IN THE MATTER OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION

INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

and

CASE STUDY 31: GEELONG GRAMMAR SCHOOL

By letter dated 28 July 2015 the solicitor assisting the Royal Commission sought a statement from Robert John Bugg addressing certain matters set out in an attached schedule.

In response to that request the following statement is provided.

I, Robert John Bugg of REDACTED in the State of Victoria state the following:

1. I am 75 years of age having been born on the REDACT 1939.

2. I married in 1971 and my wife and I have 4 adult children.

3. My tertiary qualifications are Bachelor of Commerce (Melbourne); Diploma of Education (Melbourne); Advanced Certificate of Education (United Kingdom); Masters in Education Administration (UNE). I am a fellow of the Australian College of Educators.

4. I am now retired.

5. In May 1981 I was appointed Master of the Highton campus of Geelong Grammar School ("GGS") in Pigdons Road Waurn Ponds. I remained in that position at that campus for 12 years until May 1993.

6. In the second term of 1993 I was invited to transfer to the Corio campus of GGS and was appointed Co-ordinator of Curriculum & Policy Research for the Headmaster. I remained in that position until the end of 1995 when I ceased my employment with GGS. I took up a position as councillor with the Borough of Queenscliff from 1997 - 2008. I was also on the Board of Barwon Water from 2006 - 2012.

7. The Highton Campus had day students who attended and departed according to school fixed hours. The Highton Campus also had boarders who stayed at the Highton Campus Boarding House. It housed approximately 50 students, both male and female aged between 9 and 14 years.

8. The Highton Campus Boarding House was managed by a Housemaster, a number of teaching staff on rostered duty and a Matron.
9. Whilst at the Highton Campus, my role was essentially to be in charge of the entire Highton Campus. This meant I was responsible for the day to day administration and management of the Highton Campus and I reported directly to the then Senior School Headmaster, Mr John Lewis. Matters such as finance, catering and major projects were all managed through the Corio Campus of GGS.

10. During the period 1981-1993, there were 3 Boarding House Masters, being Roger Morton, Christopher Noble and Tony Inkster. Whilst at the Highton Campus between 1989 to 1993, my deputy Master was Mr Paul CLARIDGE\(^1\). He reported to me.

MATTERS SPECIFICALLY RAISED IN THE SCHEDULE, NUMBERED 2 -6.

MY KNOWLEDGE OF SYSTEMS, POLICIES & PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO RESPOND TO ALLEGATIONS OR COMPLAINTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MADE AT GGS.

11. I am not aware of any written policy or procedure for the training of staff in response to allegations or complaints of child sexual abuse at GGS. However in terms of a system or systems in place, there was a strong culture within GGS, whereby the care, welfare and personal safety of its students was paramount. This overarching principle was emphasised to staff, commencing with the employment selection process. The day to day running of the campus was largely based on trust amongst staff and students.

12. At the Highton Campus there were regular (as in daily, before 9.00am) staff meetings to ensure all matters of interest or concern would be voiced and actioned. This forum acted as a vehicle for matters concerning student welfare to be addressed. Any matters of concern raised would be noted in writing by me or by a staff member.

13. In addition we also held weekly meetings with senior staff to discuss any matters of concern. For example I held weekly meetings with my deputy, the head of the primary school and the house master.

14. Staff were encouraged to contact or meet with me to discuss any issues they felt uncomfortable raising in the staff meetings.

15. In addition to the structured meetings described above, I was involved in numerous informal conversations with staff whereby issues of concern were discussed.

16. Any complaints made to me or brought to my attention would to the best of my ability, be attended to and dealt with on the same day. In most instances complaints were quickly resolved.

17. If a complaint or allegation was made to me or brought to my attention, which I considered to be more serious in nature, I would raise it with the headmaster either formally or informally.

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\(^1\) Mr Claridge had arrived at the Highton Campus in 1986
and, depending on its nature and seriousness, follow it up with a memo. This usually happened after discussion with my senior staff.

MY KNOWLEDGE OF SYSTEMS, POLICIES & PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE.

18. I am not aware of any written policy or procedure for staff training in matters of the prevention or reduction in risk of child sexual abuse at GGS.

19. GGS required the care and welfare of the children/students to be of paramount importance. The Highton Campus followed and applied this philosophy in our daily operation. We were generally guided by the notion that when students were in our care and control, the staff would in effect act “in loco parentis”. Such an approach was designed to ensure that staff at GGS would act as diligent parents would act. This philosophy underpinned the entire culture of GGS which was well known amongst staff.

20. The daily and weekly staff meetings were designed to ensure that matters of concern were raised and dealt with expeditiously.

21. The GGS philosophy referred to above, was constantly emphasised and reinforced at our regular daily and weekly staff meetings.

22. The aim of GGS was to have staff who were of a good character; who would work conscientiously and to a high standard; and who would have the interests of the student as their main focus.

MY KNOWLEDGE OF SYSTEMS, POLICIES & PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO TAKE DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR STAFF MISCONDUCT

23. In the rare instances when staff misconduct was observed or alleged to have occurred, the process involved was for either me of Mr Lewis to deal directly with that staff member, in consultation with another teacher (e.g. the head of primary school or the house master) so as to reach an appropriate and satisfactory outcome.

MY KNOWLEDGE OF SYSTEMS, POLICIES & PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO ENSURE STAFF TRAINING TOOK PLACE ON MATTERS CONCERNING CHILD SAFETY.

24. I am not aware of any written policy or procedure for staff training in matters of child safety.

25. Child (student) safety was dealt with via a verbal communication system existing within campus. The Matron was a trained nurse and dealt with health and ancillary issues regarding the students.
MY KNOWLEDGE OF SYSTEMS, POLICIES & PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO REPORT ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

26. Whilst there was no written policy or procedure in place regarding the reporting of such allegations, it was well understood by me and other staff members that there existed a duty and obligation to report any allegation of sexual abuse to the relevant authorities.

27. At no time during my tenure at either Highton nor Corio did the occasion arise to report to the relevant authorities any allegation of child sexual abuse.

ALLEGATION AGAINST MR BLS

28. Mr BLS commenced his employment at Highton Campus in 1982.

29. As part of that employment he was offered board and lodging for the 1982 school year by way of a self contained flat on school grounds. The school had a number of self contained flats for use by permanent staff. Staff were provided those flats primarily in order for them to supervise the boarding community at night and in the morning.

30. I have viewed the memo dated 6 July 1982 referred to in paragraph 3 of the Commission’s letter to me. I confirm that it was composed and sent by me to the headmaster Mr John Lewis on or about the 6th July 1982.

31. Mr BLS was a physical education teacher aged in his 20’s as I recall.

32. As best I can recall this memo dated 6 July 1982 was written after considerable discussion with Mrs Thompson, the year 9 co-ordinator, and Mr Roger Morton, the Housemaster, both of whom had considerable experience at the school.

33. As best I can recall, Mr BLS was observed to have been somewhat flattered by the attention some year 9 female students showed him and we believed that such response / reaction was inappropriate for a staff member. The comment in the memo: “I am concerned at his maturity with many of the children, particularly the older girls” was based on that observation.

34. I have no knowledge of the allegation that he repeatedly took a student named BLI off campus and sexually abused her. I do remember a student named BLI but at no stage was any item of concern regarding her, brought to my attention. I have no knowledge nor recollection of either Mr Herbert, Mr Lewis or any other person ever raising the matter with me. I would like to think that I would remember such an allegation of a teacher “trying to be alone” with a student, as such a claim would give cause for concern.

35. The memo dated 6 July 1982 is illustrative of the type of action taken by me once matters of concern were brought to my attention or observed by me.
36. Pursuant to the recommendation contained within my memo, I recall shortly after my memo was received (circa mid July 1982) Mr BLS left the school.

37. BIW was a student at Highton Campus in 1989.

38. I have no knowledge of any report by BIW to the Matron Ms Parsons of having been sexually abused in the Highton Boarding House.

39. I have no knowledge nor recollection of Mr Claridge informing me of any incident of sexual abuse involving BIW. Nor do I have any knowledge or recollection of any meeting having taken place with Mr Claridge and the student. Given the significance of the claim I would remember the complaint and the meeting if they’d occurred.

40. I have no recollection of BIW being removed from the school. I am unaware of the circumstances of his removal and by whom he was removed.

41. I first learned about this 1989 incident in 2005.

PHILIPPE TRUTMANN

42. REDACTED

43. 

44. There were a number of Student Assistants who worked in the Highton Boarding House. This role was primarily advertised to students from Deakin University as the position provided them with a flat within the boarding house, food and a modest remuneration.

45. The role of the Student Assistants was to support the children in the boarding house by assisting them wake up in the morning, get showered, have breakfast and then attend school. Then on return of the children from school the student assistants helped them with their afternoon routine of homework, dinner and the general running of the boarding house.

46. Philippe Trutmann was employed as a Student Assistant from mid to late 1980’s. He was a former student of GGS and as far as I recall came to work at the Highton Campus on recommendation from the Corio Campus. He maintained this position after I left the campus in 1993. He was at no stage under my direct supervision whilst I was at Highton Campus.

47. I do not recall hearing of any negative reports regarding Philippe Trutmann nor any suggestions of sexual impropriety by him. The first I learned of the allegations involving sexual abuse by him was in April 2005 when I read a newspaper article.
KNOWLEDGE OF ANY OTHER MATTERS

48. I have no personal knowledge or recollection of any other incidents or matters regarding sexual abuse of children at GGS. I became aware, through others, of allegations of sexual abuse having occurred at the Corio campus. I had no direct knowledge of these matters.

Dated: 14 August 2015

Robert John Bugg