

STATEMENT OF:

REDACTED

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My present role at St Ann's is as transition teacher for the older students.

I conduct skills training and work experience programs preparing the older students for leaving school. I liaise with sheltered workshops etc.

I joined the staff at St Ann's in September 1986.

Brian Perkins was already on the staff when I arrived, as I remember.

I really had nothing to do with him on a day-to-day basis while he was there. I just observed him coming and going in the ordinary course of driving the bus.

On perhaps only two occasions prior to me gaining my own bus drivers licence, he drove me and my students on excursions.

My recollection is that he performed no other roles than as bus driver and doing some odd jobs about the school.

Towards the end of Brian Perkins' time at the school I recall MX and LH LH with packed overnight bags going home on Friday nights with Brian Perkins on the bus. They were the only two students I recall doing that.

It is probable that they would have been on his bus anyway to go home, but the fact that they already had their bags packed suggested that they were heading off with Brian Perkins for an overnight stay with parental approval.

I recall that MX was usually excited about going on those weekend outings.

It was my impression at the time that Brian Perkins alone was taking the boys camping.

At that time I had the impression that he was "a good bloke".

On occasions after those weekend camping trips when MX was showing some excitement, Perkins made comments consistent with the boys having enjoyed them.

REDACTED an art teacher at the school, was standing with me on the veranda one afternoon as Perkins left in the bus with the boys. She said-"I would never let my kids stay overnight with a man on his own". She was questioning whether NE should be allowing her children to go with Perkins. That was her personal philosophy.

As I said, most of us thought he was a good bloke doing the parents a favour by taking them off camping on weekends and giving the parents a break.

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There was a policy within the school that at least two staff members must go out with students on excursions. It would have been virtually impossible for one staff member to handle students alone, irrespective of that policy.

I have no recollection of Claude Haman saying anything about the propriety of the respite care conducted by Perkins.

We all saw that as a private arrangement between the parents and Brian Perkins. It had nothing to do with the school.

I was not aware of any practice or policy relating to the appointments of staff members. My understanding was that Claude would discuss his needs with the Board of Management and get their approval. He would then report back on any appointments.

Claude Haman appointed me after interviewing me on his own. He was aware that I had worked as a teacher in New South Wales and asked me about a police check over there. There was no suggestion of him doing a police check here in South Australia.

I was aware that Claude kept personnel files for staff members. I had no need to access mine at any time.

From time to time I gave Claude things to put in my file, such as certificates for courses which I attended. I saw it as a repository for updating my CV.

I assumed there were files for all the staff.

The only time I had any concern about Brian Perkins was in June 1991 a few weeks before a Debutant Ball I was organising for the students. The only substantive thing which had not been confirmed was a photographer. I was discussing the arrangements with Brian Perkins (about three weeks before the Ball) and I mentioned that I had not yet had confirmation from my professional photographer. Perkins said "I have a friend who takes fantastic black and white photos." I said "No. It's already organised and I'm waiting for final details". His language then became quite profane which was unusual for him in his discussions with me. It was very much a drop in his standards and I was quite taken aback by the language he used. It was offensive to me. He kept going on about his photographer friend telling me what beautiful work he did. He was pushing to get his friend in as the photographer.

There was nothing which caused me to think of registering a complaint at the time. It was a private conversation and there were no students anywhere near us. I simply put that episode in the back of my mind.

The students liked Perkins. I had no particular gut feeling about him.

I did not know of Robert Hawkes before he came to the school. Claude Haman brought him to my classroom and introduced him to me as a volunteer. I do not recall the name Claude called him. We relied heavily on volunteers. Claude said Hawkes was offering to help with jobs on that day.

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That day was Thursday, a day on which I worked with students on jobs around the schoolyard. Before Claude and Hawkes arrived at my classroom I had been discussing the jobs with students and had put a list on the board. My practice was to ask the students to volunteer for jobs and I would then put their names against the jobs on the board. I would then separate the students and send them off to do the jobs. When volunteers were involved they would help the students through the jobs.

When Claude left Hawkes at my classroom I asked him to sit at the back of the room. His body language immediately caused me concern. He sat with his legs apart and with his forearms resting on his knees. His head was down low and I noticed his eyes darting around the room looking at all the students. I felt instantly nervous.

I asked Hawkes if he would assist LH with the job of emptying the bins. I watched him very closely because of the gut feeling I had.

He showed no care or desire to assist or guide LH in doing the job. Hawkes did the job himself and LH simply followed him. He finished the job very quickly, which was most unusual because the intention is to get the students involved in completing the tasks.

Hawkes walked to the other side of the playground and stood under the Peppertree. I noticed that Brian Perkins then joined him. I was not aware at the time of any connection between Brian Perkins and Hawkes.

They looked as though they were chatting and having a cigarette together.

I went straight to Claude Haman, who was in the storeroom behind the front desk, and said "I don't know who this chap is but he needs to go". Claude said "I'll deal with it". As I went back to my classroom I saw Claude go out of the front office door.

A short time later at recess time he told me he had spoken to Hawkes and he had gone. I still did not know at that time who Hawkes was. It was not until some time later (and after Brian Perkins had left) when I saw Hawkes on television at a court appearance that I realised that he was the person who had been in my room that day.

I did not know he was a friend of Perkins. When I saw them together standing under the Peppertree I recall thinking to myself "what's going on over there?".

I spoke with other staff members at recess about Hawkes and my gut feeling. When I told Claude that Hawkes had to go, I told him that I had seen Brian Perkins and Hawkes talking together under the Peppertree.

There was no hesitation on Claude's part when he said "I'll deal with it". He completely trusted my judgment and got rid of the guy.

When he spoke to me at recess time to tell me he had asked Hawkes to leave, he thanked me for raising the matter. He appreciated that I had made a judgment even though I had nothing specific to complain about.

Hawkes made my skin crawl. I never got that feeling about Brian Perkins.

St Ann's is a very family oriented and caring environment.

Claude Haman is a very caring and concerned Principal, more so than any other Principal I have had.

St Ann's has been wonderful place to work and I have missed Claude since he left.

All of the staff relied heavily on each other because the students are hard to deal with. We are all very supportive of each other.

The students loved Claude Haman.

Dated 2nd September 2002

Signed:..

REDACTED