

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND YOUTH SERVICES
INTER-OFFICE MEMO

11/05/88
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TO: Mr George Nix
D/Director-General
(Community and Youth Support)

Date: 27 May 1988
Our Ref.:
Your Ref.:
Refer to: Mr P. Coyne: TP
Section: John Oxley Youth Centre

COPIES TO:

George Nix
Noted by Ministry & discussed. May sup. my advised of further developments.
28/5/88

Subject: Report on the Educational Program - 24 May 1988
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On the 19.5.88 two teachers Mr R. O'Hanley and Mr G. Cooper, submitted a proposal to conduct an educational program to the review team at John Oxley Youth Centre. The program was an environmental bush walk to the Lower Portals area at Mount Barney National Park on Tuesday the 24th May 1988 from 8am to 4pm. The children selected to attend were

[redacted] These children were selected on the basis of their school attendance. The following staff were selected to take part in the program. Mr R. O'Hanley (teacher), Mr Gordon Cooper (teacher), Mrs K. Mersiades (teacher), Mr J. Manitzky (psychologist), and Ms S. Moynihan (youth worker).

The program proposed was considered by the John Oxley Youth Centre review team which is made up of the Manager, Deputy Manager, three Principal Youth Workers, Psychologist, Supervising Social Worker, Senior Youth Worker on duty and Teacher-in-Charge. The program was subsequently approved.

On the 24th May, 1988 the above mentioned staff and children left John Oxley Youth Centre at approximately 8.15am. At approximately 3.15pm Mr O'Hanley phoned John Oxley Youth Centre and advised Ms J. Foote, Deputy Manager that four children, namely [redacted] had absconded. Beenleigh Police later contacted the Centre at approximately 4.45pm to advise that the four absconding children had been detained by Police and were being returned to the Centre.

I contacted Mr Ian Peers, Executive Director, Youth Services at 4.50pm to advise him of the absconding and subsequent detention of the four children. On duty staff were also informed of this information. Shortly after this phone call, Mr O'Hanley and Mr Cooper returned to the Centre with Annette Harding, [redacted]. The children were returned to the living area and I, Ms Foote, Mr O'Hanley and Mr Cooper spoke briefly. We were all relieved that the children had been located as our major concern at that time was for their safety. We were particularly concerned, they may have become lost in the rainforest and experienced low overnight temperatures. We then left the centre to go to our respective homes.

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Date: 7.12.2012

Exhibit number: 242

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I received a phone call at 6.45pm from Mr J. Manitzky who was concerned about the events of the day. He was also concerned that [REDACTED] were refusing to leave the admissions area and were actively provoking a physical confrontation. I gave brief instructions and then immediately drove to the Centre and arrived at approximately 7.15pm. I went to the admission area to find the children yelling, swearing, banging walls and doors as well as whistling on high note. They were still attempting to provoke the two staff in the admission area, Mr T. Cox, Senior Youth Worker and Mr E. Kaltner, Youth Worker, into a physical confrontation. I decided not to enter the room for fear that it may escalate the situation and in the hope that in time the children would tire, relax and voluntarily go to their rooms.

In the conference room next to the admission area I met with Mr J. Manitzky, Mrs K. Mersiades and Ms S. Moynihan who were all concerned about the events of the day. They were most concerned about a suspicion that Annette Harding may have been sexually assaulted. We spoke for over an hour and agreed a meeting should be held at 9am the next day. The purpose of the meeting was to analyse the program, debrief staff, gather information for future planning and to develop a strategy for investigating the concern about Annette Harding being sexually assaulted. Mr Manitzky, Mrs Mersiades and Ms Moynihan then left the Centre.

The children in the admission area at this point in time became very loud and agitated, so I entered the admission area because of concern for staff safety. I gave the children an ultimatum and they agreed to go quietly to their rooms. The children were then taken one by one to their rooms to prevent them escalating the disturbance with other children. This process lasted about 45 minutes.

When the four children were in their rooms I went to see Annette Harding, however, she was asleep in her bedroom. I then spoke with Mr Cox the Senior Youth Worker on duty about the incident in the admission area. I left the Centre at approximately 10pm.

At 9am on the 25.5.88 a meeting was held between Ms J. Foote, Mr O'Hanley, Mr Cooper, Mr Manitzky, Mrs Mersiades, Ms Moynihan and myself. We discussed the events of the previous day for approximately 1½ hours. There was a concern that Annette Harding had been sexually assaulted but no direct evidence was available.

At 10.30am I spoke with Mr M. Freemantle a Youth Worker on duty in the company of Ms W. Kropp, Acting Supervising Social Worker. He informed me [REDACTED] had told him that [REDACTED] had sexual intercourse with Annette Harding. He was also concerned for Annette's safety at morning tea. The meeting was quickly terminated and Mr Freemantle returned to Blaxland Living Area to ensure Annette's safety.

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* I placed [redacted] in their rooms at approximately 11am. I enquired about the possible sexual assault of Annette, the absconding, and the behaviour in the admission area with all four boys. I spoke with [redacted] on 3 occasions, [redacted] on 3 occasions, [redacted] on 2 occasions and [redacted] on 2 occasions. I also spoke with [redacted] about the possible sexual assault of Annette Harding on one occasion.

* [redacted] indicated he masturbated while watching [redacted] and [redacted] have sexual intercourse with Annette Harding. He indicated [redacted] and [redacted] were near by but did not engage in sexual intercourse. He also stated Annette was a willing participant in these activities.

Y [redacted] indicated he imitated having sexual intercourse with Annette as well as having sexual intercourse with Annette. He said [redacted] had sexual intercourse with Annette. He said all the other boys were watching and masturbating. He stated that Annette was a willing participant.

* [redacted] indicated he was standing near by when [redacted] had sexual intercourse with Annette. He said he was not involved in any way.

* [redacted] indicated that [redacted] had sexual intercourse with Annette. He said he only kissed Annette. He also said Annette participated willingly. [redacted] stated clearly that both he and [redacted] had sexual intercourse with Annette while [redacted] watched and masturbated. He stated Annette was a willing participant.

After these interviews I spoke with Ms J. Foote who had spoken with Annette Harding. A copy of her report is attached.

Shortly after lunch I spoke with Annette Harding in the interview room. I explained to her that I had spoken to the five boys. I asked her if she had sexual intercourse with anyone the previous day. She said "Yes, with two boys". I asked who they were and she indicated [redacted]. I asked about her willingness to participate and she indicated that no physical force was used. However she indicated she felt under a lot of pressure from the boys. She was unable to explain what this pressure was but I assumed it to be both peer pressure and psychological pressure. I then asked if she wanted the boys to be charged by the Police and she tentatively said yes. I explained to her that I would need to contact her parents and advise them of these events. She didn't want me to contact them because she

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was frightened her parents would be upset and physically assault her as they had done in the past. Annette explained she had been raped by a group of school boys when she was 11 years old and her parents had bashed her until she told them about the incident.

I then contacted Mr Ian Peers at approximately 1.50pm to advise him of the information I had obtained and to seek his advice. After speaking with him, Ms Foote and I convened a meeting with Mr O'Hanley, Mr Cooper, Mrs Mersiades, Mr Manitzky and Ms Moynihan. I advised them I believed Annette had been sexually assaulted. I then requested them to provide me with a report about the previous day. The reports are attached for your information. At approximately 3.30pm I spoke with [redacted] about the inappropriateness of their actions on the previous day. Annette Harding was also moved to another living area.

After the Review Team Meeting on Thursday, the 26 May 1988, I reviewed the reports prepared by staff. I then approached the five boys about being reinterviewed so as to collect more specific information about the incident with Annette Harding. They all declined to be reinterviewed.

At 4.30pm I informed Mr G. Butler, the Family Services Officer with responsibility at Beenleigh about the incident relating to Annette Harding and my intention to contact Annette's parents. I attempted to contact Mr and Mrs Harding by phone at 4.40pm and 4.50pm without success.

Mr T. Cox, Senior Youth Worker on duty contacted me at home at 6.45pm and advised me that Mrs Harding had rang the Centre and he had obtained her new phone number. I rang Mrs Harding and informed she and Mr Harding about the incident involving Annette. An appointment was then made for them to visit John Oxley Youth Centre at 11am on Friday 27.5.88 to discuss the matter more fully. I also encouraged Mrs Harding to ring and speak with Annette. Mr Cox later contacted me saying Mrs Harding and Annette had spoken together on the phone.

On Friday the 27.5.88 at 12.30 Ms Foote and I spoke at length with Mrs Harding about the incident with Annette. Mrs Harding then spoke privately with Annette for approximately 30 minutes. Ms Foote and I then rejoined them and they both indicated they wanted a complaint made to Police about [redacted]. Annette stated that [redacted] was not involved in any way. I immediately contacted Inspector Dave Jeffries, J.A.B. Brisbane who will organise an investigation of the complaint.

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I have also reviewed a video tape of the outing but it provides no information about the alleged offences.

Alayne

Mr Peter Coyne
Manager
John Oxley Youth Centre

*Director-General,
Submitted for your information.
I will keep you informed of
the outcome of the police
investigations.
S. Linn
27/5/88.*