



The Sydney Institute

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**Email: YoungM@knox.nsw.edu.au
(Marilyn Young – PA to Headmaster)**

Peter Roach
Chairman
The Council of Knox Grammar School
PO Box 5008
WAHROONGA NSW 2076

Dear Mr Roach

Thank you for your letter dated 19 March 2015 which I received by email.

I note that you have responded to the email which I sent to Dr Simon Longstaff on 11 March 2015. I had other email exchanges with Dr Longstaff but he declined to answer my questions pending your response. I did ask Simon Longstaff when he joined the Knox Grammar School Council. I would be grateful if you could provide this information in due course.

I know how busy you are – so I do appreciate the time taken to reply to my letter to Simon Longstaff. I note your concluding comment that any future enquiries I might have should be directed to you in your capacity as chairman of the Knox Grammar School Council – i.e. not to such board members as Mark Scott and Simon Longstaff.

As you will be aware from my correspondence with Mr Scott and Dr Longstaff, my interest in this case stems from a question of double standards. As ABC chairman and editor-in-chief, Mark Scott has been responsible for ABC journalists vigorously pursuing such institutions as the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Salvation Army and more besides concerning child sexual abuse. As the executive director of the St James Ethics Centre, Simon Longstaff has run campaigns calling for the highest standards of transparency and accountability concerning business.

My interest is in how Mark Scott and Simon Longstaff handled the issue of child sexual assault in their individual capacities while they were members of the Knox Grammar School Council – in view of the fact that Knox is both part of the Uniting Church of Australia and a business in its own right.

As you may or may not be aware, the Knox website is not very user-friendly and it is difficult to locate material concerning how the school handled the child sex abuse which occurred during or after 2004.

When you have time, I would like to receive additional information:

1. Did Knox refer to any of the child abuse cases which occurred during or after 2004 in its Annual Report? If so, in which year or years? If not, why not?
2. According to your letter, Mr Scott first attended a Council meeting on 30 April 2008 and NSW Police established Task Force Arika "in or around 2009". In view of the fact that child abuse was a matter of public concern in 2008 – as reported on the ABC and elsewhere – did Mark Scott ask for an audit of Knox with respect to current or past sexual abuse cases at anytime in 2008 or 2009? If not, why not?
3. I accept that Knox and the Uniting Church of Australia made a public apology for child sexual abuse on 15 December 2009. I also accept that what was termed a "Mea Culpa" was read by Mr Wannan "at each of the speech days". However, it is not clear from the document you sent as to what were the speech days at which the Mea Culpa was read.

In view of the fact that, according to your letter of 19 March 2015, Knox was aware at least as early as 2004 about instances of child sexual abuse at the school, why did it take half a decade for the Council to issue a public apology?

Moreover, the undated "Mea Culpa" – which appears to have been made during and/or after 2009 – contains the statement "those allegations relate to actions which took place some decades ago". Why would this statement have been made when it was known to Knox that the allegations in question referred to actions which took place a few years – not decades – previously?

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In conclusion I repeat that my prime intent in this matter turns on what Mark Scott and Simon Longstaff did – or did not – do about child sexual assault as members of the Knox Grammar School Council.

In view of the fact that Mr Scott has declined to answer most of my questions, and Dr Longstaff has refused to answer all of my questions, I have no alternative but to direct the above questions to you – in accordance with your request.

As advised, I know how busy you are and I understand that you are a non-executive chairman. So there is no need for a prompt response.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Gerard Henderson