

Tuesday, 18 March 2025

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Episcopal Standards Determination Regarding Former Bishop of Grafton, Keith Slater

The Episcopal Standards Board of the Anglican Church of Australia has recently considered the conduct of former Bishop of Grafton, Keith Slater, to determine whether he should remain in Holy Orders, given his handling of allegations of historical child abuse of which he was aware during the period from 2003 to 2013. On 17 May 2013, Bishop Slater resigned from the office of Bishop of Grafton and issued a media statement in which he made certain admissions regarding the handling of the redress claims and made an apology for the part he had played.

The Board's determination is that Keith Slater should be deposed from Holy Orders. Under the provisions of the Episcopal Standards (Child Protection) Canon 2017 he has 28 days to appeal the decision. He therefore has until close of business on Monday 14 April. If he does not exercise this option, he will no longer be an ordained person from that time.

A full copy of the Board's determination and of the Primate's Media Release can be found here <https://anglican.org.au/governance/tribunals/episcopal-standards-board/>

A Diocesan Bishop carries a weighty responsibility. The Church is precious because it is Christ's and the ministry that one accepts on becoming a Bishop is one discharged as a servant of Christ, watching over and protecting Christ's people within the diocese. At the consecration of a Bishop the Exhortation and Examination includes the following words: *You are to watch over, protect and serve the people of God ... These are the duties of a bishop, and they are weighty. Are you willing to perform them?* As stated in the report, to accept episcopal ordination is to accept a weighty task. To neglect matters willingly accepted brings weighty consequence.

A key responsibility of a Bishop is to ensure that allegations of abuse are reported, and are dealt with appropriately, according to established Professional Standards processes of the Diocese and the National Church. A failure to report or to follow due process is unacceptable.

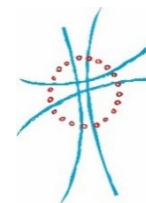
I referred this matter to the Episcopal Standards Commission in May 2020. This Determination therefore draws to a close a very lengthy process, which has been frustratingly slow. The amount of time that it has taken has impacted negatively on survivors, and on advocates both within and outside the Diocese and the Church more broadly. Yet I am satisfied that the matter has been thoroughly and fairly tested. I feel that the right decision has been made, and I want to point out that the Anglican Diocese of Grafton accepts the Determination of the Episcopal Standards Board.

I continue to pray for those who have been harmed by sexual abuse perpetrated by people in the Church who hold positions of power and trust. As the current Bishop of Grafton I am committed to listening to and acknowledging the lived experience of those who have been abused, to responding with compassion to all those who have been harmed, and to fostering a culture of safety for all, especially the young and the vulnerable.

Yours in Christ,



Dr Murray Harvey
Bishop of Grafton



Enquiries to Vivian Hoskins, 02-66572860