

Supplementary Statement of Amy Frances Bridson

Name Amy Frances Bridson
Address an address known to the Royal Commission
Occupation School Counsellor
Date 27th October 2016

1. I refer to my earlier Statement dated 17 October 2016.
2. I have perused the Statements of EAL and EAM dated 6 October 2016. There are certain paragraphs in those Statements that I wish to respond to and I do so below.

Response to Statement of EAL

3. In relation to paragraph 8 it is not the policy of Shalom Christian College (**SCC**) for a houseparent to collect a student and just take them back to the school without the parents accompanying that student and being given an orientation around the school.
4. It has been the normal practice for some time for students who arrive from out of town, to attend the school with their parents on the first day. The parents are shown around the school facilities and they are able to sit in on the classes during the first day and to dine with their child in the school dining room.
5. I cannot explain why in this case CLF and her parents were not brought to the school together and shown around as is the normal case.
6. In relation to paragraph 17, I cannot recall the school being in the condition that EAL describes. I had been working at the school for some 6 years by this stage and I had never seen it in the condition to which EAL refers. The grounds were always well maintained and the grass was never overgrown to hip height as described. There may have been some graffiti on walls from time to time but that was never prevalent. I also do not recall observing drains having rubbish floating in them.
7. On the morning of 20 March 2006 severe Tropical Cyclone Larry crossed the tropical North Queensland coast near Innisfail. Even though Innisfail is approximately 260 kilometres north of Townsville the area where SCC is located was affected by storm damage. I recall there being significant tree damage and leaf matter strewn across the grounds. It may well have been that the maintenance staff were still in the process of cleaning up the grounds when EAL was present on or about 2 April 2006.
8. Annexed to my Statement and marked "**AFB1**" is a bundle of photographs of the school and the surrounding area which were taken during 2006. The photographs give an indication of the state of the buildings and the grounds at that time.
9. In relation to paragraph 19 it is not correct to say that the school never called the Police to report the incident involving CLF. As stated in paragraph 83 of my earlier Statement, as was the normal practice the Principal reported this matter to the Police as recorded in my Case Management Notes (Document **SCC.006.001.028**). When I met with CLF on 29 March 2006 at 11.00am she disclosed details indicating that the sexual relationship was not consensual and she gave permission for me to share my notes with the Principal and with the Police. As my notes further record the Police were contacted by the Principal, Mr Chris Shirley and arrangements were made to accompany CLF to the Townsville Police Station the following day. I note in Mr Shirley's Statement that he says in paragraph 47 that he contacted Child Safety and JAB (which is the Juvenile Aid Bureau).
10. My Case Management Notes reveal that on 30 March 2006 the appointment I arranged with JAB for 1.00pm was cancelled at CLF's parents' request.

11. In relation to paragraph 21 I disagree that there was no access to counselling or offer of a psychologist. I was the school counsellor at that time and I had been conferring with CLF since 27 March 2006 as my Case Management Notes reveal together with my other notes referred to in paragraphs 77, 79 and 82 of my earlier Statement. Indeed, as set out above at the meeting on 29 March 2006 CLF disclosed the details of the incident to me and I was assisting her with that including arranging for the meeting with the Police to take place the next day.
12. I also offered support to CLF's parents. The second page of my Case Management Notes (document **SCC.006.001.028_01**) reveal that on 5 April 2006, I met with CLF's parents and discussed with them referral to appropriate sexual assault support services for counselling support for CLF and other family members. I also discussed referral to family therapy services. It was at that meeting that CLF's parents informed me that they were unhappy with the Police involvement.
13. In relation to paragraph 26 reference is made to some of the boys involved in the alleged incident being older males who were doing apprenticeships in town but were staying at Shalom. This was not the case and I can confirm that all of the boys involved in the incident were students attending SCC.
14. To my knowledge SCC has never provided boarding to apprentices and I don't believe there is funding available for such arrangements. At SCC we had a program at that time for senior students that allowed them to undertake vocational education placements. The program was called the "Step Out" program. This was a 13 week course and DFJ, DFK and DFL were participating in that course through the local TAFE at the time. Components of the course contained industry placement.
15. This course was being conducted in conjunction with another high school in Townsville and the course was transferrable for any student who wished to undertake an apprenticeship after leaving school. The course was introduced to senior students as a result of skills shortages in the construction industry at the time.
16. In relation to paragraph 28 I assume CLF is referring to me when she said she spoke with the "school guidance counsellor at some point...". As my Case Management Notes reveal together with the other notes referred to in my earlier Statement, CLF and I had been discussing various matters since 27 March 2006, such as her concerns with her body image and rumours that were allegedly circulating around the school concerning herself and other boys which she denied as being true.
17. In relation to paragraph 33 I believe that the discussion EAL is referring to was the one had with me on 5 April 2006 which I have dealt with in my Case Management Notes. I did not have any other discussion with EAL and EAM other than that referred to in my notes.

Response to Statement of EAM

18. In relation to paragraph 7 the matters referred to are similar to those set out in paragraph 8 of EAL's Statement. I repeat and rely on my response set out in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 above.
19. In relation to paragraph 13 my Case Management Notes reveal that CLF disclosed to Chris Adebahr (Head of Boarding) and Gwen Johnson (House Parent) on 28 March 2006 details of the sexual relationship with male students at the school and the following day during my meeting with CLF she disclosed details to me indicating that the sexual relationship was not consensual. As my notes reveal the Police were contacted by the Principal, Mr Chris Shirley. The reason the Police were not notified sooner was because CLF had not told anybody from the school about this incident until 28 March 2006.
20. In relation to paragraph 15 I have dealt with the condition of the school and its surrounds in paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 above. I disagree that it was a "pigsty" and I do not recall there being broken windows, barred windows and rubbish everywhere.

21. In relation to paragraph 21 offers of pastoral support or counselling were in fact made to EAM and EAL. In this regard I repeat and rely upon the matters set out in the record of my discussion with them on 5 April 2006 as set out in the second page of my Case Management Notes.
22. In relation to paragraph 28 I repeat and rely upon the matters set out in both my Case Management Notes together with the other notes of the meetings I had with CLF referred to in my earlier Statement.
23. In relation to paragraph 48 it was the case that the Police were notified as soon as CLF disclosed that the sexual relationship was not consensual.
24. In relation to paragraph 49 I refer to the Record of Telephone Interview (Document **SCC.006.001.035**) between myself and Rose Gordon of the Sexual Health Service on 29 March 2006. Rose advised me that a Doctor from the Sexual Health Service would do a full examination that day but that we would need to contact the Police first. I cannot recall whether the examination took place, however my notes appear to indicate that there may have been a protocol that needed to be followed up by police before the examination could occur.
25. My understanding at the time was that the police would arrange a medical examination after interviewing CLF on 30 March 2006. However this interview was cancelled at the request of CLF's father. Upon reviewing the statements of CLF's parents it would appear by the time CLF was eventually interviewed by police too much time had passed for a medical examination to assist them in their investigation.
26. In relation to paragraph 50 it was the case that the matter was reported to the Police and that both CLF and her parents were offered support.
27. In relation to the allegation in paragraph 50 that we tried to get the parents not to press charges I disagree with that having regard to the fact that my Case Management Notes reveal that on 29 March 2006 a discussion was had with CLF in relation to likely Police procedures and counselling was given regarding making a complaint to the Police. It was during that discussion that CLF informed me that she wished to make a complaint and I then made arrangements for CLF to attend the Townsville Police Station the next day. That meeting with the Police was then cancelled at her parents' request.

Child Protection Form dated 1 March 2006

28. I have perused the Child Protection Form dated 1 March 2006 and the report that is attached to it, more particularly referred to in tab 12 of the Tender Bundle produced by the Royal Commission.
29. This incident was not brought to my attention at the time and I only became aware of it when preparing my Supplementary Statement.
30. As set out in paragraph 47 of my earlier Statement any suggestion of sexual abuse or child protection issues are reported direct to the Principal.

Signed: 

Date: 27/10/16

Witness: 