

**YMCA****Caringbah Team De-Brief 6 March 2013****Summary**

To follow up from the sentencing of Jonathon Lord, the organisation, in partnership with the Australian Childhood Foundation and Craig Hemsworth, invited Craig to facilitate a team discussion to continue the support of the Caringbah team through this difficult time.

Below is an outline of the responses the YMCA provided to the team in response to critical questions about the process and was an opportunity for the YMCA to hear the Caringbah team's valuable feedback in the management of this critical incident.

In our inexperience with managing critical incidents, the YMCA acknowledges that in the height of the John Lord case, our process and responses were not always considerate of our team on site and the organisation has had some confronting learning's from this experience. We are committed to working with the Caringbah team to rectify this, take the learning's, and implement for thoughtful structures and processes for the future to ensure our staff feel supported.

**Session Notes**

The YMCA management team responded to the Caringbah team's questions provided to Craig Hemsworth and the YMCA Management team on the morning of the session.

In response to this, the YMCA Management team provided much needed clarity:

- The critical incident and the YMCA's response was one that the YMCA had no prior experience in managing. Taking this into account, many of the Y's decisions and processes were influenced or enforced by external sources, such as the detective JIRT team and media consultants who were advising the organisation through the process.
- Upon reflection and through experience, the YMCA Management team has been confronted with some extremely important learning's, specifically in relation to the level of support and communication provided to the Caringbah team:
  - Timelines for when and how we had contact and communication with the team should have been prioritised. The Y acknowledges that we should have:
    - Had in person briefings with the Caringbah team prior to releasing communication documents to parents and media
    - Explained what our communications documents meant for the Caringbah team and what the message was for the community
    - Stationed more resources and managers at each of the Caringbah BAASC sites to support the team when faced with questions
    - Provided transparent timelines for our responses to the Caringbah team in relation to follow up from previous debrief meetings
    - Provided feedback on the items raised and discussed at the Management debriefing sessions
    - Implemented and offered Crisis management training for the Caringbah team
  - Had more foresight and communication in relation to Catharine Clements dismissal:
    - The Y Management team disclosed that the timing of Catharine's dismissal was not considerate of the incident progression
    - Was not thoughtful of the level of support and comfort she was providing to the team
    - Was not in relation to the incident at all
    - Was in relation to her role and outcomes to meet critical deadlines with regards to the accreditation process with ACF that were not being met
    - The Y Management team was not aware of the impactful and important role Catharine had adopted in supporting the team
    - The Y Management team acknowledges more transparency in this process and consultation with the Caringbah team with regards to Catharine and her role could have provided clarity on the perception of her dismissal
  - The Y Management team enforcing the Confidentiality agreement:

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- Was conducted on advice that we were required to ensure confidentiality from the detective team and JIRT
- The intent was to ensure the protection of the children affected in the incident and to the integrity of any proceeding court hearings
- The JIRT emphasised the need to protect the process for prosecution with the fear that discussion or sharing of allegation information among the Caringbah team may damage or alter the course of the court proceedings and validity of information
- The JIRT did not disclose any information to the Y Management team about what children or families were affected in order to protect the children and the integrity of the process
- The Y management team were instructed by the JIRT not to release any information about who the incidents involved, including John Lord himself, the affected children or families
- The intent from the Y Management team was never to isolate or smother conversations among Caringbah team members to grieve, support each other and seek counsel from each other
- A main learning point for the Y Management team, as guided by Craig Hemsworth, is that we do not have to follow the direction provided from the detective JIRT team and we can build a partnership to work with them to ensure all people, including our staff are considered through the process
- The Y Management team provided the opportunity for employees to use the YMCA EAP program:
  - The Y Management team acknowledges we should have asked the Caringbah team what methods of support would assist them the most
  - Provided more opportunity for team debriefing and counselling sessions
  - Allowed forums and safe places for the team to talk with each other and support one another
  - Invited the team to attend the sentencing hearing
- Enforcing Child Protection Policy:
  - The Caringbah team should have been briefed with regards to the language used in communications around "zero tolerance" to policy breach
  - The Y Management team was focused on restoring trust in the community and our commitment to protecting children in our care, however we should have also explained that the Y Caringbah team was doing a fantastic job, that they were not seen as criminals and that they need not fear this message
  - All YMCA Child Protection Policies and Procedures are still currently under review as part of the ACF accreditation process

**Key Learning's for the YMCA**

Guided by the leadership of Jacqui Barnat, the team will come together and/or collate a table of key learning's for the YMCA Management team to use to improve its systems and process for critical response management, specifically from the perspective of our employees.

Once collated, two nominated representatives of the Caringbah team will be asked to present this feedback as part of the critical analysis to be conducted by ACF.

**Next Steps**

- Phillip Hare, CEO of YMCA NSW has also committed to meeting with the Caringbah team in the coming weeks to discuss and reinforce the messages outlined above.
  - Date for meeting with Phillip Hare and Caringbah team:
- The YMCA NSW is committed to restoring the relationship with the team at Caringbah through providing a critical analysis of the incident and how it was managed. Craig Hemsworth and the team at ACF will be conducting this as a third party and we will be asking for representatives from the Caringbah team to provide feedback in relation to your experiences. The overall aim of this critical analysis is to learn from this

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experience, so that, if faced with a similar incident, we can better manage the process and ensure we are supportive of all parties, including our valued employees.

- o Dates for the commencement of the critical analysis are: