



FILE NOTE

RE: HUTCHINS & AOA

DATE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2002

Attending Bill Toppin.

Discussing letter. I said that AOA's letter was appalling and it made unwarranted assumptions about what Bednall may or may not have done during his time at Hutchins based on a press report in the Mercury about something he had done in Western Australia. I agreed that the letter was defamatory.

I said that from the point of view of publicity I doubted very much whether any newspaper would publish AOA's letter. I said any reply should not debate the matters raised by AOA or otherwise contain anything of substance which might be used by the media. I said if any response from the school only made sense if viewed in the light of AOA's letter it was unlikely it would be published.

His view was that we should not reply and if AOA stirs the matter up and goes to McMullan or does something similar we should write to McMullen pointing out the evil of AOA's letter. He said the school was damned if it did and damned if it didn't and I said I agreed with this and also did not disagree that not writing at all maybe just as appropriate as writing. I said that my view was that the minimalist approach was warranted and reading the contents of the reply I had drafted.

He asked that I write to the Board setting out what we had discussed, saying that we both agreed that a minimalist approach was warranted and leaving it to the Board to decide whether we wrote along the lines I suggested or simply did not respond.

RCM