

Submission to the Royal Commission

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I will begin by stating that I am not a victim of sexual abuse, nor am I a witness of any of the same abuse. I am, however a witness to the process involved when someone reported abuse to the hierarchy of the Anglican Church in Tasmania in the 1980s. I must apologise for not being involved in proceedings earlier. I live permanently in the UK and domestic events in Australia are rarely reported here. When friends alerted me to the Hobart hearing and its focus, I felt I needed to write this statement.

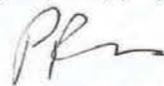
I was a leader in CEBS – The Anglican Boy's Society from Mid 1985 until around 1994/5. I was initially asked to join the St Andrews Lenah Valley branch of the organisation by Miss Sue Clayton who had started the branch the previous year and I became a leader in the primary school aged group. Sue left Hobart and moved to the East coast of Tasmania at the beginning of 1986 and, as a result, I took on more responsibilities in the branch.

Sue was also heavily involved in CEBS on a diocesan level and encouraged me to also become involved at that level – the organisation was small with only about 10 – 12 branches scattered around Tasmania and it was easy to become involved. CEBS on a state level organised a small number of gatherings for both leaders and children. Later in 1985 I was asked to help lead one of the 1986 summer camps organised by the Anglican Children's Vacation Camp committee (CVC) and this particular week long camp had been staffed by CEBS leaders for many years. The camp was directed by The Rev'd Lou Daniels and amongst the young leader team were ^{BYG} and ^{BYM} and Brett Skipper. That is how I first met these four individuals. Lou Daniels and ^{BYM} lived in Deloraine, Brett Skipper was, I think, living in Launceston – but had strong links to Deloraine and ^{BYG} and myself were living in Hobart.

During the rest of 1986 we all met at various CEBS and Anglican youth events and the friendship between myself and Brett, ^{BYM} and ^{BYG} developed. Sometime later in 1986 ^{BYG} became involved in the St. Andrew's Lenah Valley branch which I was, by mid-1986, in charge of (under the supervision of the Rev'd David Hayman, the assistant priest in the parish).

The CEBS national leader's convention was due to be held on the Gold Coast in January 1987. Several leaders from Tasmania attended but it was decided that Sue Clayton and Lou Daniels would drive a car load each of junior leaders from Tasmania to the convention and back. Apart from the drivers, Myself, ^{BYM} and ^{BYG} were participants. Brett Skipper chose not to join the trip. We stayed in church halls and rectories on the way there and back. The trip was essentially uneventful. ^{BYM}, however found travelling in the same car as Lou Daniels difficult and wanted to swap cars. He didn't really articulate why but swapped cars during the return journey.

Up until this stage I had not witnessed any form of sexual activity between Lou Daniels and any other individual. I also had no idea that he was or had been trying to initiate sexual activity with any of the people I was mixing with in CEBS. In the wider church Lou Daniels was very well respected and was thought to be 'on the way up' in the church hierarchy. An appointment as an assistant bishop was thought by many people to be just around the corner.


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In March 1987 the junior leaders from around Tasmania CEBS gathered at the Deloraine rectory (the home of Lou Daniels) for a training weekend. This was an annual event if I remember correctly. Brett Skipper, ^{BYM} and ^{BYG} were present at this event. At some time during the weekend BS and ^{BYM} confided in me that they had been the victim of unwanted sexual advances from Lou Daniels. I don't recall the context of how they came to discuss this. They did not go into any exact detail as I think they found it to be difficult to talk about but they made it clear that they were talking about unwanted sexual advances toward them from Lou Daniels. They were extremely worried about the fact that they were underage and that Lou Daniels had extensive access to a lot of individuals the same age over a long period of time. They also had an inkling that ^{BYG} had also been a victim and asked me to check with him to ascertain whether he had been. There was also a feeling that something had to be done about this and they already knew what options they had – Police, tell their parents, approach the church or do nothing.

Shortly after I approached ^{BYG} and told him of the experiences of Brett and ^{BYM} - opening up the conversation to allow him to discuss his experiences if indeed he had any. ^{BYG} appeared to be not surprised and confirmed that he had also been a victim of unwanted sexual advances from Lou Daniels during the diocesan summer camp programme and so the three individuals came together in terms of discussing their experiences and thinking about what to do about stopping Lou Daniels from offending again.

During the next couple of months, I think the three communicated by phone and discussed what to do. They did not confide in their families (and felt that they did not want to or could not) nor were they discussing it with anyone else. Likewise, I did not confide in anyone. I'm sure anyone can appreciate how much pressure all four of us were placed under, given our age and lack of life experience.

By June 1987 ^{BYG} and I made a decision to approach The Rev'd David Hayman who at that time was the assistant priest in the parish of St James' New Town and was based in Lenah Valley and so we knew him well and, more importantly, trusted him. Crucially, we also felt that he did not seem to have any links to Lou Daniels. ^{BYG} informed David about his experience and we discussed the fact that there were two others. We tried to keep it hypothetical but David guessed that we were talking about Lou Daniels. David discussed with ^{BYG} his options including informing the police and we left him to think about it and what to do.

I think about a week later David, ^{BYG} and I met again and David informed us that he had approached Bishop Phillip Newell. I remember that both of us were taken aback by this as we had not asked him to do so. David informed us that he felt he had to do this.

An initial meeting was quickly arranged for mid-June 1987 in the Diocesan offices in Macquarie St Hobart with ^{BYG}, Phillip Newell and I. I remember feeling extremely nervous about the meeting. At the meeting ^{BYG} explained his experiences to Bishop Newell who listened intently and appeared very concerned about what he was hearing. ^{BYG} informed the bishop of the other two individuals (Brett and ^{BYM} and their concerns that they all wanted Lou Daniels to be stopped from offending. At no stage did the bishop try to talk ^{BYG} out of taking any action but the idea of reporting his story to the Police was never discussed at length nor did the Bishop indicate that he would support ^{BYG} if he went down this route. ^{BYG} was asked to write a statement recording all of his experiences and to bring it to another meeting – a week or two later, again in the Diocesan offices. The bishop also stated that he may need to discuss the matter with other senior individuals and asked ^{BYG}'s permission to do so.

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^{BYG} wrote his statement and I believe that ^{BYM} and possibly Brett Skipper were then contacted by the Bishop. At some point here Sue Clayton became involved. I think we had told her what was going on and she offered to help wherever she could. It is here that my role in the proceedings lessened. A meeting was arranged with ^{BYM} and Brett in northern Tasmania with Sue in attendance to get their version of events. Brett Skipper chose not to attend and pulled out of any further involvement in the process but ^{BYM} chose to continue in the proceedings. I was not present at those meetings – Sue Clayton was and both ^{BYG} and I felt comfortable with her being involved.

^{BYG} was invited to a final meeting, this time at Bishops Court in Fitzroy Place, Hobart. I recollect ^{BYG} going to this meeting but I don't recollect being there.

Sometime after the series of meetings we were all informed of the proposed actions the church would take against Lou Daniels.

1. He would be removed from the parish of Deloraine and placed in another parish
2. He would resign as state chairman of CEBS and have no further involvement with the organisation
3. He would take no further part in the diocesan camping programme
4. That he would receive counselling

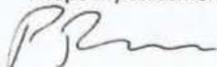
At no point during any of the proceedings was it suggested that the matter must be passed onto the police (mandatory reporting). This was, however, something that the three individuals did not want at that time – for a number of differing reasons.

A year later, in an incomprehensible decision, Lou Daniels was promoted to be Archdeacon of Burnie. Even moving him from the Parish of Deloraine to Burnie in mid-1987 was a promotion in itself, but to be appointed Archdeacon was deeply insulting to those who knew of the events of 1987.

With the power of hindsight, was it would have been more appropriate for the diocese to hand the situation to the police, who with their access to professional support and investigators, would have handled the situation in a far more thorough manner and it would have resulted in Lou Daniels being removed from any position within the church in 1987. Additionally, to give 15 and 16 year olds the choice of reporting their stories to the Police or not was incomprehensible and I feel the reticence of these boys to report it to the Police was used by Bishop Newell to enable Lou Daniels to maintain his position in the state and national church. However, it also enabled him to continue to abuse young people. The four actions (1-4) listed above were merely a rap over the knuckles and I do not therefore feel that the testimonies of ^{BYG} and ^{BYM} were taken seriously enough.

The behaviour of Lou Daniels had a profound effect of many individuals. Ultimately he is the one responsible for his actions, but even though the warning signs were there, he was permitted by the Diocese of Tasmania to keep his position and to therefore keep on offending. It is a travesty that Brett Skipper could not inform the commission of his own horrendous experience. His suicide in 2004 came as devastating news to many including myself.

I hope my statement has been useful.



Peter Francis



01-02-2015



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