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Friday, 23 August 2002

Principal
The Hutchins School
Sandy Bay
Hobart Tasmania

Re: Mr John Bednall's carriage of my 1994 complaint of sexual abuse.

Dear Mr Bill Toppin

It must have come as a terrible shock to your community to read of the WA Police Child Abuse unit's investigation into your former headmaster, Mr John Bednall's alleged accessing of inappropriate web sites whilst Principal of Wesley College (The Hobart Mercury, Saturday August 10th, page 6).

He himself has called his wrong doing a gross error of judgement. He was such a strong and public advocate of education ethics. The hypocrisy would be breathtaking were his previous stance not born possibly out of guilt, and must call into question other 'errors of judgement' whilst he was Headmaster at the Hutchins School.

I think we know enough about the habits of 54 year old internet pornographers to know that their problem did not begin yesterday and is not limited to the internet. That he very well knew the monitoring system of web access at the college, suggests a guilty desire to be caught.

If the Police Child Abuse unit is involved because the allegations involve paedophile voyeurism, I must now wonder at the adequacy of Mr Bednall's original investigation of my complaint about your former headmaster, Mr David Lawrence.

Has it also given you pause for thought about the adequacy of Bednall's handling of my or any other disclosures of child sexual abuse during his term at Hutchins?

I ask you to retrace Mr Bednall's steps in the matter of my disclosure, to assure yourselves that his investigation was thorough and did not result in a cover up, nor in the destruction of evidence or any diversion of due process or a fair hearing of my complaint.

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Page 1 of 2

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Page 1 of 2



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Have you now opened an investigation into Mr Bednall's time at the school, inviting his former students to come forward with disclosure of inappropriate behaviour, particularly of voyeuristic paedophilia or other inappropriate sexual interest in them? I note CEGS Brisbane's recent letter to old boys after one of their former teachers was charged with a child sex offence.

Does your protocol mandate an investigation into the behaviour of a previous Headmaster whose behaviour has recently been the subject of a police investigation? If so, would it to be independent?

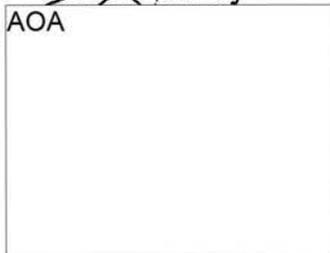
I am now asking you once again in my case, to openly canvas the old boys who may have been sexually abused by Mr Lawrence, particularly his private French students, as well as by other teachers at the time.

I have forwarded my concerns to the WA Police Child Abuse Unit.

I look forward to your reply and hope that Senator Bob McMullan will not be called upon to obtain a complete response from your office to my concerns.

~~Yours Sincerely~~

AOA



Cc. Editor, Hobart Mercury. Detective Senior Sergeant John Adams, WA Child Abuse Unit. Senator Bob McMullan. Bishop of Tasmania.

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Page 2 of 2



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