

REDACTED

23rd September 2010

**To The Presiding Judge of the District Court
In the Matter of Mr Adrian A J Nisbett**

My Own Background

My name is John A Turnbull, B.A., M.Litt, age 67, retired after 40+ years in secondary education, most of which time I spent at Knox Grammar School, Wahroonga, as follows-

I began teaching at Knox Grammar School in 1963, During 34 years at Knox I taught a number of Subjects, mainly English and French, but also including History, Geography, Social Studies and Religious Education. I was appointed to a number of positions of responsibility during those years, as follows -

Class Teacher (1963 – 1992); Boarding House Resident Master (1962-1967); Pastoral Care Tutor (several years); Year master (several years); Housemaster (about 5 years); English Subject Head (1975 – 1980 approx); Deputy Headmaster (for 15 years from 1978 to 1992)

I left Knox at the end of 1992 to take up the position of Headmaster of Hamilton College in rural Victoria. I was there for 6 years (1993 – 1998) before returning to Sydney.

I was re-appointed to Knox in 1999 as Assistant to the new Headmaster, and was responsible for the Community Relations Office for four years before I retired from Knox in 2002 and my wife and I took up residence in REDACTED Victoria, where we presently reside.

During my 34 years at Knox, I also travelled overseas and taught at Fettes College in Edinburgh, Scotland and was therefore away from Knox for 1 year (August 1985 – August 1986)

Mr Adrian A J Nisbett

I have been asked to act as a character witness for Mr Adrian A J Nisbett and am aware that he has pleaded guilty to two charges of indecent assault and admitted to a third count of indecent assault in reference to former students of Knox Grammar School who were at the time under the age of eighteen. This is the context in which I provide the statement about his character as I have known it.

I first knew Mr Nisbett in my first year of teaching (1963) when he was a student in my Year 8 English class where he was very able and intelligent. He was also cast in two School Plays which I directed in 1966 & 1967 and he played these roles reliably and with talent and quiet assurance.

In the 1970s he was appointed to the English staff at Knox and I was his Head of Department until 1980 approximately. As his Subject Head, I was impressed by Mr Nisbett's teaching abilities – he was more than merely competent; he was an excellent teacher, able to draw out and develop the talents of his students at all levels. I was often informed by parents how delighted

they were with their sons' progress in Mr Nisbett's classes. He was infinitely patient with even the least talented students. As a consequence of the fine quality of his teaching and his impressive capacity to lead fellow adults (teachers) and to handle complex administration, Mr Nisbett succeeded me as Subject Master of English in about 1981.

I continued my English teaching under his administration and leadership and was able to observe his competence in all areas of his new responsibilities. His staff responded very positively to his informed and conscientious leadership. He always enjoyed a strong teacher following at Knox. He was a Year Tutor and later a Yearmaster for several years.

He was a respected Rugby coach and enthusiastic assistant coach in athletics (we shared responsibility for assisting the distance runners). Boys responded very positively to his encouragement and sound advice in both areas. I witnessed this first hand.

As Commanding Officer of the Knox Cadet Corps for several years he assumed responsibility for the outdoor adventure training and Parade training of a very large Cadet Unit of some 400 cadets. This was a large and onerous responsibility which he handled with real commitment, calm and ability. He was much respected in this role by the Cadets and fellow Officers of Cadets.

He was held in high esteem by the parents and students of Knox which was often in evidence within the grounds of the School, at sporting and other activities and beyond the School by way of genuinely warm greetings and happy conversations which I personally witnessed on numerous occasions.



John A Turnbull, B.A., M.Litt