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Mr John Bednall
Headmaster
Hutchins School

Monday, 13 March 1995

Dear Headmaster

Thank you and the Board for your letter of 28 October last year, and for your continued openness to further discussion. Your expression of 'understanding and deep sympathy', though ambiguous, meant a great deal to me as a survivor. As a psychologist, I was also re-assured by your appointment of a counsellor with a wide role.

I have enclosed a copy of my letter to him.

In your letter you advised me that you had been instructed to give me the opportunity to make any further observations I desired when next we meet. That was four months ago, when the Board met to discuss my letter, and six months since I wrote the letter. So I thought I should keep things moving along at a steady, contemplative speed, and give you those observations ahead of your scheduled, next trip to Canberra.

I have sat with your letter, letting its contents settle in my mind. The wording of the preface of paragraph 3 continues to trouble me, viz: '... the Board has not been able to identify specific(ally) individuals'.

I would have preferred that you acknowledge you are writing to a specific individual.

You appear to imply I am such a one, by way of giving sympathy and understanding, but withdraw it by prefacing this sympathy with a gratuitous reminder, which could be interpreted to mean no specific individuals have been identified.

A survivor of sexual abuse can be insulted by a careless ambiguity which appears to discount their existence. And that will damage your credibility in their eyes.

As I requested in my letter of September 9, I continue to ask for your informal and off the record apology on behalf of the School and Mr Lawrence. If you are not authorised to do that, please tell me in advance of your secretary arranging a time for us to meet.

If the Board won't instruct you to even tell me that you don't have their authority to apologise informally, please tell me that too. I can then find a suitable avenue of professional mediation for resolving this difficulty directly with you.

I reiterate my request for a copy of the letter I sent to Mr Lawrence and the dates I was at the School.

Sincerely yours,

AOA

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