ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Case study 31: Geelong Grammar School

Statement of Anthony James Inkster

Personal Details

1. Anthony James Inkster
2. 50 Biddlecombe Avenue, Corio, VIC, 3214

Part 1. Involvement with Geelong Grammar School (School)

3. I commenced employment in 1984 at the School at Highton Campus as a teacher and Sports Co-ordinator.
4. In or about mid 1989 I was appointed as Housemaster of the Highton Boarding House.
5. In 1998 I was appointed as Head of Unit at the Timbertop Campus.
6. From 1999 until end of 2002 I was appointed Deputy Head of Timbertop Campus.
7. Between 2003 until 2004 I was appointed the Deputy Head of Glamorgan Campus.
8. In 2005 I was appointed the Head of Middle School. I am presently in this same position but will change roles at the end of this year (2015).
9. I have attempted to set out my recollection to the best of my knowledge having regard to the lapse of time. My recollection is better in some instances than others.

Part 2. Knowledge and understanding of the systems, policies and procedures in place at Geelong Grammar during the period of my association with the School

a)

10. The School now has in place pastoral policies that explain how staff are to respond to allegations or complaints of child sexual abuse.
11. The School’s pastoral policies are also produced in ‘Student friendly’ format.
12. Head of Campus and/or Director of Student Welfare are notified.
13. In reference to the Highton Boarding House (which closed in 1997) I do not recall any such policies or procedures being in place. Whilst systems, policies and procedures dealing specifically with child sexual abuse were not formally in place when I commenced employment at the School, child sexual abuse was always clearly understood to be unacceptable.

b)

14. The School policies give specific directions in relation to how staff are to respond.
15. Staff are required to disclose information if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a sexual offence has been committed.
16. All teachers are Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered, which ensures the appropriate working with children checks have been undertaken.

17. Staff, at interview, are asked key questions to ascertain their suitability to work in a School environment. So too are referees who are also required to give written references.

18. Campus security guards patrol grounds overnight.

19. The School has a Transporting Students policy (annexed).

20. The student diary contains an action plan explaining to students how they should respond if harm is caused.

21. In reference to the Highton Boarding House, the only practice I recall being in place was that the door to a room was to be open if staff were in a room with only one student.

c)

22. Disciplinary action for staff misconduct is managed by the Head of Campus and Principal.

23. It is my recollection that with regard to the Highton Boarding House, disciplinary action for staff misconduct was to be managed by the Head of Campus.

d)

24. Mandatory reporting on-line training modules are to be completed by all teaching staff. A copy of certificates of completion must be sent to the Head of Campus.

25. Staff meeting presentations, in regard to mandatory reporting procedures, are presented by the School's Risk Manager.

26. Teaching staff must also ‘sign off’ that they have read the School's Pastoral Policies (annexed).

27. With regard to the Highton Boarding House, I do not recall any similar training in place.

e)

28. Teachers are mandated to report if we believe a sexual offence has occurred.

29. The School has an Obligation to Protect Policy in place (annexed).

30. Teachers also notify the Head of Campus.

31. Procedures are articulated in School Pastoral Policies.

32. With regard to the Highton Boarding House, I do not recall being informed about what to do in relation to reporting child sexual abuse.

Part 3: in 1989, a student, BIW, allegedly reported to the matron, Catherine Parsons that he had been sexually abused in the Highton Boarding House. These allegations were allegedly explained to Mr Inkster by Mr Robert Bugg and a meeting was convened with the student. The student was subsequently removed from or left the School.
33. In early 2005 Principal Stephen Meek informed me Philippe Trutmann had been arrested and was expected to be charged with sexual offences against students.

34. I recall being upset and in shock. I went home.

35. I also recall that I attended the Corio police station (possibly that same afternoon), for the purpose of providing a statement to police.

36. A copy of the statement provided to the police dated 5 April 2005 is annexed to this statement.

37. Philippe Trutmann was an assistant at the School when I commenced as House Master in mid 1989.

38. I have a recollection that Philippe Trutmann may have also been employed as a plasterer in South Geelong.

39. Philippe Trutmann was not a teacher, but, in exchange for lodging and meals, would undertake boarding house duties at the School.

40. It was usual for School leavers to become assistants for a fixed time, however, Philippe Trutmann was the only assistant I am aware of who stayed for a number of years.

41. To the best of my knowledge and recollection Philippe Trutmann would provide boarding house supervision on weekdays and on weekends.

42. The assistant housing at the School comprised of small bedsitters diagonally opposite and one or two at other locations, all within the confines of the boarding house.

43. I have a recollection that a young boy commenced as a boarder and telephoned his mother informing her that in the night someone had come into his room and was rubbing his back.

44. I recall being called into John (Robert) Bugg's, (then Head of Campus), office and having the allegation explained to me.

45. I do not have any recollection of Cate Hook (now Catherine Parsons) at that meeting but she might have been.

46. I recall being shocked and concerned by the allegation.

47. I refer to my statement made to police in 2005. In relation to the confidentiality assertion the absolute confidentiality to be maintained was not to draw any undue or adverse attention to the student involved.

48. I cannot recall particulars or details of the investigation into the complaint.

49. I recall being informed that the boy spoke to other students about the incident and as such confidentiality was not maintained.

50. I do not recall why the boy spoke to other students about the incident.

51. REDACTED

52. REDACTED
Part 5:

a) knowledge of the above incidents and matters and any action taken at the time; and

b) knowledge of all other incidents, allegations or complaints of child sexual abuse occurring at Geelong Grammar and the responses by him of Geelong Grammar to those incidents, allegations or complaints during his period of association with Geelong Grammar.

55. Phillipe Trutmann was approximately 24 years old and was highly regarded in the School community.

56. Phillipe Trutmann always volunteered to support staff and did his duties without question.

57. Phillipe Trutmann was seen as a “big brother” for the students, and the students regularly used to call on him.

58. Development of student-staff relationships was encouraged by the School.

59. Phillipe Trutmann would give the kids back rubs and scratch their backs. They were referred to as “backrubs”.

60. The kids would say “Trutty” come and give us a “backrub”.

61. The staff, at the time, viewed “backrubs” as harmless physical contact.

62. In my statement dated 5 April 2005, I refer to Phillipe Trutmann giving students “backrubs”, which I say may have occurred on some occasions in bedrooms. I went on to say that sometimes bedroom lights were on and sometimes they were not and that “I never felt there was anything untoward about this”. Although, it was not uncommon for staff to talk to children after lights out while students were still awake it would have been uncommon for staff to enter students’ rooms while students slept.

63. I recall viewing the complaint in relation to back rubbing at night as very serious, however, I have no recollection that at the time I was aware or made aware that the complaint was sexual abuse.

64. Phillipe Trutmann’s parents lived at a farm at • and Phillipe had a bus licence and would take groups of students to the farm.

65. I cannot recall how often excursions would occur or when they started.

66. I have a recollection that other assistants would also accompany Phillipe Trutmann to the EDI.

67. To the best of my recollection there were at least two staff (and on week nights three staff) rostered on duty in the Highton Boarding House. As Housemaster, I would regularly be a fourth staff member on duty.
68. I have a recollection that in or about 1996 two female staff members, one of whom may have been a teacher, were worried about young boys sitting on Phillippe Trutmann's lap at assembly.

69. I recall the two female staff raising their concerns with me.

70. I recall that the concern was then raised directly with Phillippe Trutmann.

71. I cannot recall who discussed the matter with Phillippe Trutmann, however, it might have been Malcolm Powys, then Head of Campus.

72. At that time boarding at the Highton campus was being phased out and the School decided Phillippe Trutmann was no longer required.

73. I have a recollection of feeling uneasy towards Phillippe Trutmann at this time, and raised this directly with Malcolm Powys but (to the best of my knowledge), at that time I had not received a complaint or any evidence that any abuse was occurring.

74. I have no knowledge of any other incidents, allegations or complaints of child sexual abuse occurring at the School other than those matters raised recently by the current Principal and reported in staff meetings. Those matters are in the public domain.

Other Matters

75. I have recently been diagnosed with Parkinsons disease.

76. The disease causes me to shake internally.

77. As a result of the disease, I have some reduced capacity.

78. I am on medications to assist me in managing this disease.

Dated: 14th August 2015

Anthony Inkster