

To Mr AOA

Thank you again for your letter dated 3 May.

Following my letter to you dated [redacted] I have undertaken a review of the investigation conducted by John Bednall. I am satisfied that the investigation was thorough, and that interviews were conducted with the appropriate persons, and that all available documents considered. I also note that subsequent to the investigation, some of the persons interviewed were contacted again independently by the School's lawyers to confirm details in their recollections.

I am completely satisfied that there was no "cover up", and that no evidence was destroyed.

I record that your letter of 23 August, 2002 refers to certain allegations against Mr John Bednall. That matter has resolved, by the Police withdrawing the single charge, because of a complete lack of evidence. I am aware that the police forensic report noted that the presence of any material or files on Mr Bednall's computer that could relate to the charge would have been unknown to, and inaccessible by, Mr Bednall. Neither was there any evidence of illegal activity by him.

I have been told that the Police stated to Mr Bednall's lawyer that Wesley College had failed to produce evidence to support its allegations.

Mr Bednall had been investigating serious breaches of internet security at Wesley College, committed both by staff and students. This involved him monitoring school use of the internet, a matter upon which I am told Mr Bednall first sought legal advice. It seems that ill-informed comment by some presented a view of his actions which was wrong. Those comments also led to many drawing conclusions that were also wrong.

There is in these circumstances, no cause in my view for The Hutchins School to investigate the behaviour of Mr Bednall.

I have been concerned to ascertain the whereabouts of the letter you wrote to David Lawrence. The School does not have the letter. The investigation disclosed that it was not given to Mr Kerr, but that he was aware of the contents. Neither was the letter ever given to any member of the Board. Mr Lawrence resigned before the contents of the letter became known to the Board. It appears to me that it was likely returned to Mr Lawrence by the Chaplain, I surmise because it was considered by him to be a private letter.