



14 June 2019

Pastoral Letter from the Bishop to the clergy and people of the Diocese

Dear brothers and sisters,

District Court trial of Graeme Lawrence

Next Monday, the trial of Graeme Lawrence, former Dean of Newcastle, will begin in the Newcastle District Court. The trial is likely to attract considerable attention and it is likely that the harrowing story of the Diocese, as evidenced before the Royal Commission, will be retold in the media, including social media.

Experience teaches us that the men and women who have experienced sexual abuse will be affected by the trial and its media coverage. You may wish to reach out to those who you know and offer additional pastoral support. The Diocesan Survivor Support and Advocacy Service can be contacted on 1800 774 945.

It is possible that during the next fortnight, someone may share with you their experience of abuse within the Diocese. Cathy Rose, our Acting Director of Professional Standards, can be contacted by telephone on 1800 774 945 or email dps@newcastleanglican.org.au. Cathy can assist a person report their experience to NSW Police and, with our Survivor Support and Advocacy Service, arrange for counselling and other support.

The Anglican Church is committed to the safety of children and vulnerable people participating in church life. We have an ongoing process of improvement in place to provide assurance around safe practices and a safe culture. One feature of this is our continued commitment to close cooperation with NSW Police.

The Diocese will not be making any statements about the trial while it is underway. In order to ensure a fair trial, clergy and laity are encouraged to refrain from making comment while the judge, jury, witnesses, and legal teams do their work. Should you be asked for media comment, simply let the Bishop's Office know and we will be in touch with the media agency for you.

As a people of faith, we hold before God the parishes and individuals most affected by these events. We pray for special grace and guidance for the clergy entrusted with leading those communities and supporting people.

In the Old Testament (1 Kings 3) we hear the dream of King Solomon in which he prayed, "Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong." Moved by his dream and its insights, his first subsequent judicial action was celebrated because the people "saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice." As we hold all these circumstances before

God, and the people affected by them, we pray for those who are called to the work of justice-bearing and justice-making in our court system.

Please be assured of my special prayers and blessing,

Grace and peace

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Stuart', written in a cursive style.

Dr Peter Stuart
Anglican Bishop of Newcastle