

8 March 2013

The Honourable Georgie Crozier MLC
Chair
Family and Community Development
Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms Crozier

Right of Reply

I wish to exercise my right of reply in relation to allegations made against me at the Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations (**Inquiry**).

On Monday 4 March 2013, Raymond D'Brass appeared at the Inquiry. Media reports suggest that Mr D'Brass made allegations that, in my role as Coordinator of Carelink, I:

- a) edited a psychiatrist's report so that Mr D'Brass fitted a diagnosis of a drug-induced schizophrenic, and told Mr D'Brass that I had done so at a meeting on 22 February 2012;
- b) deliberately represented Mr D'Brass as incoherent, by marking some of Mr D'Brass' conversation in transcripts of our meetings as 'inaudible'; and
- c) introduced and held myself out as a psychologist and a counsellor.

These allegations have previously been made by Mr D'Brass to, and have been rejected by, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (**AHPRA**).

After receiving a complaint from Mr D'Brass, AHPRA commenced an investigation into these claims.

In the course of the investigation I informed the Board that at the 22 February 2012 meeting I informed Mr D'Brass I had played no role in the drafting the psychiatrist's report. This is evident in audio recordings and transcripts of the meeting.

The transcripts of three meetings with Mr D'Brass contain many references to words that are "inaudible". This only indicates that the typist was unable to decipher the word from the audio recording. The references to "inaudible" words do not only appear at times when Mr D'Brass is speaking, but also when the psychiatrist and I are speaking.

I am a registered psychologist. However I do not work as a psychologist in my role as Coordinator of Carelink. My contact with Mr D'Brass arises through my role at

Carelink. As the Inquiry is aware, Carelink is a counselling service funded by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne to provide assistance to victims of clergy sexual abuse.

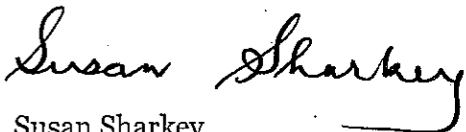
I am currently the Coordinator of Carelink. In that capacity, I do not provide counselling to victims nor do I undertake psychological assessments of victims. My role is to assist in the administration of the provision of counselling to victims by third parties. I have not provided counselling to Mr D'Brass nor have I undertaken a psychological assessment of Mr D'Brass.

The Board of AHPRA and an independent assessor appointed by AHPRA have confirmed this. In a letter to me dated 13 February 2013, the Board stated it had considered Mr D'Brass' submission and the assessor's report and decided to take no further action because the assessor could find no basis on which to conclude that I practice as a psychologist in my Carelink role. AHPRA then closed the matter.

The appropriate professional body has shown the allegations have no substance. The audio recordings and transcripts of Carelink meetings confirm this. Both AHPRA and the assessor had access to these audio recordings and transcripts. In these circumstances there is clearly no basis to Mr D'Brass' claims.

I ask that the Committee acknowledge this in open hearing, and in any publication of the transcript of Mr D'Brass' appearance, to redress the distress and damage caused to me by the Committee's acceptance of Mr D'Brass' evidence and the considerable media publicity that it has attracted.

Yours faithfully



Susan Sharkey
Co-ordinator