

**STATEMENT BY THE ANGLICAN BISHOP OF NEWCASTLE**  
**THE RIGHT REVEREND DR PETER STUART**  
**BISHOP RICHARD APPLEBY**  
**3 December 2019**

## Summary

- *Bishop Peter Stuart accepted finding that Bishop Appleby not fit to be employed by any church body without conditions*
- *Bishop Appleby cannot engage in any ministry as a bishop nor present himself as a bishop in the Diocese of Newcastle for 3 years*
- *Bishop Appleby must satisfy the Director of Professional Standards about his knowledge of and commitment to reporting disclosures of child sexual abuse before being able to exercise ministry as a bishop.*
- *This decision is being communicated to all Diocesan Bishops in Australia and all clergy in the Diocese of Newcastle*

## Detailed Statement

Bishop Richard Appleby was the Auxiliary Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle from 1983 until 1992 serving Bishop Alfred Holland. Bishop Appleby went on to serve as the Bishop of the Northern Territory from 1992 until 1999 when he became an Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Brisbane until 2006. He administered the Diocese of Brisbane in 2001.

During the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse a witness known as CKA spoke of the serious sexual abuse perpetrated against him, when he was aged between 10 and 14 years, old by the Reverend George Parker (deceased) in the years 1971 - 1975. CKA's account is harrowing both because of the abuse itself and the subsequent response of officials of the Diocese to CKA and his family.

CKA gave evidence to the Royal Commission that he disclosed the sexual abuse by George Parker to Bishop Appleby in 1984. Bishop Appleby also gave evidence to the Royal Commission.

In its findings in relation to this matter in Case Study<sup>42</sup>, the Royal Commission stated:

*We are also satisfied that during that meeting CKA disclosed to Bishop Appleby that as a child he had been sexually abused by Father Parker over a period of years. Bishop Appleby is not in a position to deny the conversation because he*

*cannot recollect whether or not the meeting occurred. Moreover, our rejection of Bishop Appleby's account regarding his knowledge of the criminal charge against Hatley Gray and his incorrect evidence about carefully reviewing his diaries and finding no evidence of the meetings with CKA and CKA's family have caused us to proceed with caution in assessing Bishop Appleby's evidence. As against this, CKA presented as a truthful and compelling witness who gave a clear and precise account of the circumstances in which he disclosed his abuse to Assistant Bishop Appleby. No reason was suggested as to why CKA would fabricate an account that he disclosed his abuse to Assistant Bishop Appleby and that the assistant bishop told CKA that he would look into it. (Case Study 42 Findings page 159)*

The Professional Standards Committee of the Diocese considered the report of the Royal Commission in Case Study 42 under the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012 of the Diocese of Newcastle. The best description of the function of the Professional Standards Ordinance comes from the Supreme Court of South Australia. Chief Justice Kourakis described the purpose of the Ordinance as being “to protect the standing of the Church and the welfare of parishioners by ensuring that all church workers are fit for the office they hold”<sup>1</sup> Justice Gray said that the processes identified in the Ordinance were “directed to the ensuring of pastoral protection for current and future members of the Church from sexual harassment, exploitation, inappropriate gratification and related harms<sup>2</sup>.

In July 2018, the Professional Standards Committee referred the Royal Commission finding against Bishop Appleby to the Professional Standards Board which heard the matter late in 2018 and delivered its decision in February 2019. The Board recommended that Bishop Appleby be deposed from holy orders. Bishop Appleby availed himself of an opportunity to seek a review of the decision of the Board. The Professional Standards Review Board accepted submissions from Bishop Appleby and set aside the determination and recommendation that Bishop Appleby be deposed from holy orders. However the Review Board did not accept a submission from Bishop Appleby that he remained fit to be employed by any church body without conditions. The Review Board referred this matter to me as the relevant church authority for finalisation.

Bishop Appleby has proposed to me that the Royal Commission got it wrong. He has indicated to me that he is not in a position to make anything other than a general apology to CKA.

I have concluded that for the protection of the people of God, I should place conditions on Bishop Appleby's ministry. In doing so, I take account of the fact that in his position as

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<sup>1</sup> Harrington v Coote (2013) 119 SASR 152; [2013] SASCF 154 at 67.

<sup>2</sup> Harrington v Coote (2013) 119 SASR 152; [2013] SASCF 154 at 171.

Administrator of the Diocese of Brisbane in 2001, 19 years after he worked in the Newcastle Diocese, he did demonstrate an understanding of the response required of a bishop in dealing with child sexual abuse matters.

I considered the matter in accordance with the Professional Standards Ordinance 2012 and the Holy Orders (Removal from Exercise of Ministry) Canon 2017.

Bishop Appleby is 79 years old and living in retirement in Sydney. It is possible that people from the Diocese might from time to time seek his ministry. It is my decision that should Bishop Appleby seek to engage in any ministry as a bishop that he knows that he cannot do so within the Diocese for 3 years and then only when he has satisfied the Director of Professional Standards of this Diocese about his knowledge of and commitment to reporting disclosures of child sexual abuse. In order that this expectation is clear to people, I expect him not to dress as a bishop in this diocese without my consent.

To the best of my knowledge, Bishop Appleby does not have any license or permission to exercise ministry in any part of the Anglican Church of Australia. This Diocese, and I expect any other Diocese, will take my decision into account when considering his fitness for ministry.

The position of the Diocese is that it continues to accept the findings contained in the report of the Royal Commission into the Diocese, noting the rigour of its work. It is working diligently to implement its recommendations to religious bodies.

We have made an apology to CKA who has shown considerable graciousness towards the Diocese given all that he has experienced.

I restate my commitment to leading the Diocese in its commitment to enable a healthy culture where people are protected from harm and flourish by God's grace.