

Dr John Isles

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APPENDIX I

Skye Cromach P/L

ACN 009 536 207

REDACTED

17th February 1994

PRIVATE AND STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Mr J M Bednall
Headmaster
The Hutchins School
SANDY BAY
Tasmania 7005

Dear Mr Bednall,

I have studied the copies of the two letters which you sent for my opinion. Thank you for taking me into your confidence in relation to this delicate matter.

I do not believe the writer has resolved the emotional conflicts which were engendered for him through the contact he describes with his headmaster. Many of his remarks indicate an ambivalence concerning the issues of retribution.

It seems probable the writer has felt a strong desire to speak out at last and raise these matters with the school as part of his efforts to resolve his personal anguish. Judging by the aggressive undercurrent in the letter as a whole and the particular remarks he makes about the man he has accused of abusing him, the full force of his anger is yet to emerge.

What indeed is the evidence upon which the writer concludes that incidents of sexual abuse were widespread during his relatively short period at the school? To some extent the professional's training and professional experiences serve only to increase his fears since they have taught him to focus upon the horror and the psychic damage which may follow such experiences while paying little if any attention to the group of subjects who come through such experiences unscathed.

I recommend you respond to his offer to assist in the consideration of ways and means for the school to proceed should it decide to take the initiative in setting-up some form of therapeutic net. I suggest you negotiate with him on an informal, confidential basis as the headmaster, so as to

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leave a secondary line of defence in the form of the school council, should he press for any gung-ho procedures to be instituted. On the positive side, and since this would seem to be a genuine, altruistic offer to assist the school ensure that a recurrence of student abuse will be avoided in the future, I think there would be real value in enlisting his aid in one particular area at least. What specific procedures does he think would be effective in assisting a vulnerable and frightened fourteen-year-old escape from the clutches of " a practiced, skilful and predatory paedophile"? If nothing else were to eventuate, this should keep him involved and satisfy what seems to be his present urge to make a positive contribution towards eradicating the perceived evil.

Naturally the school will already be considering ways to facilitate revelation of any traumatic episode which may have been experienced by pupils during their schooling. To this end it may be thought expedient to appoint some form of 'confidential counsellor' but I feel sure you will wish to be the one in charge of the arrangements. However, in view of the present accusations, perhaps the fact that such a service had been established and was available to any students, past and present, should be publicised and a regular notice placed in the school magazine.

There is considerable doubt in my mind as to the writer's motives for wanting to meet other "victims". By so doing he might make some gains in his effort to discharge the confusion of old pent-up emotions he is experiencing: but at what cost to those he wishes to gather together? Be that as may be, I feel certain that it would not be appropriate for a past victim, no matter how well trained, to be involved in the actual provision of any therapeutic measures which may be instigated by the school authorities at some stage.

I appreciate your offer to cover a fee for my opinion but am glad to be of service to the school. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

With kind regards,

yours sincerely,



John Isles