

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

WITNESS STATEMENT OF PATRICK JAMES DUNN

**FILED ON BEHALF OF
THE BISHOPS AND CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

I, Patrick James Dunn, say as follows: -

Introduction

1. My full name is Patrick James Dunn. I was appointed the Bishop of Auckland in 1994. My resignation as Bishop of Auckland was accepted in 2021. I am retired and known as the Emeritus Bishop of Auckland.
2. In 1974, I obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree, majoring in English, from the University of Canterbury. In 1975, I obtained a Bachelor of Theology Degree from the University of Otago.
3. I studied for the priesthood at the Holy Name Seminary in Christchurch and then the Holy Cross College in Mosgiel prior to being ordained in 1976. Following ordination, I did pastoral work with the Catholic Māori Mission and in various parishes within Auckland. I was also the diocesan Director of Vocations during this period.
4. In 1989, I obtained a Master of Theology Degree from the Melbourne College of Divinity.
5. In 1992, I was appointed the personal assistant to the then Auckland Bishop Denis Browne. I was ordained Auxiliary Bishop of Auckland on 25 July 1994. On 19 Dec 1994, I was appointed as the 11th Bishop of Auckland. I held this role for 27 years.
6. I am making this written statement in response to Notice to Produce No. 507 (**Notice**). Paragraphs 12 – 19 of Schedule A of the Notice set out matters on which I am asked to give a statement.
 - a. The attached appendix (**Appendix A**) sets out the information requested at Paragraphs 12 – 15 and part of paragraph 16 of Schedule A of the Notice. I have trouble with my eyesight. This creates significant difficulties with reading large quantities of documents. Therefore, I asked that Appendix A be drafted by Simpson Grierson, legal counsel for Te Rōpū Tautoko. I have been consulted about the contents of Appendix A.
 - b. This written statement sets out the information requested at part of paragraph 16 and paragraphs 17 – 19 of Schedule A of the Notice. I respond to these paragraphs in turn.

Reasons for support following conviction

16. Describe the nature of any support provided by the Church to Sefo Sateki Raass since his conviction and the reasons for that support.

7. The nature of support provided by the Church to Raass since his conviction is set out at paragraphs 5.1 to 5.4 of Appendix A.
8. Regarding the legal representation for Raass during the prosecution, this support was provided because a group of parishioners approached me and suggested that Steve Bonnar QC be retained. I was inclined not to have the Diocese retain Steve Bonnar QC, and for Sateki Raass to plead guilty. However, I sought advice, and took the advice that Raass was entitled to representation and that Steve Bonnar would be a good fit.

Current relationships between the Church and Sefo Sateki Raass

17. Describe the nature of the current relationship between the Bishop, the Tongan Chaplaincy or other parts of the Catholic Church in New Zealand and Sefo Sateki Raass.

9. Today, Sateki Raass is a lay member of the Catholic Church in New Zealand. I understand

GRO-C

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 In both circumstances, his attendance is in the capacity as a lay person.

Church's response to reports of abuse by Sefo Sateki Raass

18. Outline your views on what worked well in relation to the Church's response to all reports of abuse by Sefo Sateki Raass.

10. My view on what worked well is that reports of abuse were responded to when they were made. I acknowledge that Sateki Raass was not confronted directly when the first two allegations were made, but this was because of the survivors' wishes, and I wanted to respect those.

11. When **GRO-A Ms CU** made her complaint, on behalf of her **GRO-B** and expressed her desire that the information be taken further, I could directly confront Raass about his alleged behaviour.

19. Outline your views on what should have been done by the Bishop, by the Tongan Chaplaincy or other part of the Catholic Church in New Zealand, but which was not done, in relation to the Church's response to all reports of abuse by Sefo Sateki Raass.

12. The reports of abuse by Sateki Raass all occurred within the Tongan Catholic community.
13. On reflection, I should have sought advice from Tongan professionals or senior Tongan leaders about ways to respond to the reports of abuse. This advice would have assisted me in determining methods of communication, understanding the cultural relationships better, and advising me on cultural norms and practices appropriate to the situation. Any advisers would have an enhanced level of cultural awareness and knowledge of the community, and the relevant customs and traditions. Given my own cultural background and upbringing, I do not have an innate understanding of these cultures. I think taking this step would have assisted me in engaging with this Catholic community, where there are important community and cultural aspects.
14. Over the years, the Catholic Church has implemented safeguarding policies, programmes, and protocols. These assist in identifying and managing unacceptable behaviour and set out the requirements for those ministering in the Church today with all peoples and especially the young and vulnerable. Policies also set out what steps should be taken if protocols for responding to reports are not followed. Leaders in all communities, including the Tongan Chaplaincy, have participated in workshops on these topics. The safeguarding protocols have also been translated into a number of different languages, including Tongan.
15. In January 2021, I exercised my authority to override some of the restrictions Raass was subject to, including restrictions on teaching.¹ Where individuals are dispensed from priesthood (which men can do for a variety of reasons), they are subject to the Dispensation Rescript from Rome. In my view, the Dispensation Rescript takes a standard approach and in some circumstances, this approach is overly restrictive on the man's life after being a priest. Accordingly, it was not uncommon for me to review an individual's restrictions and, in

¹ 001.R376.0146.

some cases, remove some of these restrictions. In this instance, dispensing with some of the restrictions for Raass was not my wisest decision.

16. In January 2021, two headmasters of Catholic Colleges had “*expressed interest in having [Raass] teach Religious Education at their Colleges*”.² In response to this, I recommended Raass for a teaching position.³ Both of the headmasters knew Raass and were aware of his conviction, but also thought that he could be an effective teacher. This role did not eventuate. Raass has not held a teaching position in a school, in a chaplaincy, or in a parish since his conviction. In hindsight, Raass holding a teaching position would have been unwise.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and was made by me knowing that it may be used as evidence by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

GRO-C

Signed:

Patrick James Dunn

Dated:

27 September 2022

² 001.R376.0021.

³ 001.R376.0021.