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11-Jun-2013 14:20 REDACTED

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Name: AYLING, Geoff

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Subject:
Information:

INFORMATION REPORT - HISTORIC PAEDOPHILIA ACTIVITY - HUTCHINS SCHOOL 1963.

The attached is an e-mail received from the informant:-
(Note - Relates to 1963 and unlikely to be of any use now)

Sgt REDACTE

Tasmania Police
Sorell Police Station
Tasmania.

I now need to present a matter to you with a request that you advise me of any responsibility I have to report it formally. I must apologise for putting this on you but my old mates who I would have otherwise called upon (rifle shooters REDACTED) are no longer in the job. I need advice on this matter because it can get out of hand and unnecessarily hurt a lot of people.

You may remember when I was a member of the Sandford Rifle Club that I was teaching at The Hutchins School, i.e. from 1962-6. In those years there were always a few characters around who as teachers in schools would from a position of trust take advantage of the kids, sexually. The law was such that if anyone observed this and said one word, then there was a good risk of being sued for defamation, etc. The most that ever happened was a scandal in a school and kids being recognized all of their lives as having somehow participated in activities that led to a teacher being dismissed. So we said nothing and did our best to forget, mostly for the benefit of the victimized kids.

In the term holidays of 1963 the Headmaster of The Hutchins School visited my home in REDACTED REDACTED and appointed me as the new Master-in-Charge Chemistry. I was to replace the Chemistry Master, Mr Spencer George, who had been dismissed for committing sexual acts over a period of time upon a student in the new Hutchins Boarding House in Nelson Road, Sandy Bay. I became aware of what happened when Mr Cromwell Wood (Biology Master) and Vernon Osborne (Physics Master) were joking about the excuse given by George to justify his actions when apprehended. George was reputed to have claimed to have been teaching three-dimensional geometry to a student alone in his dormitory room.

A year later, Mr AOC, a General Science Master was dismissed for unspecified sexual acts performed on boys. I had to take over his classes and it was apparent that AOC was a sick man. His students' class notebooks contained abnormally graphic detail on the structure of male sexual organs and the act of sexual intercourse. These details were not at that time in the syllabus.

Several months later I unintentionally overheard a conversation between AOC and the Headmaster, David Lawrence. The conversation was held in the present-day residence attached to the Junior School in Nelson Road. I was waiting in the next room before being admitted on an appointment to discuss a matter with the Headmaster. When I arrived AOC was already there in discussion with David Lawrence. There was no door to keep their conversation private because during construction of the new school building his temporary office had been set up in the hallway of the residence.

AOC [redacted] was asking David Lawrence to give him back his job as a Master. AO [redacted] was talking to David as a friend with a common interest in young boys. AOC [redacted] reminded him that he had given him his job because they were friends with this common interest. But David repeatedly replied that he was unable to do this because the School Board and parents all knew of AO [redacted]'s indiscretion and that if reinstated, would expose David to the same scrutiny by everyone.

When it became clear what I had overheard, the risks to me were clear and I quietly left the residence. AOC [redacted] did not regain his position at the School and worked thereafter in Hobart as a salesman in the scientific field.

I left The Hutchins School in May 1966 to take up a position at Australian Oil Refining, Kurnell in NSW. I returned to Tasmania in 1968 to take up a position as a forensic scientist, working with Tasmania Police and the Tasmanian Department of Health Services.

I later learned through hearsay that my position as Master-in-Charge, Chemistry, had been given to a paedophile, who had upon exposure left to take up another teaching position at a school in West Australia. I also learned from hearsay that sometime in the 1970s or 1980s David Lawrence himself had been dismissed as Headmaster upon being exposed as a paedophile. He returned to live in the UK where according to hearsay, he took his life.

What concerns me is that there are enquiries underway in other States in which specific institutions are being investigated, i.e. as having contributed to the incidence of paedophilia. The problem of paedophilia at The Hutchins School was due entirely to the presence of a person in a position of responsibility, known to paedophiles, who were given employment in preference to other candidates. At The Hutchins School there was such resentment expressed against paedophilic behaviour that a sensible attitude in the community quickly led to a return to a proper sense of behaviour.

I am not aware of any requirement for a report of such behaviour in Tasmania to be given to the enquiry recently commenced by the Commonwealth Government. The time factor may also limit the value of such evidence.

I would hope that the events which occurred at The Hutchins School, which recovered well, will be treated as being non-institutional. That is, paedophilia is not linked to the Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion, any particular school or Boy Scout troop, but was in this instance, linked to the unfortunate employment of a paedophile who subsequently attracted further paedophiles to his institution.

If the initial paedophile is a person with responsibility for employing staff, then the risk of exposure of children is greatly increased.

RED [redacted], I would be much obliged if you would advise me of any moral or legal obligation for this matter to be reported to any authority. I have heard that people are being asked to report such instances even years later, but I wonder if 50 years later is too long.

Please feel free to show this letter to any appropriately responsible person.

Best regards

Geoff Ayling AM MSc C Chem MRACI Regd Teacher (Tas, NSW), QTS (UK)

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Result Type: Filed for intelligence purposes only

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Name:

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