

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

OATHS, AFFIDAVITS AND STATUTORY DECLARATIONS ACT 2005

STATUTORY DECLARATION

I, Andrew Stefan Grono of Coordinator Regional Services, Southwest Education Region, sincerely declare as follows:-

1. I am 45 years of age and I reside in Busselton, Western Australia
2. I currently work as a Coordinator of Regional Services for the Department of Education in the Southwest Education Region.
3. Prior to working for the Department of Education I was a Police Officer in the West Australian Police Service for over 17 years.
4. In 2005 I held the position of Detective Senior Constable and I was attached to the Busselton Detectives Office.
5. I resigned from the Police Service in August 2006.
6. In September 2005 I received a call from a person who identified themselves to me as Sergeant Mark Watters from the New South Wales Police. Sergeant Watters informed me that he had been trying to locate a person for some time and had recently received information that the person he was attempting to locate was residing in or around the Busselton area.
7. Sergeant Watters went on to explain that whilst working as a Detective in the Newcastle Area he investigated a Child Sexual Abuse matter involving Father Denis McAlinden. As a result of these inquiries he had obtained an arrest warrant for Father McAlinden. Sergeant Watters informed me that despite extensive enquiries he had not been able to locate Father McAlinden.
8. Sergeant Watters forwarded a copy of the arrest warrant and information he had regarding Father McAlinden to me at the Busselton Detectives Office. After receiving the information from Sergeant Watters, I conducted a number of computer searches using the West Australian Police databases. I conducted these searches in an attempt to locate the current whereabouts of Father McAlinden. I found three entries for a Denis McAlinden.

Signed

9. For the purpose of preparing this statement, on Wednesday 3 April 2013, with the assistance of Detective Sergeant David Beard of the Busselton Detectives Office, I arranged to inspect copies of the three entries on the police database that relate to Denis McAlinden and the contents of which I saw on screen in September 2005.
10. The first entry for Denis McAlinden that I found in September 2005 had a Kojonup address. Kojonup is situated in the wheatbelt of Western Australian and is approximately 300 kilometres south east of Perth. The address given was St Bernards Parish, Kojonup.
11. The Denis McAlinden against this address had a Date of Birth that was the 24 January 1933. The record also indicated he had a previously been arrested. The arrest record indicated this Denis McAlinden had been arrested for 3 counts of Indecent Dealing of a Child Under 13 years of age. The record indicated the matter went to trial and that Denis McAlinden was acquitted in July 1992.
12. The second entry had an address of a Road Side Mail Box (RMB) 244, Kulicup Road, Kojonup. The Date of Birth against this entry was 24 January 1923. There were very few other details for this entry.
13. The third and last entry for Denis McAlinden had an address of Lot 25 Lockridge Road, Wannepup. The Date of Birth was 24 January 1923.
14. When I reviewed the entry in September 2005, I took Wannepup to be a misspelling of Wonnerup. Wonnerup is a location on the outskirts of the Busselton Shire.
15. I was not able to locate an address of Lot 25 Lockridge Road, Wonnerup.
16. After a number of inquiries I determined that the Wonnerup Address was very similar to that of 24 Lockville Road, Wonnerup. This is the address for the Martin Fields Bed and Breakfast.
17. I telephoned the number for the Martin Fields Bed and Breakfast and spoke to one of the proprietors. I was informed that Father McAlinden resided in a building adjacent to the Bed and Breakfast premises. I was provided with directions and a description of the building occupied by Father McAlinden.
18. Shortly thereafter, in September 2005 I attended at 24 Lockville Road, Wonnerup. I was accompanied by a uniform officer who was assisting me.

19. I located the building adjacent to the Martin Fields Bed and Breakfast residence that was described to me and knocked on the glass sliding entry doors.
20. After a time an elderly male attended at the door. I introduced myself and my partner to this person and asked if he was Father Denis McAlinden. He confirmed he was Father Denis McAlinden.
21. I advised Father McAlinden that I wanted to speak with him regarding a matter that had been forwarded to me by New South Wales Police. I asked if we could come inside to discuss the matter.
22. Father McAlinden invited us inside.
23. I noticed that Father McAlinden was frail and appeared to struggle walking.
24. Father McAlinden returned to an armchair which had an oxygen bottle situated next to it.
25. I informed Father McAlinden that I was in possession of a warrant for his arrest from New South Wales. Father McAlinden did not appear surprised at my statement and, if anything, appeared amused.
26. I told Father McAlinden that the warrant related to charges regarding Child Sexual Abuse. He said words to the effect: "I was previously charged with child abuse matters and I beat those charges so if I am around long enough, I will beat these charges too." I regarded Father McAlinden's attitude towards me as being, to a significant extent, defiant and dismissive.
27. I asked Father McAlinden to clarify what he meant. It was at this point Father McAlinden informed me he had terminal cancer and only had short time to live.
28. I asked for more information regarding the nature of his cancer and I was told that a number of his organs were affected by cancer and he was afflicted by several other ailments. He invited me to contact his local General Practitioner or Specialist to confirm his condition.
29. I took details of Father McAlinden's treating doctor. I believe he said his doctor was Dr Geoff Taylor of Busselton Medical Practice, 21 Albert Street, Busselton.

30. I attempted to discuss the charges on the warrant with Father McAlinden. He was dismissive of my attempts and appeared to have no interest or concern over what I was saying. He certainly did not express any remorse or make any admissions of guilt regarding the charges.
31. Father McAlinden made it clear he did not want to discuss the matter further and again invited me to contact his doctors.
32. I informed Father McAlinden I would follow up with the Doctor and the New South Wales Police regarding his health and the warrant. I stated I would return if needed.
33. Father McAlinden told me he does not leave his accommodation and has food delivered to him when required.
34. We left the premises and returned to the Busselton Detectives Office.
35. I contacted the Doctor's rooms at the Busselton Medical Practice and left a message for Dr Taylor to call me.
36. I contacted Sergeant Watters and advised him what had transpired. I informed him that I did not think Father McAlinden would be well enough to travel to face the charges in New South Wales therefore I had not executed the warrant on Father McAlinden. I told Sergeant Watters I was waiting for conformation from his treating doctor but from my observations Father McAlinden did not look well.
37. I asked if he would still like me to execute the warrant. Sergeant Watters stated he would accept my judgement and was happy that I was following up with his treating Doctor.
38. A short time later, I received a telephone call back from Dr Taylor. I explained that I had a warrant for Father McAlinden's arrest and wanted to confirm whether Father McAlinden would be healthy enough to travel to New South Wales to face the charges.
39. Dr Taylor confirmed that Father McAlinden was terminally ill with advanced cancer and did not have long to live.
40. I phoned Sergeant Watters in New South Wales and conveyed this information to him. Sergeant Watters advised me not to execute the warrant given Father McAlinden's poor health and inability to travel.

41. I had no further dealings with Father McAlinden.

42. As part of any investigation I compile a case file. For Father McAlinden the case file contained printouts relating to Father McAlinden from the police databases including address details, criminal records and licence details. In this instance the file contained a copy of the warrant from New South Wales and other paperwork forwarded from Sergeant Watters. It had contact information for Sergeant Watters. It held notes of the conversations I had with Sergeant Watters, the proprietors at Martin Fields Bed and Breakfast, Dr Taylor and Father McAlinden. I kept a running sheet of my actions regarding the actions and inquiries I made.

43. When I resigned from the Western Australian Police Service in 2006 all my files including the McAlinden file were stored at Busselton Detectives Office or in the Busselton Police Stations file room.

44. I also completed a daily Detectives Journal as required by Police policy. These journals were also stored at Busselton Police Station when I left the Police Service.

45. On Wednesday 20 March 2013, I was contacted by Detective Sergeant Youlden from the Child Abuse Unit in Western Australia. Detective Sergeant Youlden informed me that a request had been received from the New South Wales Special Commission of Inquiry into matters relating the Police Investigation into certain child sexual abuse allegations in the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

46. As a result of this request I contacted the current Officer in Charge of Busselton Detectives Office, Detective Sergeant David Beard, regarding obtaining a copy of the McAlinden file and my journal related to this time period. I have been advised by Detective Sergeant Beard that, despite searches having been undertaken, he has not been able to locate the McAlinden file or my journal.

47. I have been asked by the NSW Crown Solicitor's Office as to whether, in respect of Father McAlinden, I had any communications with a NSW Police officer called Detective Peter Fox. I confirm that in my dealings with NSW Police in relation to Father McAlinden, my only communications were with Sergeant Watters as described above.

This declaration is true and I know that it is an offence to make a declaration knowing that it is false in a material particular.

This declaration is made under the *Oaths, Affidavits and Statutory Declarations Act 2005*

At Bunbury
{place}

2 May 2013
.....
{date}

in the presence of -

Signed

Signed

by.....
{Signature of person making the
declaration}

.....
{Signature of authorised witness}

Graham G. Standley
Justice of the Peace

WA 6054

.....
{Name of authorised witness and qualification as such a witness}