

120, The St.

Doveton, 3111

Phone 799 4317

Holy Family Parish

Doveton

Presbytery:

21 Balfour Street

Doveton

8th October, 1986.

Most Rev T F Little, S T D
Archbishop of Melbourne,
Catholic Diocesan Centre,
EAST MELBOURNE.



Your Grace,

The resignation of Graeme Sleeman was neither initiated, nor engineered nor desired by myself. It came as a complete surprise, as we have enjoyed a good working relationship over nearly three years. I requested that he re-consider his position and that we discuss his problems, leaving the situation for a week, before reluctantly accepting his request. We are now following the normal procedure of seeking a new Principal, and the co-operation between the school and myself continues harmoniously, and will do so in the future.

The approach of Mr Walker on behalf of the Doveton Cluster of Schools is primarily an unwarranted intrusion on a purely local administrative and personal decision. A similar furore was raised when the Principal of Doveton High School recently resigned from the Cluster. The reasons for the vindictive attitude appear twofold. Firstly, Graeme has carried Cluster for several years; many agree it would cease to function without him, as no one would be prepared to give as much time and effort as he has. I am not, and have never been opposed to the Group; in fact I have openly supported it by my presence at quite a few of its meetings, spoken in favour of it publicly and permitted our facilities to be used by them. Secondly, my non-acceptance by them stems to the fact - previously reported to you and the the Catholic Education Office - that over fifty Catholic children have transferred from State schools to Holy Family through my encouragement. I would not expect my "persona non gratis" status to change too readily.

To claim that I am totally opposed to all areas of community development and involvement is quite unfounded. I could quote numerous examples to the contrary, one of which was my offering to Austpost an unused Parish building for sorting and distribution of daily mail, when the Doveton Post facilities were to be extended. This was offered as a gesture of goodwill and service to the Doveton, Hallam and Endeavour Hills communities. By nature, I am a very Community-minded person.

There is no furore in our Parish or School community. There is no threat of mass or even single resignations over Graeme's resignation nor has even one parent talked of removing their child from the school. May I refer you to Alan Dooley, our Education Consultant, for his endorsement of the above, as he has been very involved in the current situation.

Mr Walker has given an over-exaggerated, non-factual and self-interested viewpoint/version, speculating on "reasons" of which only Graeme and I are privy. My advice would be consequent to the above honest assessment, and to receive any deputation would be playing into their hands and really cause disruption in our Community. I would genuinely challenge the sincerity of their motives.

With every Blessing and best wish,

Sincerely in Christ, Peter L Searson. PASTOR

P. L. Searson

I share some reservations also re the Doveton Cluster involvement in this matter & some staff will leave as a result of the current situation & there has been parent discussion re transfer of children - there is a body of parents seriously concerned about the current happenings. I cannot endorse all aspects of this letter. Alan Dooley.

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