



THE COUNCIL OF KNOX GRAMMAR SCHOOL

19 March 2015

Mr Gerard Henderson

By email: gerard.henderson@thesydneyinstitute.com.au

Dear Mr Henderson

Email sent on 11 March 2015 to Dr Simon Longstaff

I refer to your email sent on 11 March 2015 to Dr Simon Longstaff, a member of the Knox Grammar School Council (the **Council**), a copy of which has been forwarded to me.

I am Chairman of the Council. As Chairman, it is appropriate that I respond to the matters you raise in your email involving Knox Grammar School (**Knox**). I have indicated this to Dr Longstaff and asked that he not respond in circumstances where it is my responsibility, in my capacity as Chairman, to do so.

I have set out your questions below, under which I have provided my responses. As you will see from my responses, the ethical issues you have raised are based on assumptions that are not supported by the facts. The facts described below detail Knox's conduct since 2004 and indicate that Knox has acted in an appropriate and ethical manner having regard to the information available to it and the advice it was given by the relevant authorities.

1. In view of the evidence which suggests that the authorities at Knox Grammar School were aware of occasions of sexual assault by teachers on under-age youths and boys at least as early as 2004, was it ethical for Knox Grammar School Council not to make a full disclosure at or around this time?

1.1 In 2004 Knox made a full disclosure to the NSW Ombudsman (the **Ombudsman**) in accordance with the information that was known to it at that time.

1.2 In 2003 Mr Peter Crawley, the then Headmaster of Knox, received a complaint of inappropriate conduct from a former student in relation to Mr Adrian Nisbett, the then Director of Students. Mr Crawley consulted with the Association of Independent Schools (the **AIS**) and appointed Mr Grahame Wilson, an independent and highly qualified investigator, to investigate the complaint and provide a report (the **First Wilson Report**). In opening submissions in the Royal Commission's Public Hearing, Mr David Lloyd, Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission, informed the Royal Commission that:

... Knox conducted the investigation into the allegations under the supervision of the Ombudsman as was permitted by the Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW) section 25E'.¹

1.3 Upon conclusion of the investigation, Mr Crawley notified the Ombudsman of the inappropriate conduct and the outcome of the investigation, including furnishing the Ombudsman with a copy of the First Wilson Report.

¹ Lines 5 – 8 on page 11685 of the transcript of the Public Hearing of the Royal Commission.

- 1.4 The Ombudsman reviewed the notification and, by letter dated 8 January 2004, informed Knox of the Ombudsman's determination, stating:

... I was impressed by the timeliness of the school's investigation, actions and handling of this matter. I do not require the school to take any further action.

- 1.5 The current Headmaster, Mr John Weeks commenced in the role of Headmaster in January 2004. In a statement dated 6 February 2015 by Mr Weeks tendered in evidence to the Royal Commission (the **Weeks' Statement**), Mr Weeks said that on commencement at Knox he reviewed the First Wilson Report and, upon doing so, became 'increasingly alarmed' and considered that there were 'many questions unanswered'.²

- 1.6 In the Weeks' Statement, Mr Weeks states that he informed Mr Grahame Mapp, the then Chairman of the Council, of the Ombudsman's determination (as conveyed in letter dated 8 January 2004) and together they and Mr Martin Gooding met with Messrs Terrence Chapman and Geoff Newcombe, Executive Director and Director respectively of the AIS, to discuss re-opening the investigation. Messrs Weeks, Gooding and Newcombe subsequently met with the Ombudsman to discuss investigating Mr Nisbett further and as a result, Knox appointed Mr Wilson to conduct a further investigation. Following his further investigation, Mr Wilson produced a further report (the **Second Wilson Report**). Upon receipt of the Second Wilson Report, Knox as part of its further notification to the Ombudsman, provided a copy of the Second Wilson Report to the Ombudsman.

- 1.7 By letter dated 19 July 2004 from the Ombudsman (under the signature of Ms Kylie Symons, Principal Investigator), the Ombudsman informed Knox of its determination pursuant to the further notification, stating:

... After reviewing the information you have provided, I am satisfied that this matter was handled appropriately and do not require Knox Grammar School (the school) to take further action in relation to this allegation at this time.

- 1.8 Following further correspondence with the Ombudsman, by letter dated 1 October 2004 from the Ombudsman (under the signature of Ms Sue Phelan, Acting Principal Investigator), the Ombudsman informed Knox:

No further action is required of Knox Grammar School in relation to this matter, and I will now proceed to close the Ombudsman's child protection file.

- 1.9 Knox also notified the Commission for Children and Young People of Mr Nisbett's conduct. In the Weeks' Statement, Mr Weeks states:

... In my notification Mr Nisbett was classified as Category 1 which would prevent [Mr Nisbett] gaining employment with children if a Working with Children Check was undertaken.³

I explained that I classified him in this way for:

² Paragraph 196 of the Statement dated 6 February 2015 of John William Weeks.

³ Paragraph 215 of the Statement dated 6 February 2015 of John William Weeks.

... inappropriate behavior which constituted grooming in the sexual abuse context and that he failed to meet the professional standards expected of him as an employee of Knox Grammar School.⁴

1.10 The father of the survivor who was the subject of the First Wilson Report and one of the subjects of the Second Wilson report informed Mr Weeks that he had reported the matter to the NSW Police. The survivor also reported that his mother had reported the matter to the police.

1.11 In opening submissions in the Royal Commission's Public Hearing, Mr Lloyd informed the Royal Commission that Mr Wilson:

... conducted his investigation on behalf of the school under the oversight of the Ombudsman, as was permitted under section 25E of the Act.⁵

1.12 Mr Lloyd further submitted:

Mr Wilson's report was sent to the Ombudsman by Knox.⁶

On 7 June 2004, the Ombudsman was informed by Mr Weeks, the current headmaster of Knox, that he proposed to accept the preliminary findings of Mr Wilson as the school's findings, and that Mr Nisbett would leave Knox's employment on 18 June 2004. Mr Weeks said that he would ensure that the matters (sic) was reported to the Commissioner for Children and Young People, now the Office of the Children's Guardian, and that was done. No mention was made of the NSW Police being notified. It appears that there is no evidence that Knox did notify the police. The Ombudsman's office did not pursue Knox about whether it had notified the police and did not make any such report itself. The Ombudsman's Office has accepted that there was a deficiency in the investigation in that a referral to the police was not pursued in circumstances where there was a finding of criminal activity.⁷

1.13 As is evident, from the matters set out above, in 2004 Knox, upon its own volition, conducted a further investigation into Mr Nisbett's conduct and notified the Ombudsman in circumstances where the Headmaster in consultation with others, including the then Chairman of the Council, were not satisfied that the First Wilson Report disclosed the full extent of Mr Nisbett's conduct. In taking this action, Knox made a full disclosure to the Ombudsman and relied on the Ombudsman's expertise and advice as to whether appropriate action was being taken in circumstances where the investigation was being conducted under the oversight of the Ombudsman.

1.14 In about 2005/2006, Mr Weeks met with another survivor of child sexual abuse. Mr Weeks encouraged this person to report the matter to the police, which the survivor eventually did, and the police took action.⁸

1.15 Mr Weeks gave evidence at the Royal Commission's Public Hearing that, after being informed that in 1988 Mr Craig Treloar, a preparatory teacher in his role as Housemaster in the senior school, had shown a student a pornographic video, in 2007 he sought guidance from the AIS

⁴ Paragraph 216 of the Statement dated 6 February 2015 of John William Weeks.

⁵ Lines 22 - 24 on page 11685 of the transcript of the Public Hearing of the Royal Commission.

⁶ Line 47 on page 11685 of the transcript of the Public Hearing of the Royal Commission.

⁷ Lines 1 - 16 on page 11686 of the transcript of the Public Hearing of the Royal Commission.

⁸ Paragraph 156 of the Statement dated 6 February 2015 of John William Weeks.

and, with Mr Wilson sought advice from the Ombudsman.⁹ Documents tendered in evidence record the meeting between Messrs Weeks and Wilson and a representative of the Ombudsman and note the discussion in relation to Mr Treloar.¹⁰

1.16 Following the meeting with the Ombudsman, Messrs Weeks and Wilson sought a meeting with Insp. Elizabeth Cullen of the Child Protection and Sex Crimes Squad of the NSW Police.¹¹ I am informed that Messrs Weeks and Wilson, in addition to other matters, informed Insp. Cullen of Mr Treloar's conduct and sought her guidance as to the action to be taken. Mr Weeks gave evidence at the Royal Commission's Public Hearing to this effect both orally¹² and in the Weeks' Statement.¹³ In a statement dated 27 February 2015 tendered in evidence in the Royal Commission's Public Hearing, Insp. Cullen stated that she did not have a recollection of being provided with information relating to any teacher other than Mr Nisbett and did not make a file note of any discussion about other teachers, as was her usual practice.¹⁴

1.17 However, in her statement, Insp. Cullen states:

At the conclusion of the meeting with Mr Weeks, I do not recall the words I used but I advised him that police would be very keen to speak with the victim of the alleged abuse by Mr Nisbett and I encouraged Mr Weeks to pass this information on to him. I said that I would review police holdings in relation to Mr Nisbett and let him know as sometimes victims of sexual assault can be encouraged to report their abuse to police if they know that someone else has already. I told him that, without a victim complaint, this information would be recorded in an intelligence report.¹⁵

1.18 Unlike the victim who was the subject of the First Wilson Report and whose identity was known, Dr Ian Paterson (a former Headmaster of Knox) failed to record the name of the victim who reported to Mr Stuart Pearson, the then General Duties Master, that he had been shown a pornographic video.¹⁶ The identity of the victim was not known to Mr Weeks nor discoverable when the 1988 conduct came to the attention of Mr Weeks and Mr Weeks was seeking advice and guidance from the Ombudsman and the police in 2007.

1.19 Mr Treloar was subsequently charged with criminal offences when a survivor of sexual abuse made a report to the police about the offences committed against him. Other survivors of sexual abuse also reported to the police offences committed against them by Mr Treloar.

2. In view of the fact that Knox Grammar School Council member Mark Scott has said that he cannot recall that child sexual abuse was discussed on the Council before 2009, was it ethical for Council members not to initiate an audit concerning this matter between

⁹ Line 28 on page 12196 of the transcript of the Public Hearing of the Royal Commission.

¹⁰ Document titled 'E/2009/4549' dated 6 March 2009 produced by the NSW Ombudsman (Document ID: OMB.0009.006.0126_R).

¹¹ Lines 2 – 8 on page 12197 of the transcript of the Public Hearing of the Royal Commission.

¹² Lines 30 – 47 on page 12196 and lines 1- 19 on page 12197 of the transcript of the Public Hearing of the Royal Commission.

¹³ Paragraphs 177 - 178 of the Statement dated 6 February 2015 of John William Weeks.

¹⁴ Paragraph 26 of the Statement dated 27 February 2015 of Insp. Elizabeth Cullen.

¹⁵ Paragraph 28 of the Statement dated 27 February 2015 of Insp. Elizabeth Cullen.

¹⁶ In paragraphs 41 – 45 of the Statement dated 7 February 2015 of Ian Wilson Paterson, Mr Paterson refers to the subject incident but does not record the name of the victim to whom the pornographic video was shown by Mr Treloar.

2004 and 2009? This question is raised in view of the fact that George Pell, who has been much criticised by the ABC during Mr Scott's tenure as managing director and editor-in-chief, set up a formal process to handle child sexual abuse cases in 1996 – i.e. some 13 years before it appears the matter was discussed at the Knox Grammar School Council.

- 2.1 Mr Mark Scott first attended a Council meeting on 30 April 2008, following his appointment as a Council member. It follows that Mr Scott would not have been present for any discussion of child sexual abuse prior to that date.
- 2.2 In 2007 Knox received notification of a claim from a survivor of sexual abuse, following which Mr Weeks informed the Council, which discussed the sexual abuse.
- 2.3 The next notification was not received until midway through 2009. This and subsequent matters were discussed at Council meetings, which accords with Mr Scott's recollection.
- 2.4 As the evidence disclosed at the Royal Commission's Public Hearing, with the exceptions identified by Dr Paterson when giving evidence and the matters that are the subject of the Wilson Reports, survivors of sexual abuse did not disclose the sexual abuse until a particular survivor reported the sexual abuse to the police, which led to the establishment of the NSW Police Task Force Arika (**Task Force Arika**).
- 2.5 Dr Paterson gave evidence that he concealed matters from the Council. Under cross examination by Mr Geoffrey Watson SC, Dr Paterson gave the following evidence:¹⁷
- Q. *That had been the pattern of your work, hadn't it, Dr Paterson - that is, throughout, you deliberately concealed from the school council these allegations, these serious allegations of child abuse and child sexual abuse; correct?*
- A. *Correct.*
- 2.6 Dr Brian Scott, who was Chairman of the Council during the period of 1981 to 1989, gave evidence at the Royal Commission's Public Hearing that he would meet with Dr Paterson on a monthly basis. While Dr Paterson informed Dr Scott that he had removed a teacher from a boarding house, he failed to inform Dr Scott of the reasons due to which he had done so, despite Dr Scott asking whether there was 'any problem', to which Dr Paterson responded 'no, it's fine'.¹⁸
- 2.7 With the establishment of Task Force Arika in or around 2009, the magnitude of the abuse became apparent and Knox established a process to support survivors of sexual abuse, which included (but was not limited to) offering counselling, meeting with survivors (and, in some cases, family members), providing apologies, compensating survivors for their damage and loss (to the extent that this could be done financially) and keeping the Knox Community informed of issues relating to the sexual abuse, the teachers charged, action taken to protect Knox students and the process put in place.¹⁹ Knox's redress to victims has been individualised and intensely personal.

¹⁷ Lines 34 - 39 on page 12609 of the transcript of the Public Hearing of the Royal Commission.

¹⁸ Lines 19 - 25 on page 12645 of the transcript of the Public Hearing of the Royal Commission.

¹⁹ Paragraphs 86 - 103 and 112-113 of the Statement dated 6 February 2015 of John William Weeks; Message to Parents dated 17 February 2008; Media Statement dated 17 February 2009; Message to Parents dated 18 February 2008; Media Statement dated 19 February 2009; Message to All Members of the Knox Community dated 24 February 2009; Media Statement dated 25 February 2009; Message to All Members of the OKGA dated 16 March 2009; Message to All future and Prospective Families of Knox Grammar School dated 16 March 2009;

2.8 To date 19 survivors of sexual abuse have come forward.

3. In view of that fact that the Knox Grammar School Council did not issue a public apology for past cases of child sexual abuse committed by Knox teachers until the matter came before the Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, do you believe that the evident delay in delivering this apology was ethical?

3.1 Knox has issued a public apology and given a number of personal apologies to both the survivors and the Knox community. Apologies have been given in writing and in person (including directly to victims) by Mr Weeks on behalf of Knox and by Mr Robert Wannan, Chairman of the Council during the period of 2007 to 2013. I have also apologised on behalf of Knox.

3.2 In evidence given during the Royal Commission's Public Hearing, Mr Weeks said that the first occasion on which Knox offered an apology to victims was through Detective Annette Campbell of Task Force Arika in or about 2009. The reason that the offer was made through Detective Campbell was that Knox did not wish to delay offering an apology to any survivors of sexual abuse while not knowing the identity of those survivors.²⁰

3.3 On 15 December 2009 Knox and the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of NSW and the ACT jointly issued a media statement, setting out a frank and unreserved apology, which was published in the mainstream media.²¹ I attach a copy of the media statement.

3.4 Subsequently, through the Knox website and in correspondence to the Knox Community, Knox reiterated the apology given publicly on 15 December 2009.²²

3.5 Mr Wannan also apologised to the Knox community on a number of occasions. During examination by Ms Eastman SC, Mr Wannan gave the following evidence:

Q. *As at 6 July 2009, you were working with Mr Mein as part of a group from the school and from the church to address the events that had occurred early in 2009 with the arrest of the teachers?*

A. *Correct.*

Q. *The school and the church at that time were looking at how to respond to those circumstances and, relevantly, whether or not it would be appropriate for there to be a joint apology from both the school and the church in relation to those events?*

A. *That's correct.*

Letter to each *Old Boy* dated 16 March 2009; Letter to *All Parents/Carers Knox Grammar School* dated 16 March 2009; Email to *Knox Grammar School Community from the Headmaster* dated 15 December 2009, *Media Statement* dated 8 April 2009; *Media Statement* dated 15 December 2009.

²⁰ Paragraph 101 of the Statement dated 6 February 2015 of John William Weeks.

²¹ AAP 15 December 2009; ABC News 15 December 2009; The Daily Telegraph 15 December 2009; The Australian 16 December 2009; and, The Daily Telegraph 16 December 2009.

²² *Note to the School Community* dated 7 March 2015 from Mr Peter Roach and letter to parents dated 12 March 2015 from Mr John Weeks.

Q. *The reference to the apology that appears in this email is a reference to an apology which was drafted by Rod Frail, I think with your assistance, for consideration by both the school council and the church as to whether or not the apology would be appropriate and, also, the timing of the apology?*

A. *Correct.*

Q. *As at 6 July, I think by this stage there was an indication that Mr Vance had pleaded guilty in relation to a charge concerning him and an expectation that Mr Treloar might plead guilty in the imminent days following 2 July - do you remember that?*

A. *I don't recall that. I recall that one of the frustrations was that, because of the presumption of innocence, and because, at that stage, in my recollection, there hadn't been any proven guilt or admitted guilt, the school was not able to give an apology, but it was the school's desire and intention to give an apology at the earliest possible opportunity, and my recollection was that at that stage no-one had accepted guilt, but we were preparing an apology so that as soon as that occurred we could hopefully apologise to any victims whose names we were aware of - and that was another frustration, because some of those victims were known to the police, obviously, but not known to the school.*

Q. *And in terms of this apology, it wasn't until December 2009 that the apology, which I will call the joint apology, was issued by both the school and by the church; do you recall that?*

A. *Look, I can't recall that, but I know, myself, we had speech days or presentation days, and I know that at each of those - and there were four of them - I gave an apology on behalf of the school. But as to the actual timing of when the school apology went out, I just can't recall the month. I think it would have - it certainly would have been before December, I think, because I think that there would have been an admission of guilt by one of the teachers before then.²³*

3.6 I attach a transcript of the apology given by Mr Wannan at each of the 'speech days'. This transcript was also tendered as evidence in the Royal Commission's Public Hearing.²⁴

3.7 On 7 March 2015 a *Note to the School Community* authored by me was forwarded to the parents of Knox students and posted on the website for the broader Knox Community. In that note I said:

At the hearings, the Headmaster, Mr John Weeks, made a clear, unambiguous and heartfelt apology on behalf of the school, to those who have suffered. It is an apology that the entire School Council supports without reservation, and follows the apology

²³ Lines 21-47 on page 12161 and lines 1 – 26 on page 12162 of the transcript of the Public Hearing of the Royal Commission.

²⁴ Paragraph 8 of the Statement dated 13 February 2015 of Robert Wilson Wannan.

made by the Headmaster and the School Council in 2009.

- 3.8 On 12 March 2015, in a letter to parents, Mr Weeks reiterated the apology he gave in evidence at the Royal Commission's Public Hearing. I attach a copy of the letter.

Should you have any further questions, please direct them to me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Roach', written in a cursive style.

Peter A. Roach
Chairman



KNOX GRAMMAR SCHOOL



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of New South Wales and the ACT

15th December 2009

Media Statement issued by the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of New South Wales and the ACT and Knox Grammar School

Three former teachers at Knox Grammar School have pleaded guilty to charges relating to the sexual abuse of a number of students at the School between the 1970s and 1980s. Knox Grammar School is a Uniting Church School.

The Moderator of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of New South Wales and the ACT, the Rev. Niall Reid, said today: "The Uniting Church and Knox Grammar School are sincerely sorry and unreservedly apologise for the abuse of these students while they attended the School. The Church is most concerned for their welfare and admires their courage in confronting such an ordeal.

"Counselling has been offered, on a confidential basis, to the victims and their families.

"The Uniting Church is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment in all its Schools and supports the School Council and Headmaster of Knox in their determination to provide the safest possible environment for the students at Knox".

The Headmaster of Knox Grammar School, Mr John Weeks, said: "Knox acknowledges that it is responsible for the welfare and protection of students in its care. Parents entrust their children to a school believing that they will be educated in a safe environment. Abuse of a student by a teacher is abhorrent to everything that Knox stands for. On behalf of the School I would like to express my profound regret that this occurred.

"Since this investigation began, Knox has worked assiduously to assist Police and to encourage witnesses to come forward. The School believes its current child protection procedures are of the highest standard and more than meet the regulatory requirements.

"Nonetheless, in cooperation with the Uniting Church, Knox will continue to closely monitor these procedures to ensure that in the 21st century Knox provides the safest possible environment for its students."

As a number of matters are still before the courts, no further comment will be made at this time.

John W. Weeks
Headmaster
Knox Grammar School

The Rev. Niall Reid
Moderator, Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of New South Wales and the ACT



FROM THE HEADMASTER

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

12 March 2015

Dear Parents,

Over the past couple of weeks you have seen in the media the terrible things experienced by some boys through the 1970s to the 1990s and the culture of cover-up, which seems so foreign to us now, which allowed that to happen.

You have also heard the School's apology to those people and their families and the condemnation of what happened.

We can take some comfort from the fact that during that era tens of thousands of boys had very positive experiences and hundreds of talented teachers gave dedicated service to the School.

But we must not let that affect our resolve to support the survivors of the abuse.

We must also recognise the bravery of one heroic young man who, having been abused in 1987, first reported the matter to police in December 2008. His strength and courage is to be admired as is that of the young men who followed.

Redress to Survivors

Since 2009, we have been advised of 17 men who were the victims of sexual abuse during the 1970s, 80s and 90s and the Uniting Church and the School has settled compensation claims with 15 of them. It has been heartbreaking to hear their stories and we want to reach out with everything we have to support them.

The Royal Commission has recently released a discussion paper on the topic of redress. While it acknowledges nothing can change what happened, there are ways that institutions can help. Knox firstly accepts its responsibility. It failed those young men and since 2009 we have been working with these survivors with the support, encouragement and resourcing from the Knox School Council.

This is sensitive work as each survivor is different, each situation unique. Unfortunately the processes can be time consuming, but it is crucial that we push on to provide some redress. This has included offering both general and individual apologies to victims, independent counselling and compensation.

Just as importantly we have sought to work directly with survivors on joint partnerships. Knox will continue to explore ways we can reach out to as many survivors as possible though we understand not all will want to do any of this or to have anything to do with us. The School and the Uniting Church will be working specifically with the survivors to assist them as much as we can, including a young man who left Knox Prep in 2003 who made new allegations to the Royal Commission.

Knox of the 21st Century

Since I became Headmaster in 2004, I have built on the foundations of reform left by my predecessor, Mr Peter Crawley from 1999 to 2003.

A relentless drive to transform Knox, 'root and branch', has occurred and that commitment to change, modernisation and best practice in all areas of the School continues.

Culturally and operationally, Knox of the 21st Century has a clear focus where it counts most – on its boys – their care, their development. I live by the belief that 'the individual is more important than the organisation' and that this School belongs to its boys. They are the School and whatever the reputation of the School is, it is built on the collective achievements and activities of its boys with the expert guidance of our teachers and the support of our parents.

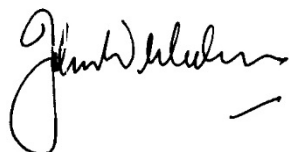
No other school in Australia and its staff has been subjected to such forensic examination of its child protection policies, training, accountability and the checking of its staff as Knox.

The Royal Commission received a comprehensive report on Knox policies and practices in relation to staff selection, training, supervision and accountability. The Commission also reviewed the training of students and the auditing of Knox by the NSW Board of Studies, the Ombudsman, the School's work with the Office of the Children's Guardian and our new work with Bravehearts.

All this ensures that boys and staff are not only aware, trained and knowledgeable about child protection issues but empowered individually and collectively to understand what inappropriate behaviours are, how they are recognised and how we all must work together for a safe, secure environment for everyone.

Attached is a summary of our recent submission to the Royal Commission and further information on our Child Protection Policies is available on our website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John W Weeks', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mr John W Weeks
Headmaster

MEA CULPA

This year was also a year of sadness when we were confronted by allegations of child abuse against five former teachers, two of whom have admitted guilt. Those allegations relate to actions which took place some decades ago. We, and more importantly, the victims cannot, however, take comfort from that fact.

This School, like any other, has, first and foremost, a paramount duty to ensure the safety and well being of all of its students. Sadly, this was not the case for, at the very least, two of our past students where guilt has already been acknowledged by the teachers involved.

The abuse they caused, any abuse, is abhorrent and runs contrary to the Uniting Church and Knox and everything they stand for.

We acknowledge that the students involved have carried a heavy burden and we commend them for their courage in coming forward.

We can, I believe, take some comfort from the fact:

- That the School has worked assiduously to assist Police in their investigations;
- That we have done whatever we could to encourage those within our community with any relevant knowledge to come forward;
- That, where possible, we have offered assistance in the form of independent professional counsellors to those people who have been affected;
- That the current child protection procedures, at Knox, are of the highest standard; and
- That we will continue to closely monitor those procedures to ensure that, in the 21st Century, Knox provides the safest possible environment for its students.

But above all, to those students who were abused, we reiterate our deepest regret and our sincerest sorrow and we offer our apology unreservedly.

