

## File note

Agency: Knox Grammar School (Knox)  
 SOA: Mr Adrian Nisbett, Director of Students  
 Date: 10 February 2004

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### Issue:

Information received from Knox Grammar School about Mr Adrian Nisbett, Director of Students.

### Background:

On 26 November 2003 we received a notification of a child abuse allegation against Mr Nisbett (refer C/2003/8367). It was alleged that Mr Nisbett permitted a former Year 10 male student, ASA [REDACTED] to go to his home where it was alleged that Mr Nisbett offered the student cigarette, alcohol and hugged the student.

The complaint was made by Mrs [REDACTED] (the student's mother) to Mr Peter Crawley, the Principal of Knox and the incident was alleged to have occurred in 2002. Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] were separated at the time the allegation was made, and the allegations came to Mrs [REDACTED] via her husband. Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] indicated that they did not want their son involved in the school's investigation of the allegations. The only first hand information about the incident was from Mr Nisbett.

Mr Graeme Wilson, independent investigator was appointed by the school. Mr Wilson conducted an electronically recorded interview with Mr Nisbett. The outcome of the investigation was that child abuse was not-sustained. The school sustained a breach of professional behaviour by Mr Nisbett, who had admitted to inviting and having ASA [REDACTED] at his private residence. (This was with the knowledge of Mrs [REDACTED] which appeared to be a mitigating factor in the investigation)

Mr Crawley, the Principal gave Mr Nisbett a written warning/reprimand about his breach of professional behaviour. Mr Crawley also stated 'I believe that his actions in this particular case were an error of judgement rather than a failure to understand the Legislation.'

I assessed the school's investigation and action taken as 'satisfactory'

### Current position:

Mr Peter Weekes has replaced Mr Crawley as Principal of Knox. At the commencement of the 2004 teaching year, Mr Weekes reviewed staff files at the school and became aware of the above allegation against Mr Nisbett. Mr Weekes became concerned about the allegation due to Mr Nisbett's position in the school as Director of Students.

A discussion has occurred between Mr Martin Gooding, the Director of staff at Knox and Mr Weekes. Mr Gooding informed Mr Weekes that he was aware of a prior matter involving Mr Nisbett and an allegation of 'inappropriate contact with a child'. Mr Weekes passed this information on to Mr Geoff Newcombe at AIS. (This information was not provided in matter C/2003/8367)

On 20 January 2004 Mr Newcombe discussed this 'new' information with me on the telephone. I asked Mr Newcombe if Mr Gooding could document all the information he had about this prior matter and provide a copy to me.

On 10 February 2004 Mr Newcombe hand delivered two 1 x page reports to me. One report by Mr Martin Gooding (dated 22.1.2004) and the second report by Mr John Cameron (dated 28.1.2004) who I believe is the Business Manager at Knox. (see attached reports).

Mr Gooding indicated that in 1986 he was informed by two sources at Knox: the then principal of Knox, Dr Paterson and another staff member, who Mr Gooding cannot now recall, that an incident occurred at Knox involving Mr Nisbett and a student which was **'...connected to, the dark room where one or other or both were developing photographs. The student, I was told, was disturbed by the behaviour of Mr. Nisbett, feeling it entirely inappropriate and sexual in intent.'** At the time of this allegation Mr Nisbett was a boarding house master of Ewan House at Knox.

Mr Cameron, the Business Manager provided information in his report (see attached) about an incident involving a student named ARO [redacted] in Ewan House (it appears that this may be the same student and incident as described by Mr Gooding, above). He also mentions that 'murmurings' existed about Mr Nisbett when Mr Nisbett was the boarding house master. The 'murmurings' were apparently informally (and, it appeared without approval of the then Principal) investigated by the then General Duties Master (an ex-policeman!). It is alleged that the Principal informed the General Duties Master to discontinue his investigation of Mr Nisbett and Mr Nisbett was removed from his duties at Ewan House and given 'a fresh set of duties' at the school.

Other information provided by Mr Geoff Newcombe: The alleged student involved, ARO [redacted], whereabouts are known to the school and he would be available for interview, the General Duties Master, Stuart Pearson's whereabouts is also known to the school. The ex-principal, Dr Paterson is a current principal at another independent school. Mr Newcombe appeared to suggest that it is possible that those persons would cooperate with a school investigation.

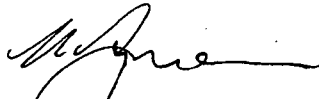
Mr Newcombe also indicated that the school wished to meet with us about this matter. I requested the attached information prior to committing to a meeting or making any arrangements.

### **Recommendations:**

1. I would suggest that sufficient information exists to have the school notify this matter to us as an allegation of child abuse – misconduct that may involve

child abuse. (named child, current employee, a description of behaviour that may constitute child abuse)

2. That we meet with the school and discuss risk assessment and the investigation process, as initially requested by the current principal of Knox, Mr Weekes.
3. That we monitor the school's investigation. (it is likely that they would engage Graeme Wilson to conduct the investigation.)



Kylie Symons  
Principal Investigator

Agree with  
recommendation.  
I would like to  
attend meet with  
you  
A-Barnick  
11/2/04