

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
OATHS, AFFIDAVITS AND STATUTORY DECLARATIONS ACT 2005
STATUTORY DECLARATION

I, **Justin Joseph Bianchini**

Bishop of Geraldton

sincerely declare in regard to:-

Special Commission of Inquiry into matters relating to the Police Investigation of certain child sexual abuse allegations in the Catholic Diocese of Maitland - Newcastle ("Inquiry")

As follows:-

1. I never had any communication or discussion with either Bishop Francis Thomas or Bishop William Foley in relation to Fr Denis McAlinden or any matters or letters connected with him.
- 2a. Mr Bob Fragomeni was the West Australian Manager of Catholic Church Insurance. From memory the discussion I had with Bob was in relation to insurance. If Fr McAlinden had offended elsewhere, it could be that he may have offended while in our Diocese. Noting his name formally in a letter would, as I remember, make possible a claim on Catholic Church Insurance money if compensation was requested by someone in the future. It was only because of this possible eventuality that I wrote that letter.
- b. I had no discussions with Church officials from the Maitland Diocese in relation to sexual abuse charges against Fr McAlinden while he was in the Wickham Parish. It was common knowledge because news of the charge was published in the West Australian newspaper.
- c. I had no discussions with any Church officials of the Maitland Diocese with respect to any other complaints against Fr McAlinden in relation to sexual abuse. My recollection where I obtained information relayed in the second paragraph of my letter dated 9th of June 1994 was from Archbishop Hickey in Perth.
- d. To the best of my recollection I have never had any discussion with Bishop Leo Clarke in relation to prohibiting Denis McAlinden from "exercising any priestly ministry whatsoever". Again my information source for this was, I believe, Archbishop Hickey. In Canon Law there is a penalty which can be invoked on priests called "Suspension". This prohibits priests from exercising any priestly ministry whatsoever. With the knowledge that Bishop Clarke had "taken Denis out of priestly ministry" I presumed that he would have invoked this penalty.
- e. To the best of my recollection I have never had any discussion with Bishop Peter Quinn in relation to criminal proceedings of allegations of child sexual abuse in 1992. I became Bishop of Geraldton on the 19th of May 1992. The charge against McAlinden was certainly before that date and to my knowledge was dismissed from court even before that time. Whichever way there would have been no reason for me to talk with Bishop Quinn.
- f. I had no knowledge of Fr McAlinden being "recalled" in February 1993 and never discussed this with Bishop Clarke.

g. Any of my knowledge of Fr McAlinden's whereabouts (my knowledge was of him being in W.A. and I believe dying in Perth) was from Archbishop Hickey. I had no discussions with any Church official from the Maitland Diocese or offices of the NSW or WA Police in relation to his whereabouts.

3 I can only repeat; my letter to the Catholic Church Insurance was just a precautionary one. By writing to Catholic Church Insurance, if any further case against Fr McAlinden emerged in the Geraldton Diocese and required compensation, there could be a claim on Catholic Church Insurances.

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 Diocese of Geraldton Chancery,
{place}

on 5th APRIL 2013
{date}

in the presence of -

Signed

{Signature of authorised witness}

CAROLE ANN BUCKLEY

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

A SOLICITOR WHO HAS HELD
A PRACTICE CERTIFICATE IN EXCESS
OF 2 YRS AND HOLDS A CURRENT
PRACTICE CERTIFICATE.

Signed

by
{Signature of person making the declaration}