



THE HUTCHINS SCHOOL SPECIAL COMMUNIQUE

From the Chairman of The Hutchins School Board

Today I am writing to you as Hutchins parents and members of the Hutchins community to discuss the hearing of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Hobart.

This has been a difficult time for the entire School community and I want to acknowledge the overwhelming support the School, its Headmaster Warwick Dean and the Board has received from the School Community.

Firstly, I want to assure you that your boys are safe at the Hutchins School. We have rigorous processes in place relating to the recruitment of staff, complaints procedures and education programs at all levels, in accordance with modern best practice.

We have some 300 staff members – professional men and women - who are committed, passionately, to delivering the best educational experience for your sons in a unique and safe environment.

The Royal Commission sat for five days in Tasmania and is still ongoing with one day's hearing in Sydney on 18 December. It will hand down its findings later in 2015. While it is obviously inappropriate for me to comment on certain matters, I want to make several key points:

- The Royal Commission heard evidence from four victims of sexual abuse which occurred at the School in the 1960s when David Lawrence was Headmaster of the School.
- The first complaint was received in 1993, the second in 2006 and the other two were received after the Royal Commission hearing was announced.
- Since the Royal Commission hearing was announced, the School has had contact from 9 other individuals, who have all been offered independent counselling. All complaints relate to the time before and during the period when Mr Lawrence was Headmaster.
- Up until the announcement of the Royal Commission, the Board only had knowledge of two complaints of sexual abuse occurring at the School during the 1960s.

- The School has apologised sincerely to the four former students who appeared before the Royal Commission. We accept that the four former students of the School were sexually abused by members of staff in the 1960s.
- The School has put in place a process to deal with any complaints of sexual abuse including offering counselling and financial support based on the Anglican Diocese Pastoral Support and Assistance Scheme.
- One of the issues being considered by the Royal Commission is why an apology was not given at an earlier time to the first victim. That question is a matter of ongoing consideration by the Royal Commission but from the School's point of view the answer lies, at least in part, with the legal and expert medical advice received by the School at various times since the complaint was received.

I want to state categorically that the Hutchins School Board apologises, sincerely and wholeheartedly, to any and all Hutchins Old Boys who have been sexually abused. Child sexual abuse is an abhorrent crime.

We cannot ignore what occurred in the 1960s. Those Hutchins boys were entitled to protection then and deserve our support now and throughout their lives.

This week, we will hold parent meetings as school begins, which I and other Board members will attend to address any queries you might have. **The session for parents will be held at 8am on Thursday 4 December 2014 in the Auditorium.**

Our School is now 168 years old. I am proud to say that I am a Hutchins Old Boy.

I am also committed as Chairman of the School to ensuring that your son enjoys the best educational opportunities and care in Tasmania.



David Morris
Chairman
The Hutchins School Board

2 December 2014