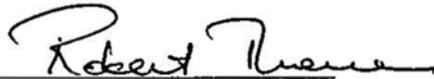


## STATEMENT OF ROBERT THOMAS

1. I provide this statement to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the "Commission") following a request from Commission for a statement dealing with the matters set out in their letter to me of 30 January 2015.
2. I was employed by Knox Grammar School (Knox) over the following periods in the roles set out-
  - a. 1972 – Boarding Master and Physical Education teacher for the Senior School;
  - b. 1974-1976 – Teacher at the Preparatory School;
  - c. 1978-1980 – Teacher at the Preparatory School;
  - d. 1984-2009 – Teacher, Deputy Head of the Preparatory School from 1997-1990, Head of the Preparatory School from 1991 – 2009.
3. I have read the 30 January 2015 letter from the Commission to me and set out below my best recollection of the three matters that I have been asked to address, noting that the passage of time since the occurrence of the matters is substantial.
4. I recall <sup>ARW</sup> as a student of the Preparatory School during the 1990's. I also recall Mr <sup>ARW</sup>'s parents. However, having considered the matter identified in the Commission letter, I have no recollection of the event or of such an allegation or complaint being made against Barrie Stewart by Mr <sup>ARW</sup> and his parents.
5. In relation to the matter relating to <sup>ATJ</sup> and Barrie Stewart, a member of the Preparatory School staff, Mr Robert Spencer, came to my office in 1995 to inform me of a conversation that he had recently had with a former student, Mr <sup>REDACTED</sup>. Mr Spencer told me that he had been contacted by Mr <sup>REDACTED</sup> following a conversation that Mr <sup>REDACTED</sup> had with <sup>ATJ</sup>. Mr <sup>REDACTED</sup> told Mr Spencer that <sup>ATJ</sup> had told him that he was about to commence legal proceedings against Barrie Stewart and Knox as a result of Barrie Stewart allegedly sexually interfering with Mr <sup>ATJ</sup> when he was in Barrie Stewart's car receiving a lift to school. As I recall it this was some time in the early 1970's at a time when I was not employed by Knox.
6. Mr Spencer also told me that Mr <sup>REDACTED</sup> had been advised by <sup>ATJ</sup> that his parents had written a letter to the Headmaster of Knox, Dr Ian Paterson, about the matter and that Dr Paterson had responded to the letter. I have no direct knowledge of this.
7. Following my meeting with Mr Spencer, I immediately made an appointment to see Dr Paterson to advise him of the conversation I had. I reported to Dr Paterson the information that was provided to Mr Spencer by Mr <sup>REDACTED</sup> and I also gave Dr Paterson a copy of a note that Mr Spencer had prepared following his conversation with Mr <sup>REDACTED</sup>. I do not now recall the specific conversation that I had with Dr Paterson, except to say that Dr Paterson informed me that he would deal with the matter. This was to be expected given he was the Headmaster. I had no further involvement with the matter.
8. I had not been advised of the specific conduct that was being alleged against Barrie Stewart, other than to be informed that it was described as sexual interference. I also had no contact from <sup>ATJ</sup> or anyone on his behalf, and the information I received was confined to a conversation with Mr Spencer who had a conversation with Mr <sup>REDACTED</sup>.

9. I referred the information that I had received to Dr Paterson because I regarded it as a matter that clearly needed to be dealt with and handled by the Headmaster. It was not a matter that I regarded as within my authority to deal with. Whilst I cannot now recall what I thought at the time in relation to reporting the matter to the police, this was a decision that was to be made by Dr Paterson.
10. In relation to the matter concerning Craig Treloar referred to in the Commission's letter to me, this occurred at a time whilst I was Deputy Head of the Preparatory School. It was during the second term of the 1988 school year. Mr Michael Jenkinson, the Head of the Preparatory School informed me that Craig Treloar had been seen by another teacher showing what he regarded as an inappropriate video to a number of boarding students. I was informed at the same time that this had been reported to Dr Paterson, the Headmaster. Mr Jenkinson told me that it was quite possible that Craig Treloar would be fired from his role with the School.
11. Some days after the conversation with Mr Jenkinson referred to in paragraph 10 above, Mr Jenkinson told me that a decision had been taken to suspend Craig Treloar from the School for a period of 6 months, following which he could return to duties.
12. I had no direct knowledge of the incident involving Craig Treloar and I had no involvement in any discussions between Mr Jenkinson or Dr Paterson in relation to the disciplinary action of Mr Treloar that was considered or ultimately delivered.



Robert Thomas

Date - 6.2.2015