

ANGLICAN CHURCH OFFICE



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The Diocesan Council of the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide has received from the Primate a copy of a report prepared, at the behest of the former Archbishop Ian George, by a senior legal practitioner Mr Ian Nicol AM, which is critical of aspects of the methodology of the report of the Board of Inquiry established to comment on the handling of complaints of sexual abuse within the Diocese.

The Diocese commissioned the Board of Inquiry in June 2003 as an independent body which would offer its own conclusions about the Diocese's handlings of complaints of sexual abuse. Archbishop George was an important participant in commissioning the Board of Inquiry in response to the matters that had been raised in connection with the Church.

The Diocese has accepted, and continues to accept, the Board of Inquiry's criticisms of the manner in which the Diocese addressed these issues over the past decades. While important steps had already been taken to improve processes for the handling of complaints at the time the Report was tabled in Parliament, the Diocese has accepted the Report's recommendations and has taken even further steps to address criticisms that have been made. The Diocese continues to support the status of the report and to accept its fundamental significance to the Diocese's response to the allegations of sexual abuse within the Church.

At the time the Board of Inquiry report was released, Archbishop George said, "It will be no surprise that there are parts of the report or interpretations with which I, or other members of the church disagree. However, the report will inform the church in this diocese and nationally in the coming months as we seek to ensure the best possible processes are in place." The report by Mr Nicol provides a particular perspective in relation to the report and will form part of the records of the Diocese. However, the focus of the Diocese continues to be on pastoral care for victims of abuse and accordingly it would not be productive for the Diocesan Council to provide any detailed response to the material contained in the report by Mr Nicol.

The events of 2004 have been traumatic for all associated with the Diocese. The Diocesan Council acknowledges the significant impact on Ian and Barbara George. The Council has expressed its appreciation to Bishop Ian for his decision to resign as Archbishop for the sake of the unity of the Church. The Diocesan Council was and is appalled that its confidential advice was leaked to the media. It is saddened by the humiliation caused to Bishop Ian and his family by events surrounding his resignation.

It is a matter of public record that the Diocese has affirmed the outstanding contribution of Bishop Ian George to the Anglican Church and wider community for over 40 years.