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## Grammar panel to review child protection

BRISBANE Grammar School has established an eminent panel to develop benchmark child protection measures.

The move came as Grammar headmaster Dr Peter Lennox said an internal investigation had unearthed evidence supporting sexual abuse claims against school counsellor Kevin Lynch revealed in *The Courier-Mail*.

"Brisbane Grammar School acknowledges clear ethical and moral responsibilities with students," Dr Lennox said.

The leading private school yesterday announced a world-renowned child psychiatrist, a senior lawyer and a former Education Queensland senior executive were to review policies on bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment at the school.

The move came after *The Courier-Mail* revealed former counsellor Kevin Lynch serially abused scores of students at Brisbane Grammar and St Paul's School at Bald Hills.

Professor Barry Nurcombe, an old boy who volunteered his services to the panel, said he wanted to develop a policy which would become the benchmark for all private schools.

"I would think that this issue (paedophilia) relates to every boys' school in Australia at some time or other. Even at the best school it is," he said.

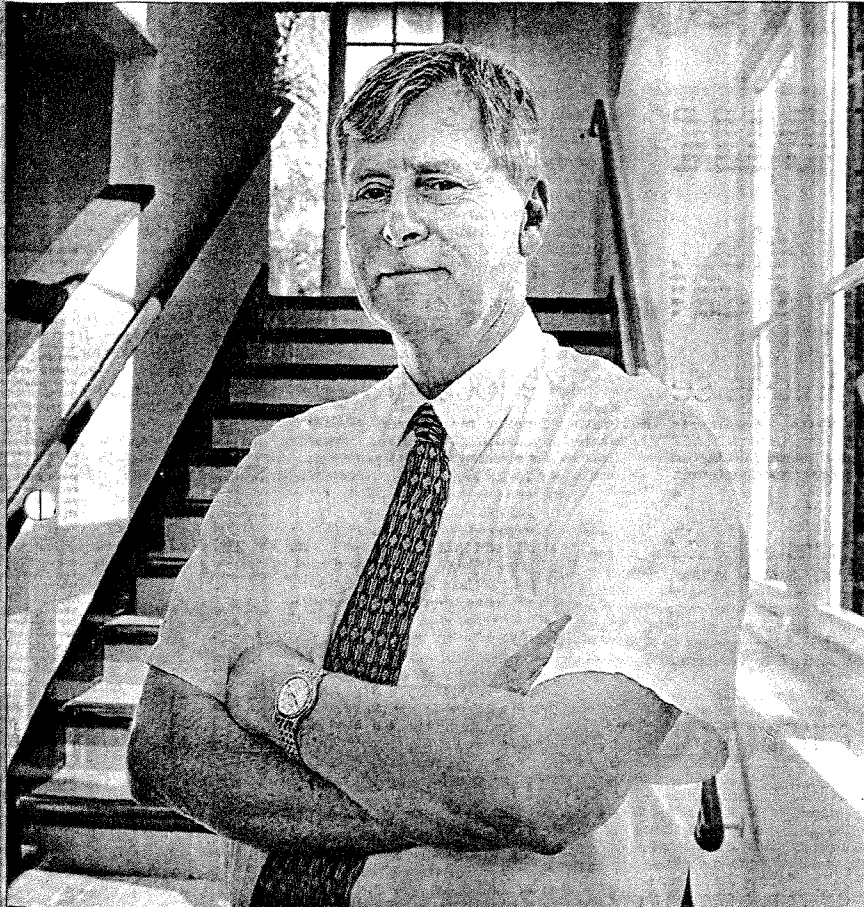
"I think there needs to be a process in place whereby organisations like young men's or girls' schools vet the people who work there.

"There needs to be a central registry of people who have offended in this way. Even with the best kind of screening devices, it can happen from time to time."

Professor Nurcombe, who is the University of Queensland and Royal Brisbane Hospital sector of child and adolescent psychiatry, said there was a deficiency in communication between institutions and departments.

Lynch's tactics under the guise of counselling, relaxation and hypnosis were extremely worrying and represented a typical paedophile's tactics, he said.

"He must have been a very persuasive man to get people to do what he wanted," Professor Nurcombe said.



PROFESSOR Nurcombe ... wants to develop a policy for all private schools. Picture: Derek Moore.

The other members of the panel are former Education Queensland executive John Burge and a senior legal figure who is yet to be announced.

Dr Lennox said the school also had called in leading psychiatrist Dr Joan Lawrence to oversee a clinical assessment of the needs of any former students affected by Lynch's behaviour.

"Where appropriate, she will refer them for treatment within a

panel of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers selected and monitored by her," Dr Lennox said. He said the "school's investigations to date do not establish any legal liability on the school's part and it will make use of all available defences".

He said the school decided to call in the panel in order to enhance its existing policies which cover issues such as discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying.

More than 70 people have contacted law firm Shine Roche McGowan seeking advice about abuse suffered during Lynch's counselling sessions.

Lynch, who committed suicide in 1997 after being charged with indecent dealing offences, used so-called relaxation and hypnosis techniques.

— David Murray, Michael Ware and Rory Callinan