



{In Archive} Catholic Church
Anthony Townsend to: David Rose, Joanne Elliott
Bcc: Anthony Townsend

09/09/2010 16:49

Archive: This message is being viewed in an archive.

Good Afternoon Joanne and Dave

I apologise for the delay getting this material to you.

Could you please look at the attached information and formulate a holding statement.

The main comment that needs to be made is that the Complaint that has been received has been referred for investigation to Newcastle City LAC.

Could you please send any proposed release to myself for authorisation.

I have attached part of report that I have prepared in relation to the matter as background.

Regards



Inspector Tony Townsend
Northern Region Operations Manager • Northern Region • NSW Police Force
☎ (02) 4929 0603 [70603] ☎ (02) 4929 0945 [70945] ☎ 0409 308 341 ✉ town1ant@police.nsw.gov.au



Media Request.doc

A file was forwarded to Lake Macquarie LAC by Newcastle Herald Journalist Joanne McCarthy in May 2010 containing Material and letters from three persons alleging they were the victims of historical sexual assault by Catholic Priests who are now deceased. The file made allegations that a number of persons who are still alive including current Senior Members of the Church concealed these allegations from the police.

Overview

The file principally relates to allegations that in 1995 members of the Maitland Newcastle Diocese of the Catholic Church became aware of serious allegations of sexual abuse on children by one of its priests Father Dennis McAlinden (now deceased) and failed to report that information to police. Instead they took action to have McAlinden removed as a priest (referred to as defrocking but a complex procedure pursuant to Canon Law).

REDACTED

The file also identifies other clergy who may be involved in concealing serious offences including the Archbishop of Perth Barry Hickey, Father Brian Lucas, Allan Hart, former nun Paula Regrove (or Redgrave) and Father W. Burston. The principal allegations also disclose significant involvement by the former Bishop of the Maitland Newcastle Diocese, Bishop Leo Clarke, who is now deceased.

At the same time this information in relation to McAlinden's conduct was disclosed to the principal clergy implicated above police were conducting a high profile investigation and prosecution of another member of the same Diocese Father Vince Ryan and investigating Monsignor Patrick Cotter, for concealing that offence.

Documentation in the file in relation to another victim also makes allegations that he was sexually assaulted by Father James Fletcher in 1975 and as a result Fletcher was moved to a remote parish in Diocese.

REDACTED

There is wide on going public interest in the issue which has received extensive media coverage and comment by the Newcastle Herald and the ABC. Overarching this is a positive change in the manner in which the Catholic Church deals with allegations of Sexual Abuse since the principal allegations in this file came to light in 1995.

Most of the documents in this file have been forwarded to Lake Macquarie LAC by Newcastle Herald Journalist Joanne McCarthy apparently on behalf of three victims who are calling for an investigation. I say apparently as their letters of complaint are unsigned. Lake Macquarie LAC conducted a long running investigation, Strike Force Georgiana, into allegations of sexual assault by members of the Catholic Church. The allegations in this file do not come within the terms of reference of that investigation which is now closed.

Current Position

The file was referred to Newcastle City LAC and then to the Northern Region. After consideration by the Northern Region Commander the file has been referred to Newcastle City LAC for investigation.

Joanne McCarthy has indicated that a substantial article will be published in the Newcastle Herald either Friday 10 or Saturday 11 September 2010 indicating that the allegations forwarded to police will be investigated.

She has indicated it will be of significant public interest in her view that police will be investigating allegations that Senior Members of the Catholic Church have concealed serious offence.

NSW Police have not indicated or do not intend to indicate the nature or extent of any investigation.

Recommendation

Forwarded to the Media Unit for the preparation of media holding statement for approval of Inspector Anthony Townsend.

Anthony Townsend
Operations Manager
Northern Region
9 September 2010