

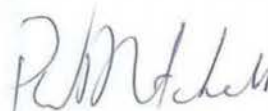
Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Case Study 42: Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

Supplementary Witness Statement

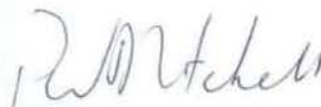
Name	Peter William Mitchell
Address	REDACTED South Kotara, NSW 2289
Date	29 July 2016

1. I have prepared this supplementary statement in answer to a request received from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse dated 25 July 2016 ('Request for Supplementary Statement').
2. I have set out in this statement my recollection to the best of my knowledge and belief.
3. This statement has been prepared on the basis that the Royal Commission will issue a notice under the Royal Commissions Act 1902 (Cth) seeking the production of signed copy of the statement and that it will be tendered and received in evidence pursuant to the Commonwealth or State legislation applicable to this Royal Commission.
4. Documents Listed in Schedule 2 to Request for Supplementary Statement
5. File note ANG.0054.001.0405: This does not jog my memory beyond what I said in my Statement of 19 July 2016 about the nature of the committee and that I had a memory that the Chair and I had discussed at one stage record keeping, especially in respect of detecting patterns of behavior. I do not otherwise recall the meeting.
6. File note ANG.0050.001.1866: I do not recall seeing this file note before. However, I recall removalists found pornography in Peter Rushton's premises when he was moving from Maitland to Hamilton and contacted the Diocesan office.
7. I believe the first contact was a telephone call from the removalist who was very concerned that his men had found gay pornographic material in Peter Rushton's home. I cannot recall the precise conversation but set out what I can recall of the nature and effect of the conversation. I recall him as concerned that his men had had been asked to pack up a lot of gay pornography and that he, and they, were offended by the material. In the context of discussing his concern about the nature of the material, we had a discussion about whether he should be reporting the matter to the police, but he advised me the material was not illegal so there was nothing for him to report. He was of the view that it was homosexual pornography available to be purchased by adults, and even though not illegal his men were offended by the nature and content and the fact they had been asked to handle it and he told me that he felt it inappropriate that a priest should own it and that a priest should expect his men to handle it. He wanted the Diocese to take some action. I thought he must have already taken some legal advice



because my recall is that he was quite definite that he could take no action himself in relation to the material and wanted the Bishop to do something. I informed the Bishop.

8. The file note refers to a meeting between the Bishop, Greg Hansen and me. I do not recall the meeting but accept that it is likely that there was a meeting at which some of the matters in the note were discussed. I do not know who prepared this document or why Rushton is referred to as 'N'.
9. I am not sure when, how or who, but at some point a box was delivered to the office which contained some videos. The box may have been brought in by former Bishop Robert Beal.
10. From what I can recall, it was quite a large carton and I would think there were maybe 20 or 30 videos in cases. I looked at the covers and the covers did not appear to depict minors but men who looked to be in their 20s or 30s. I'm almost certain I showed the box of videos to the Diocesan Secretary. I did not view the videos.
11. At some time, the Bishop asked me to contact the Diocesan Solicitor (James Helman of Rankin & Nathan) to get some advice on the action to be taken against Peter Rushton. I think the solicitor inspected the material and advised that the material was not illegal. I asked the Diocesan Solicitor for formal advice. I believe that Rankin & Nathan wrote to the Bishop advising that the material was not illegal and that to dismiss the priest on the grounds of holding material that was not illegal would likely result in a case of unfair dismissal and the priest would probably win the case. I think the advice was that the response was a pastoral decision for the Bishop to make regarding the priests apparent addiction to pornography and his unwillingness to meet and discuss the matter with the Bishop.
12. I don't remember ever knowing precisely how the Bishop handled the matter and was not involved in meetings between the Bishop and Rushton in relation to the events. It appeared to me that Peter Rushton did not take an active part in Diocesan affairs after this time. The material was discovered as part of his move to Hamilton. Rushton was no longer the Archdeacon (after his move to Hamilton) and my best memory as far I would have been informed is that the Bishop never asked him to do anything more in the Diocese other than staying on as rector of Hamilton parish.
13. ANG.0050.003.5103: This is a letter from me to the Parish advising of Rushton's pending retirement due to ill-health and the administrative actions that had been taken or needed to be put in place. I recall that Rushton was seriously ill at that time - morbidly obese, with heart issues and chronic diabetes.
14. ANG.0050.003.5104: This appears to be pastoral letter from the Bishop to Rushton.
15. File note NSW.0040.003.0163: I did not prepare this document. It appears to be a document prepared by the Bishop. I had not seen this document before it was produced to me by the Royal Commission. This document does not prompt me to remember anything further about the events. If Bruce Hoare obtained a detailed statement from



the persons identified in this document, I do not believe they were provided to me or discussed in any depth with me.

16. File Note ANG.0050.004.4856: I did not prepare this file note. I cannot now recall the meeting nor does it prompt my memory. If the file note is accurate, I note that the meeting involved DOCs and the Police and records that representatives advised the Diocese did not need to do anything further.

17. Knowledge of the Persons in 1.a of the Request for Supplementary Statement

18. Peter Rushton

19. Peter Rushton was Archdeacon of Maitland for some time while I was Registrar. We were on a number of Boards and Committees together. We saw each other at meetings and at major events at the Cathedral. We had a professional relationship only.

20. The first time I became aware of allegations of child sexual abuse by Peter Rushton were when allegations surfaced in the media a few years after his death.

21. Graeme Lawrence

22. Graeme Lawrence was the Dean of Christ Church Cathedral. We were on a number of Boards and Committees together. We saw each other at meetings and at major events at the Cathedral. We had a professional relationship only.

23. I was not aware of any allegations of child sexual abuse by Graeme Lawrence during the period I was the Registrar.

24. Even today, I am only aware in a general way of impropriety involving child sexual abuse because of occasional media reports. I am not aware of any details of accusations.

25. Greg Goyette

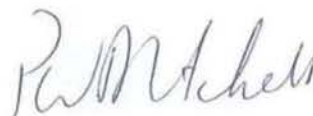
26. Greg Goyette was a parishioner at the Cathedral. He lived with Lawrence. I would have seen him from time to time at Cathedral events as he sometimes was a Server.

27. I was not aware of any allegations of child sexual abuse by Greg Goyette during the period I was the Registrar.

28. I am only aware in a general way of impropriety involving child sexual abuse because of later media reports. I am not aware of any details of accusations.

29. Bruce Hoare

30. Bruce Hoare became the Archdeacon of Newcastle at some time while I was Registrar. He had an office in the same building. We were on a number of Boards and Committees



together. We saw each other at meetings and at major events at the Cathedral. We had a professional relationship only.

31. I was not aware of any allegations of child sexual abuse by Bruce Hoare during the period I was the Registrar.
32. I am only aware in a general way of impropriety involving child sexual abuse because of later media reports. I am not aware of any details of accusations.
33. Ian Barrack
34. Ian Barrack was a one-time student at St John's College. I barely knew him. I may have met him at the College and seen him in Church occasionally.
35. The only other things I know about Ian Barrack is that at some point he ceased being a student at the College and at another time, after I had resigned from my position as the Registrar, I discovered from the press that he had been charged with child abuse offences.
36. James Michael Brown
37. James Brown was Rector of Morpeth at one time. I would have seen him perhaps a few times a year, at Budget meetings, Synod, perhaps at a Cathedral event. I think he left the Diocese sometime during my time as Registrar. I barely knew him.
38. I have not seen his name mentioned in relation to allegations of child sexual abuse.
39. Ian Shevill
40. Ian Shevill had retired before I was employed at the Diocese. I have never met him.
41. I have not seen his name mentioned in relation to allegations of child sexual abuse.

Signature:

Peter William Mitchell

Witness:

M. C. Leuicomb

Name:

Peter William Mitchell

Name:

MICHAEL CHARLES LECOMB

Date:

29 July 2016

Date:

29 July 2016

*JP. No 166085
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE.*