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JOHN OXLEY YOUTH CENTRE (49)
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Department of Family Services

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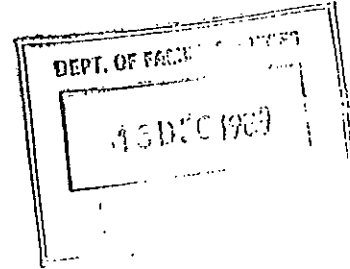
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Date: 3.12.2012

Exhibit number: 94

8 December 1989



Mr A Pettigrew
Director-General
Department of Family Services

Dear Mr Pettigrew

My name is Karen Beth Mersiadis. I have worked for this Department for a period of five years. I am currently the Teacher-in-Charge and Program Co-Ordinator at John Oxley Youth Centre.

I am writing because all of the professional staff I have spoken to who have contributed to the Inquiry are unhappy with the process as witnessed by them during their interview.

You visited this Centre on Monday, 20 November 1989 to explain to us the role of the Inquiry and the roles of the Magistrate, the Family Services representative and the Secretary. At that meeting, you may remember I asked you to clarify the role of Barbara Flynn, the Family Services representative. You assured the meeting that Barbara Flynn did not share a dual role with the Magistrate, but that Barbara was with the Magistrate to clarify to the Magistrate any Departmental procedures or structure with which he was unfamiliar.

It is my belief and concern that Barbara has stepped well outside the role as described by you. It seems that she has assumed a dual role with the Magistrate. One of the teachers whom I supervise, David Farnworth, claims Barbara asked many leading questions of him with the presumption from her being that the management of John Oxley Youth Centre had harassed and undermined Youth Workers and their work. He also feels that the Magistrate asked leading questions, justifying the behaviour of the Youth Workers and why they might have cause for complaint.

David Farnworth was asked many times why he had asked to be part of the inquiry, as he had no specific complaints or information on the complaints. When he asked about the complaints, the Magistrate refused to provide information.

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The Magistrate stated a number of times that the inquiry was not about the management, but about the Centre, and yet he seemed unwilling to listen to the positive comments David wished to make about the direction the management has taken during the past year.

I was asked several times if I had problems with the management here and on one occasion was asked to give an opinion of Peter Coyne's attitude and behaviour towards his staff. Never once was I asked about the work performance or attitudes of the staff members making complaints, whoever they may be.

The inquiry has placed a real shadow over the Centre under which a number of staff feel uncomfortable. Now that the inquiry has been set up, we are very concerned that it deal fairly with all aspects of the Centre. We have very real problems with a changed and changing client population with inadequate staff and funding, and with poor design features of the building.

Many are distressed that we are now witnessing an Inquiry which accepts the complaints of a minority but which does not accept or acknowledge the dedicated and sincere work effort of the management of this Centre.

Yours faithfully

K. Meriades

K MERIADES

Teacher-in-Charge/Program Co-Ordinator
John Oxley Youth Centre