

STATEMENT OF:

DAVID PRINCE
REDACTED

Taken: 27th November 2002.

I first became involved with St Ann's Special School and St Patrick's Special School in approximately 1976.

At first my role was that of Honorary Assistant Treasurer. It was not a formal position within the Constitution at that time.

Approximately 18 months later I was officially recognised as Bursar and as Treasurer.

Either at the end of 1977 or early in 1978 I was appointed as a member of both the Board of Management and the Board of Governors. Those boards managed and governed both schools.

I was a board member when Claude Haman was appointed as the Principal.

My recollection is that his appointment was made by a select committee of the boards and not by the boards at large.

During the period from 1986 to 1991 I have a recollection of seeing the name of Brian Perkins in the staff lists at St Ann's. One of my functions and responsibilities was to deal with staff salaries and salary related matters. I recall that Brian Perkins was a casual bus driver on the staff during that period.

At that time there were no policies or practices of imposing probationary periods or short-term testing times on new bus drivers. It was not until a couple of years after Perkins left that new drivers were put on probation, but that was only because there had been a push by the bus drivers for increased pay over the award rates and because of a general awareness that performance was important. At that time I recall the School had one driver who was regularly on sick leave and another driver who was so overweight that he could not easily get in and out of the bus. Those sorts of issues emphasised the need for some accountability by the drivers if they were to be paid more money.

I don't remember ever meeting Brian Perkins and would not know him if I was to meet him now. I had little contact with the staff at St Ann's. To me, they were simply names in a book.

I have only learned of the issues with Brian Perkins over the last year or so. Sister Loreto (the current Principal of St Ann's) told the Boards last year that Allan Dooley, the Director of Catholic Education, would be coming to speak to us about the matter.

A special meeting was called and Allan Dooley did convey more detailed information to us then and subsequently.

I am not aware of any disclosures to the Boards at any time in or around 1991 that there were any problems with Brian Perkins.

The only issues relating to bus drivers which came to the Boards at that time involved problems with the buses not being kept clean, the drivers being regularly absent or overweight and other routine management issues.

The Principal of the school is a member of the Board of management. Although as the matter of convention the Principal reported to the Board fairly regularly at its meetings, there was no formal agenda item to that effect.

I am quite certain that the Principal reported nothing to the Board about Brian Perkins or the allegations made against him.

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Now that I am aware of the nature of the allegations, they are matters which most certainly I would have expected to be referred to the Board by the Principal at the time they were made, if he knew of them.

The chairman of the board at the time, Paul Morrissy, did not report anything to the board about the allegations against Brian Perkins. If he was aware of those allegations I can only surmise that he might have been reticent to raise them at the Board because there were two parents on the board. That is pure speculation on my part because I do not know whether or not he was aware of the allegations at the time.

During that period from 1986 to 1991 I did not know what Claude Haman did in the way of checking on staff before appointing them. I am not aware of any policy or procedure for making police checks before an appointment was made.

I am sure the board was not conscious of any practice or procedure in that regard. There was certainly nothing in writing to that effect. As far as I recall, applicants would apply, be interviewed and then the board would be informed by the Principal of the person who had been chosen for the position.

I have no recollection whatever of any mention being made by Claude Haman at any time of having made a police check in connection with any appointment to the staff at the school. It has only been over the last few years that the board has put in place policies for police checking before an appointment is made. That has been driven mainly by the Catholic Education Office as part of its general policy development and was not as a direct consequence of the Brian Perkins issue.

Claude Haman did not tell the board of any police checking by him in relation to appointments and the board did not ask him about that at any time.

Claude Haman was an affable but in some ways not a very communicative person. I found, even on day-to-day matters, that he was inclined to be reticent unless drawn out.

I am still a member of the boards in my capacity as part time Treasurer and Bursar.

Dated:12/12/..... 2002.

Signed:.....