



THE
GEELONG
COLLEGE
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Friday, 27 May 2016

A letter to the College Community

As you may be aware a former Geelong College staff member, David Whitcroft was recently convicted for sexual abuse offences committed during employment elsewhere. His employment and subsequent dismissal from The Geelong College has been the subject of newspaper articles.

In an article in The Age today, a former student, who graduated in 1981 provided specific and shocking information of an alleged sexual assault during his time at our school. We are distressed and deeply concerned after learning of the terrible abuse he suffered, and we have reached out to him to offer our support and care.

We understand his sense of betrayal by the school, which failed in its responsibility to care for him. We offer our sincere apologies for the abuse he suffered, and its ongoing effects. We would like to reassure all of our community, that we are confident that our school now provides a safe, caring and supportive environment for all students.

We admire the courage of any survivor who comes forward to tell their story and encourage any survivor of abuse to report their experiences to the police.

Prior to this information, we had received one report of general allegations and one report of grooming against Mr. Whitcroft, which we had forwarded to police.

We are concerned that there may be members of our community who have additional knowledge around these matters and we seek your assistance to enable us to develop a greater understanding of these or other relevant events.

We are able to provide more information about Mr. Whitcroft's involvement with the school in the hope that this may assist your recall. The earliest record of Mr. Whitcroft at The Geelong College following his school years, lists him as a volunteer rowing coach in 1974. In the seventies and eighties he also served on the Old Collegians Committee and in rowing, in coaching and coordinating roles, as a volunteer. This precedes his employment at The Geelong College which was from 1989 to 1993. We have no formal records of Mr. Whitcroft working in the boarding house before 1989 although there are reports from the community that suggest he did.

SHAPING THE FUTURE

The Geelong College
PO Box 5, Geelong Victoria 3220
ABN: 22 005 988 205 CRICOS: 0412G

Senior School
Talbot St Newtown
T (03) 5226 3111

Middle School
Aberdeen St Newtown
T (03) 5226 8444

Junior School
Minerva Rd Newtown
T (03) 5226 8433

www.geelongcollege.vic.edu.au

The school has put in place structures to help survivors of abuse, including an independent facilitator who can provide advice and counselling. With more knowledge we may be able to reach out more effectively. Already through our outreach program, we have been able to support victims of both abuse and bullying by providing counselling, personal contact and our sincere apologies for their terrible experiences and ongoing suffering.

We hope that any former students with information they wish to share with us or report will contact the school directly or confidentially through our independent facilitator (1800 260 038), or the police at Geelong SOCIT (5223 7200).

The Geelong College apologises unreservedly to those harmed while in our care, strongly condemns sexual abuse, and will continue to support and care for survivors of abuse.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Hugh Seward
Chair of the Geelong College Council



Dr. Peter Miller
Principal



Mr. David Waterhouse
President of the OGCA

*Old Collegians were emailed correspondence on Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26 May. If you did not receive these emails please update your details with us at: communityrelations@geelongcollege.vic.edu.au.

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