

William Toppin

Subject: FW: Open Letter to His Excellency

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From: AOA [mailto:REDACTED]
 Sent: Sunday, 3 March 2002 3:09
 To: Jill Abell
 Subject: Open Letter to His Excellency

I am an old boy of the school and I would really appreciate it if you could post this letter on your libraries web site.
 Sincerely

AOA

His Excellency the Right Reverend Dr Peter Hollingworth AC OBE
 Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Dear Sir

I read with interest of your telephone apology. I thank you for the first real and public step of reconciliation. I have some thoughts about your process, and presumptuous though it is I offer them to you.

First - in giving your personal apology to the woman at the centre of one of your child sexual abuse silences, you said you did not know why on Australian Story you said 'it was the other way round' implying the 14 year old was the sexual predator of an innocent priest. I thought it was obvious. You believed it was true. This goes to the very heart of the corruption in those who protect the perpetrators. It is not that you were gullible, stupid or even evil in relationship to this comment. You are obviously a good man, perhaps just unconscious of some of your beliefs. But that is too easy. Our leaders have a duty, especially His Excellency, the Governor General, to explore deeply their own beliefs before going on the public stage and attacking a victim. It is very hard to own up, even to yourself, that you have a completely indefensible belief about power and sex. Especially when it comes to a child being abused by a close friend of yours in the old boy network.

But that is the tragedy of most child sexual abuse, it is a trusted friend, colleague or member of the family who does it. They get away with it, not only because of the ring of silence, but because they have well practiced methods of grooming both the victim and the adults who might otherwise protect their target. You, like other parents and their child victims, have been successfully groomed by a predatory paedophile. Up until your personal apology on the telephone to the lady in Brisbane, I believe you still had not examined that fact. Hence you could not know why you said it. It is not enough to have a protocol, a sex abuse committee or even mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse if the people who are administering these instruments have themselves been corrupted by the considerable public and private manipulative skills of

these serial perpetrators.

How else could each one claim hundreds of victims and go unnoticed. Relying on your silence as an elder, has been an essential part of their strategy. They also rely on that fast disappearing parenting and education philosophy of instructing children to do as they are told.

Second - I would like to see all government grants to non-government schools tied to a child sexual abuse policy. This would include 1. mandatory protective behaviours courses for primary and junior high school kids and their parents and teachers 2. mandatory disclosure of all past and present reports of child sexual abuse at those institutions and 3. random auditing by the Federal audit office for compliance with those conditions. No compliance, no money. If later it is discovered that any non-government school knowingly withheld past reports or have been concurrently protecting a perpetrator, then they must return the grant money with interest calculated daily.

The immediate benefits of such a policy would be to get these currently squeaky clean institutions to own up about their past and to do something proactive about the problem in their current situations. It is not enough to say we have a policy for sexual misconduct as the Headmaster of Canberra Grammar said after you laid a stone last week. It is far too convenient for many of our leaders to let you take the rap for a widespread silence in church schools and in their boards of governance, which taxpayers in part fund through the schools grant system.

Our hands are not clean if our dollars are going toward their silence. My own Hutchins School in Hobart, still refuses to own up to having employed at least two paedophiles, one of whom abused me in the 1960's and I have been asking for their acknowledgment since 1994. It would cost them something to remain silent under a government grant tied to compliance this kind of national child sex abuse policy. It

doesn't need a Royal Commission to begin immediately addressing the problem you are having to defend yourself against.

Please do not resign from your post whilst, through the unfolding tragedies around your office, you have a chance to turn the Governor General into a truly proactive, presidential position.

Be the best leader that you can be by honestly examining how well even one predatory paedophile has groomed you. And the rest of us have to examine how clean our hands are when our taxes have supported your silence on the past tragedy of the Toowoomba Preparatory School.

Sincerely

AOA

Clinical Psychologist

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