



9 August 2019

STATEMENT from Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay

At the Sydney District Court today, Carl Stafford a retired priest of our Diocese, has entered a guilty plea to offences related to historical Child Sexual Abuse involving victims during his time as a lay teacher in Campbelltown and when he was a priest ministering in the Diocese of Broken Bay. The Diocese of Broken Bay has fully cooperated with this criminal investigation since referring it to civil authorities in 2010 when we first became aware of the complaints.

Stafford pleaded guilty to eight indictments, associated to four victims. Six indictments are associated to his time as a lay teacher outside of the Diocese. These offences took place between 1984 and 1987. Two indictments are associated with his time at Gosford Parish. These offences took place between 1996 and 1997. Stafford was released on bail under strict conditions until his sentencing which is scheduled to take place on 6 December 2019.

Stafford was stood aside from public ministry in 2010 and from shortly after was not permitted to exercise any ministry. He has not resided in the Diocese since that time, nor will he be during his time on bail.

The Diocese expresses its great sadness at the trauma and suffering the victims and their families have experienced. We are aware of the courage it has taken for them to come forward and we are ready to assist them on their journey of healing. The Diocese expresses its shame that such incidents of clerical sexual abuse has occurred.

The Diocese conveys its clear commitment to keeping all people safe in our communities, particularly those who are vulnerable. The safety and wellbeing of our young people is our highest priority.

We are strongly committed to listening to and supporting victims of abuse perpetrated by any representative of the Church. Likewise, we are committed to ensuring that any complaint of misconduct is acted upon forthrightly, with due diligence and thorough accountability.

We encourage anyone with information of any crime to always contact the Police. Anyone who needs assistance or support may wish to contact the Diocesan Office for Safeguarding on (02) 8379 1605 or Lifeline 131 114.

For further information please contact:

Diocesan Office for Safeguarding

Director, Jodie Crisafulli

T: 02 8379 1605

E: director.safeguarding@bbcatholic.org.au