
4. I have never had any personal contact either in person or by telephone with Mr AOA
5. I have been shown a memorandum prepared by Mr JM Bednall dated 26 July, 1995 (Document HUT.0003.001.0005). This memorandum prepared for the Hutchins School Board of Management by its Headmaster Mr J Bednall outlines a telephone conversation which I had with Mr J Bednall.

T-70152231-1 Signature:

R Stone

Witness:

J Bednall

6. I do not dispute that the memorandum of Mr J Bednall of 26 July, 1995 is an accurate statement of the telephone conversation between us. I assume that I had been informally contacted by telephone by the Chairman of the Social Issues Committee of the Diocese of Goulburn and Canberra (who I now believe was Dr Bruce Stephens, a practicing psychologist in priest's orders) regarding a complaint of abuse by Mr AOA against the Hutchins School and requested to act as an intermediary with the School in seeking an apology and thereby a resolution. I would have seen my role as a pastoral one to facilitate communication.
7. From the memorandum it is clear that the School was well aware of the complaint of Mr AOA and had sought both medical and legal advice. Mr Bednall requested that I advise the Chairman of the Social Issues Committee in Canberra of the School's position as set out in points numbered 1 to 4 in the memorandum dated 26 July, 1995.
8. I assume that I telephoned the Chair of the Committee in Canberra (Dr Bruce Stephens) and related the Hutchins School position as outlined to me by Mr Bednall but I have no records to confirm this.
9. I do not recall any other involvement regarding these matters. I do not recall being asked to undertake any other communications.
10. At the time I was the Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Tasmania and worked closely with the Diocesan Bishop, Bishop Phillip Newell. It was my practice to take written notes and provide these to Bishop Newell of any significant matters. I would have regarded this as a significant matter and believe that I did provide a note as to what had occurred, and would have also created a file for the diocesan records. I have searched all my personal records and can find no related information. My statement is based on my practice. I requested the Anglican Diocese of Tasmania to search their records and they have advised they have been unable to find any documents.

T-70152231-1

Signature:



Witness:



11. I have searched all my diaries and other records and have not been able to find anything relating to Mr AOA.
12. As Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Tasmania I had very little contact with the Hutchins School. I recall going to several church services involving the School but nothing more. I have searched my diaries regarding this and can find no other record.
13. I was aware in my time as Assistant Bishop in Tasmania that the Hutchins School was independent of the Diocese and was not under its direct control. I was aware that the School was set up under an Act of Parliament and that the Church's only role was in relation to the appointment of a number of Board members and for the Diocesan Bishop to act as visitor to the School. I therefore felt restrained in my authority as to actions which I could take in respect of the Hutchins School.
14. I assume that I was satisfied that the School was taking the complaint of Mr AOA **REDA** seriously and had taken the appropriate steps to obtain advice both medical and legal. I assume that Mr J Bednall would have told me that the School was dealing with the matter and it is clear from the memorandum of 26 July, 1995 that they had taken advice. Mr J Bednall was held in high regard for his work as the Headmaster.
15. In 1995 there were no protocols or specific policies dealing with complaints of sexual abuse in the Diocese of Tasmania nor do I believe in any other Diocese in Australia. It is very different now in that there are clear protocols and policies in place around the Australia Anglican Church (although each Diocese is a separate entity).
16. My role in 1995 was limited to acting as a facilitator in communications between the Hutchins School and the Diocese of Canberra Goulbourn for a very short time. I do not recall being asked to undertake any other role or action.

T-T0152231-1

Signature:



Witness:



17. I regard myself as having a good memory but cannot remember every aspect of this matter. This is most likely due to the fact that I had a very limited involvement. Unfortunately I have no documents available to assist me other than the Bednall memorandum.

Signed: *R. V. Brown*

Date: *13. 10. 2014*

Witness: *Jaral Rubel*

Date: *13 - 10 - 2014*