

Statement from Brett Skipper

Re: Discussion held late 1986 – early 1987

Involving: Peter [REDACTED], [REDACTED] BYM [REDACTED] and Brett Skipper

Sometime in the period indicated above I recall participating in a discussion in the kitchen of the Deloraine Rectory with the above named people. BYG was also staying at the Rectory that weekend, although was not party to the conversation.

The nature of that discussion was regarding Lou Daniels (then Rector of Deloraine) and sexual abuse that had occurred to BYM [REDACTED] and I. Peter indicated this had not happened to him.

Though I do not recall the exact date, it must have been after the CEBS – The Anglican Boys Societies National Conference in Brisbane where BYM had been subject to unwanted advances from Daniels. I believe BYM and his recent experience had been the catalyst for the ensuing discussion.

This was the first time ever I had told anybody about my own experiences of sexual abuse that had commenced shortly before I reached the age of 12.

[REDACTED] indicated that he too had been abused when he was younger; however this admission was only made after he was directly asked if he had any similar experiences. He answered “yes”, but chose not to elaborate with any detail.

Peter suggested that we need to take this information further. BYM and I agreed for Peter to talk with either BYP [REDACTED] or Sue Clayton. [REDACTED] commented that he didn't think we should do anything about the information.

I am unsure if Peter spoke with BYP [REDACTED], but I do know that he spoke with Sue Clayton, who was an older friend of all of us. A short time later (approx. 2 weeks) Peter contacted me to say that he had spoken with Sue and that some meetings with the Bishop were suggested. Peter asked me if I was prepared to talk with the Bishop about this. I indicated that I was.

I recall Sue contacted me by phone as the proposed meetings with the Bishop approached to ask, “If I was sure that this had happened to me”, and, “If I was sure I wanted to talk with Bishop Phillip Newell about what had happened.” I answered “yes” to both questions. I think there may have been other conversation after the initial meeting and before this call, although I am unsure of with who and when. I think one of them may have been with Sue.

The phone call from Sue must have occurred on a weeknight as I recall I had come home from school and it was about dinnertime. My mother, and brother [REDACTED] were in the house at the time. I was feeling uncomfortable about speaking with Sue in front of my family because they didn't know about the abuse and I felt ashamed. I took the phone out into the hall way from the lounge room and closed the door. This was at my family's home in [REDACTED]

The upcoming meeting with the Bishop occupied my thoughts for days to come. I was very apprehensive about it. I was afraid what people might think about me and my sexuality if I spoke with the Bishop.

Maybe 3 or 4 days later and just before the scheduled meeting, I rang Sue back to let her know that I no longer wanted to go thorough with the meeting, not because I doubted that the abuse occurred, but because I was scared to talk about it.

Even though I didn't speak with the Bishop I know from Peter and Sue that he was aware I had originally intended to make a complaint regarding sexual abuse.

In terms of the response from the Bishop, things must have happened quite quickly. The next time I saw Daniels during a weekend visit to the Deloraine rectory (I was regularly invited and encouraged to stay with him), he was upset and angry. I could tell this because his manner was abrupt and he seemed distracted. We left Deloraine to drive to his residence at Meander. He told me in the car that Bishop Newell had spoken with him about the complaints. He asked me if I had spoken with the Bishop. I said no. He was very angry when he responded that, "Just as well because it would have all been over if you did."

I remember a sense of confusion. The overriding feeling was fear because he made me feel scared when he was aggressive and angry. I was also scared because I had met some people and gone to places that I would never have done if not for him and, at the time I didn't want the 'good side' if being around him to end. However, there was also a sense of regret that I could have stopped the abuse. I use to think that the cost of the good times was the abuse and tried to forget that it happened.

Soon after that visit Daniels was told he had to move to another Parish. This was all very sudden and occurred in a short time frame. He told me he was being moved because of the complaint and, that he didn't want to leave Deloraine. The anger now replaced with a tone of resignation to the events.

When his induction occurred at Burnie an arrangement was made by Daniels to have somebody from Launceston pick me up and drive me there. It was a school night; I was picked up straight after school and driven to Burnie. During the service there were all sorts of "legal" parts that were not normally part of a regular service. These seemed to pertain to the Diocese granting a licence for Daniels to officiate in the Parish.

I had planned to return to Launceston, but was encouraged and convinced by Daniels to stay in Burnie. During the period he again sexually abused me in the guestroom of the Burnie Rectory that I stayed in. This involved kissing, fondling of my genitals and masturbation.

Roughly 3 months later there was another significant service. This time it was to install (not sure if that is the correct word) Daniels as Archdeacon of Burnie and the North West Coast. I was invited to attend this service too. Once again there were several additional parts to the service where I think the Diocesan Register or some other official from Hobart read out long-winded and legally worded documents that

had to be publicly agreed to and signed by Daniels. Terms like "under the seal of the Bishop of Tasmania....", and, "Licensed to officiate", seemed to be used regularly.

During the 18 months or so after Daniels was moved to Burnie and before I finished year 12 in Launceston I was continually invited to stay in Burnie. During this time I was abused, "goosed", and kissed on many occasions. It was also during this period that I found the strength to tell Daniels I did not want this to happen any longer. He seemed disappointed and his behaviour persisted for some time in that he would still attempt to fondle and masturbate me. Each time I resisted his advances, he would try to talk me into it. Eventually he got the message, although this did not stop him from regularly intimately hugging, kissing and "goosing" me. He would often approach from behind or walk past and attempt to grope me.

It was around the time the sexual physical acts stopped that he began to initiate conversation around sexual acts and intimacy. Initially this only occurred occasionally and infrequently.

After finishing year 12 I sought to realise my sporting dream of being a basketballer. The North-Western Basketball Union was the strongest competition in Tasmania. Each town/city had a team and most had American imports playing. I didn't think I would be good enough to make a team but a coach in Launceston had assured me that I would make any team apart from Burnie and Devonport. His name was REDACT REDAC and his brother REDACT played for the Wynyard Wildcats. REDACT arranged a tryout for me with the Club. During my first visit I stayed with REDACTED in Wynyard. I had asked the REDACT if I could board with them if I made the team. Although initially indicating this might happen, it seemed inconvenient in their small 2-bedroom house and with the income limitations I had, board was going to be difficult. Basketball had always been my catharsis - I could do that and forget about everything else. It was separate from the events of my childhood and youth. I had not told Daniels that I would be near Burnie, this was a conscious decision I made because it didn't seem right to bring together those two aspects of my life. However, he rang home and was told that I was staying in Wynyard and got the phone number.

He called me, seeming affronted that I had been there and not called him. He asked that I come and spend a night at his place. He was quite insistent that I do this. During that stay he offered to pay for me to go on a holiday to the mainland. He said it was for 4 weeks to Sydney. He made it sound very appealing by talking about going to see stage shows, "Symphony under the Stars", and other things that sounded pretty exciting. I agreed to go on with him.

The holiday lived up to the expectations - it was fun and exciting. I met heaps of people at parties, went to the theatre and out to dinner. Daniels spoke a lot about me finishing school and that I might be moving up near Burnie. He would do this in general conversation whilst around others. He knew about my sporting aspirations and the logistical difficulties with accommodation. He never directly asked me to move in but he made it very clear the option was there for me and that it would be rent-free.

During the trip we stayed with Bishop Ken Mason. He was an older and kind man. Even though we stayed in the same room Daniels didn't seem to want to kiss or hug

me. He didn't really ask me to give him a cuddle good night and grope me like he usually did. He seemed to respect my privacy for the first time.

By the end of the trip I felt that perhaps things were different with Daniels. I seemed to get what I had always wanted - to be able to enjoy the social aspect of the relationship with him and his circle of friends, to enjoy the good parts without the invasion of my person. As a consequence the decision to move in with him became easy. The obvious practical convenience was combined with an easing of the emotional difficulties. When I told him he seemed elated.

Not long after moving in the kissing, requests for nightly cuddles, "goosing", and general groping recommenced. There also seemed to be an increase in the amount he wanted to talk about intimate things - like what I would fantasise about while masturbating and the things I might do in an intimate situation.

As this behaviour became regular I started to withdraw from conversation and find ways of ignoring him. At one stage in the first 3 months I spoke with some of the people in the Burnie parish that were adults about the difficulties of living with him. These people were safe for me - they were married adult women, sort of mother figures for me. I described to them how he would regularly become angry and aggressive over inconsequential matters like what to watch on TV and how late I would come home. He also expected me to do the housework and cook because he was working and I wasn't.

Unlike earlier times I didn't let myself get scared off by his behaviour and started to challenge it. This seemed to raise the spectre of his behaviour. It got to a point where I again started to seek out other options for accommodation. Around the same time I applied for and got a job at REDACTED in the city centre of Burnie. This seemed to change the nature of the living arrangements in a positive manner and the confrontation largely abated.

During this initial period and for some time to follow I became totally focussed on basketball. When I wasn't attending training or games, or working, I would go jogging or spend time in Wynyard with the REDAC or my team mates. While my aspiration to make the team and do well was part of the reason for this, there was also a part that was about finding excuses to not be around Daniels.

There was one period where the internal conflict about the good and bad aspects of the relationship affected me to the point where I made no effort to talk with him or accept his gratuity. I was very confused and felt trapped. Daniels became concerned and upset by my withdrawal from regular interaction. Sometimes he got upset and shouted at me about being inconsiderate of his feelings. He would always come back later and apologise, mainly because I think he was scared he was losing his influence and therefore control over me.

I ended up staying in Burnie for about 4 years. The talk of an intimate nature and inappropriate touching was constant during that time. Daniels also started to introduce me to films and literature that had a common theme. He had numerous books and would hire or buy videos that portrayed storylines sympathetic to man - boy relationships. A number of the books were graphic in their description of sexual acts

and they also seemed to portray the child in the story as being accepting of, and benefiting from the relationship. The films were similar and many contained nudity.

Daniels would regularly bring videos home to watch. Many were mainstream - some classics and some recent releases. He would just say I've got a video, want to watch it with me? As a result I never knew when he had chosen one that depicted man - boy themes. If we were watching a film and a scene appeared that featured a naked boy he would often take a sudden deep breath and sigh. If I was sitting close enough he would sometime grab my arm or knee in excitement.

After a while I tended to ask more questions about the nature of films when he brought them home. If I thought it was going to be film 'justifying' the abuse that had occurred to as a child I would go to my room or go out.

An event that I distinctly recall was Daniels becoming very agitated after receiving a long letter that I later discovered was from Sue Clayton. I once tried to ask about the letter because it so noticeably affected him, but he snapped back telling me he never wanted to talk about it. I once saw the last page of the letter and I remember it was signed by Sue and basically said, "I should have told you to fuck off a long time ago", or something to that affect.

During my time living in Burnie things were outwardly going well for me. I had returned to year 12 to successfully complete my HSC. I was doing well at basketball and became heavily involved in politics with the ALP. I worked briefly for Senator Michael Tate before he resigned to become ambassador for the Netherlands and Holy Sea. I was on a number of committees for the Diocese of Tasmania, including being an elected youth representative to Diocesan Synod.

While opportunities and achievements kept coming my way my mindset was very much about the future. It would be fair to say that Daniels had been instrumental in helping get the chance to be involved in many things. I think now that this was because such a promising future was a great distraction from the past and in that sense was 'protection' for Daniels.

Bishop Newell would often visit the Burnie Rectory and stay. He found it to be a refuge where he could relax and be himself. He would always send me straight to the bottle shop for Scotch soon after arriving.

Bishop Newell treated me like a friend and was open and honest while I was around. But despite his knowledge that I was originally to be one of the victims of sexual abuse he was to meet, he never asked me about it or tried to address the situation, even when he was relaxed and affected by alcohol and staying in the house where I lived with Daniels.

Bishop Newell would take advice from Daniels. It became apparent to me that the Bishop needed Daniels in terms of the political influence he had in the Diocese. In short Daniels was essential to the Bishops security and political position at the head of the Church in Tasmania.

At some stage later in my time at Burnie Daniels appointed me his youth worker. One of his first instructions was that I should develop an open house policy for young people at the Rectory. When he knew I was organising an event he would encourage me to hold it at the Rectory. During these events Daniels befriended BYW [REDACTED] BYW [REDACTED] was instrumental in bring the criminal action for indecent assault and rape that saw Daniels go to gaol.

In 1993 I decided to go to Uni in Hobart. I had been accepted for law/arts. I came back from a Diocesan summer camp in Feb. 1994 and basically moved out a day later. Daniels was upset because it happened so quickly and abruptly. He felt that I should have been affected more about not living with him any longer, but I suppose I was relieved and happy to be away from his control, thinking if he wasn't always around that it would be easier to forget the bad memories.

It was shortly after the time I had decided to go to Uni that Burnie Police made their initial enquiry's with Daniels about BYW [REDACTED] allegations. He told me there was a video recorded interview that he had handle "quite well", but that he was "very scared".

About 6 months later (late 94) I was formally questioned by Glenorchy detectives as to whether any abuse had occurred to me. Daniels rang me at work as I was at Glenorchy CES while maintaining my studies at Uni, to tell me that I would be interviewed. He told me there was nothing to worry about and not to tell them anything. I complied with his request.

After the interview I had to take leave from work, as I was very upset.

Daniels moved to Canberra shortly after and started working as a relief teacher. After moving there he started to write long letters to me pouring his heart out about his fears for his future. In these letters he would tell me that the only thing stopping him from committing suicide was me. This placed an enormous burden on me. These letters would arrive on an almost daily basis, sometime two a day. He also talked about his desires for 'our' future and that I was going to be the person who looked after him in his old age.

In mid 1995 I consulted a doctor as to why I wasn't handling things well anymore. The doctor told me that I was "severely depressed". At the time I didn't know what it was that put me in this state. I basically dropped out of everything - work, Uni, basketball over the rest of that year.

Toward the end of November Daniels offered me a late birthday present of a trip to Canberra for a holiday. I was so desperate to get out of the situation I was in and the concept of anything that offered me some stability and understanding was to great to pass down.

During the trip he again went out of his way to treat me exceptionally well, to the point where the most debilitating symptoms of the depression temporarily went away. At the end of the trip he offered for me to move to Canberra to live where' "at least I would be around people that valued and loved me". I wanted time to think about it

and eventually decided there was nothing to go back to Hobart for, telling him on my last night there that I would accept.

Almost immediately after that we had an argument about something to do with [REDACTED] who was already living there. I must have got my point across because he angrily accused me of "always getting my way". He later said sorry for his outburst.

In early 1997 I moved to Canberra. I was able to convince [REDACTED] to also move there. He arrived a few weeks after I did.

In about March 1998 I had a severe emotional breakdown after Hobart Detectives questioned me at work at Canberra University where I was employed as a Chef.

Again I received advanced warning from Daniels that they would be speaking with me. He asked me to, "please not say anything" in a pleading and pitiful tone. When I got home from work his brother [REDACTED] was there. Daniels was very anxious to know what I had told them and was visibly relieved when I told him I had done as I was asked.

Not long after - maybe 2 weeks, Daniels was extradited to appear in court in Tasmania. While he was away I took his car to a BBQ area at a nature reserve late one night. I took with me two old shirts, about 3 meters of garden hose, which I had cut off earlier, and a 2-litre cask of wine. Upon arriving I sat at a nearby BBQ table and finished the wine. I then set up the car, stuffing one shirt around the hose in the tail pipe and the other in the gap the hose created in the driver's side window. I had my hand on the keys and had come there calmly convinced that there was no way out of the situation and suicide was the only option. I started to think about my Mother - this made me cry because I knew how it would affect her as my Father had committed suicide many years earlier. I didn't want to suicide without Mother knowing why. I decided to return home and wake [REDACTED] up early that morning and tell him what had happened. He organised for me to see a Doctor in Giralang the next day. That was the second time I had ever told anybody about the sexual abuse. She organised for me to see a psychologist and a psychiatrist as a matter of urgency.

When Daniels returned from Tasmania he was upset that I had not rung him and did not welcome him back. I told him that I was depressed and was seeking assistance for my condition. I also told him he had to move out.

I sought assistance from Canberra Legal Aid about my false statements to the police. Shortly after I contacted one of the detectives who flew back to Canberra to take my truthful statement.