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GCFSG

Meeting with Gold Coast Family Support Group
27 April 1999

Present: Lloyd Hastings, Melissa, Dorothy Williams, Kerry Carmody, Mary Brackett

Kerry explained why we are here –

Kerry asked what processes had taken place thus far in response to Mrs Welch's allegations.

Lloyd, Dorothy and Melissa relayed the history of the situation. They were most concerned however with recent actions taken by Mrs Welch. Bobbie had been very friendly with Melissa and Dorothy. Bobbie had been a bridesmaid at Melissa's wedding. Recently a parcel was sent to GCFSG with the bridesmaid dress returned and slashed, books that had been given to Bobbie had been demolished and a teddy bear that had been given to her had a knife through it. The box had labeled: Sexual abusers support group

Information was then directed back to the beginning

Mrs Welch who then worked at GCFSG wanted to attend a meeting. This would require someone supporting Bobbie while she was at the meeting. Melissa arranged for the support person to pick Bobbie up from school. He took her to his home and she was there approximately 2 and a half hours. This was normal procedure to take the person to their home.

Marie knew John but Bobbie did not. In retrospect Melissa wondered if this situation had anything to do with Marie's training Bobbie regarding stranger danger and that because John was a stranger to Bobbie that she saw him as a "bad man"

When Marie picked Bobbie up from John's Bobbie asked, "Is he a bad man?"

Marie called Melissa that night - had concerns about John, according to Melissa Marie did not mention sexual molestation.

Melissa even mentioned to Mrs Welch that neither of them had thought how Bobbie might react in terms of her stranger danger training and that in hind sight should not have organised for a man to support her. Melissa suggested that if Marie had further concerns about John that she should talk with Dorothy in the morning.

Marie talked to Dorothy but never instigated a grievance at that stage. She had only mentioned to Dorothy that she did not like John. - She said she wanted a check done on John O'Connor and that she "hated that fellow" Dorothy said that John was a very experienced worker and that clients loved him. Dorothy relayed to Marie that she had checked his references and spoken to a head mistress in South Australia and was given a good reference.

Lloyd mentioned that soon after this, he and his wife travelled with Marie and her husband around the world but that this alleged incident was never mentioned. Lloyd found it odd that it was not as if they really had concerns about this man, that they should have mentioned it to him as this gentleman also supported his disabled son.

John continued to work for GCFSG.

It was not until March '98 – that the first words "sexual abuse" were mentioned. Lloyd advised the Welch's to go to the police. The police interviewed John. Bobbie was

interviewed last year.

An investigation was performed and it was found that there was No case to answer.

Mrs Welch had stated that she did not go to the police initially because she felt that Dorothy had informed him of her allegations. Dorothy stated that at no time did she tell him anything. Medical professionals had checked Bobbie. Not found to be sexually penetrated.

The Welch's and Lloyd and Dorothy attended a mediation session with the justice department early 1999. Melissa did not attend as she felt it was clear that Mrs Welch wanted her to change the information she had documented and Melissa would not comply, as this was not what she remembered.

Mrs Welch attended AGM and made public accusations.

Bobbie was still receiving support by FSG until approximately a year ago.

Bobbie had started at Helensvale.

Mrs Welch stated that as time has gone on, that Bobbie has made more statements about what allegedly occurred. Such as, What was rape? Is that what the bad man did to me.

Bobbie never mentioned this to anyone else but Marie.

GCFSG are concerned about events.

Felt they had done everything they could - considering taking legal action for making false accusations about their organisation. They do not want to take it this far but are concerned that they may have to if Mrs Welch persists.

When Mrs Welch stated to them, her suspicions of sexual abuse, GCFSG stated that at that time, March '98 - it was handled as a grievance. But prior to this no grievance was made or any reference to sexual abuse by their support worker.

In retrospect, they feel that they would not have handled it any differently.

Criminal check was done prior to this.

The support worker came out clean.

Up until a few months ago Bobbie was still going to FSG camps. Noelene her worker was very sick at the camp. GCFSG were accused of pulling worker out. GCFSG telephoned Marie - Marie then called Noelene and asked her if she was told to be sick.

Police told Lloyd that he felt that the family needed help/counselling.

Kerrie asked if Marie was someone they didn't know, would they have reacted differently. Melissa - I don't think so.

Melissa had Bobbie that weekend. Melissa recognised that Marie was very stressed at that time.

Meeting was closed.