

**IN THE MATTER OF  
THE BOARD OF INQUIRY  
INTO HISTORICAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN BEAUMARIS PRIMARY SCHOOL  
AND CERTAIN OTHER GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

**Witness Statement of Dr David Howes PSM  
Deputy Secretary, Schools and Regional Services**

I, **David Howes, Deputy Secretary Schools and Regional Services**, Department of Education (**DoE**), say as follows in response to the Notice to Produce a Statement issued by the Board of Inquiry and dated 16 October 2023:

**A. CURRENT ROLE**

1. In my role as Deputy Secretary Schools and Regional Services I am responsible for:
  - (a) Operations and Governance Division;
  - (b) School Provision and Establishment Division;
  - (c) Security and Emergency Management Division;
  - (d) Performance Division;
  - (e) Curriculum implementation Division; and
  - (f) the management of schools through the regional structure.
2. Schools and Regional Services is the primary connection between DoE's central office, schools, early childhood services and service providers.
3. I have operational responsibility for over 1,500 Victorian Government Schools. There are four Regional Directors who report directly to me. There are 17 areas within four regions. Each Regional Director has responsibility for all Primary, Secondary, Specialist, P-12 and Language schools in a geographic area. The Regional Directors are supported by 17 Area Executive Directors (**AED**), who are in turn supported by Senior Education Improvement Leaders

(SEILs), responsible for the delivery of improved learning and development outcomes of schools in their area.

4. While I do not have direct carriage of the response to individual incidents in Government Schools, I am responsible for and have oversight of the development and implementation of policies and practices which govern the response to incidents. In relation to students, an incident includes any actual or alleged event or situation that causes harm or creates a risk of causing harm to a student's health, safety or wellbeing either directly or indirectly.
5. I am responding to the questions 1 to 13 because I am in the role which is most equivalent to the role which would have been responsible for the oversight of incident management, including the response to incidents or allegations of child sexual abuse in the period covered by this Inquiry.

**B. WORK HISTORY**

6. My work history at DoE is set out in my resume, which is attachment **DH-1** to this statement.

**C. INFORMATION RELIED UPON IN PREPARING THIS STATEMENT**

7. In this statement, I respond to questions directed to events which occurred and legislative frameworks, policies and practices which existed in the period 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1984. The end date of 31 December 1984 was selected because the last known offending by a Relevant Employee occurred in 1984.
8. I was not employed by DoE at the time of the events referred to in questions 1 to 4, and I have no direct experience of the legislative frameworks, policies and practices in place in the period 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1984. For the purposes of this statement, I have relied upon record searches and other inquiries undertaken by DoE, with the assistance of Proximity, a professional services firm engaged to assist DoE.
9. Efforts were made to identify people who were employed in relevant DoE roles in the period 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1984, to provide

information in addition to the documents identified. DoE was not able to locate any person who:

- (a) had responsibility for the policies and practices; or
- (b) who made decisions in relation to the events,

which are the subject of questions 1 to 13.

- 10. DoE located a former employee who worked as a District Inspector for two years in the 1970s, and was able to provide anecdotal evidence about practices at that time.

#### **D. DOE'S RESPONSE**

- 11. Questions 1 to 4 are directed to DoE's knowledge of and response to allegations or incidents of historical child sexual abuse at Beaumaris Primary School and Relevant Government Schools at or around the time of that abuse.
- 12. For the purposes of responding to these questions, I largely refer to the tables summarising the available information in respect of each Relevant Employee. I refer to those tables in this statement as the **Perpetrator Narratives**.
- 13. I am informed that the information in the Perpetrator Narratives was in turn drawn from the following documentary sources (where available for the individual Relevant Employees):
  - (a) the service histories, employee files, Teacher's Cards and disciplinary files;
  - (b) school Council minutes, Mothers' Club Committee minutes, school photographs and other documents relating to Relevant Government Schools and other schools where the Relevant Employees worked;
  - (c) District Inspector Reports relating to Relevant Government Schools at or around the time;
  - (d) documents relating to civil claims brought by former students at Beaumaris Primary School and Relevant Government Schools, including Statements of Claim and records of interview with witnesses

(including former teachers, parents and students) undertaken by a Loss Adjustor engaged by DoE's legal representatives in the early 2000s; and

- (e) police interview transcripts and correspondence, and sentencing transcripts.

14. The Perpetrator Narratives are attachment **DH-2** to this statement.

**Qn 1: What was the Department's response to historical child sexual abuse at Beaumaris Primary School and Relevant Government Schools at or around the time of the abuse?**

15. DoE's response to historical child sexual abuse allegations at Beaumaris Primary School and Relevant Government Schools at or around the time of the abuse is set out in the Perpetrator Narratives – Part A: Contemporaneous knowledge and response by school / DoE table in the column headed "Response by school / DoE to direct report". See:

- (a) DH-2, pages 1-2, Wyatt [REDACTED]
- (b) DH-2, pages 7-10, Stan [REDACTED];
- (c) DH-2, page 18 Grahame Steele;
- (d) DH-2, pages 20-25, David MacGregor
- (e) DH-2, page 27, [REDACTED]; and
- (f) DH-2, page 28, [REDACTED].

**Qn 2: In considering the Department's response, what knowledge did the Department and its officers have in relation to allegations or incidents of historical child sexual abuse at Beaumaris Primary School and Relevant Government Schools at or around the time of the abuse?**

16. The knowledge of DoE and its officers in relation to allegations or incidents of historical child sexual abuse at Beaumaris Primary School and Relevant Government Schools at or around the time of the abuse is set out in the Perpetrator Narratives – Part A: Contemporaneous knowledge and response by school / DoE table in the column headed "Evidence of report to or other knowledge of school / DoE". The column headed "Date" refers to the date

identified in the evidence as the date upon which the report, etc was made to the school / DoE. See:

- (a) DH-2, pages 1-2, Wyatt [REDACTED]
- (b) DH-2, pages 7-10, Stan [REDACTED];
- (c) DH-2, page 18, Grahame Steele;
- (d) DH-2, pages 20-25, David MacGregor
- (e) DH-2, page 27, [REDACTED] and
- (f) DH-2, page 28, [REDACTED].

**Qn 3: In considering the Department’s response, what actions did the Department or its officers take or fail to take in relation to allegations or incidents of historical child sexual abuse at Beaumaris Primary School and Relevant Government Schools at or around the time of the abuse?**

17. The actions DoE and its officers took or failed to take in relation to allegations or incidents of historical child sexual abuse allegations at Beaumaris Primary School and Relevant Government Schools at or around the time of the abuse is set out in the Perpetrator Narratives – Part A: Contemporaneous knowledge and response by school / DoE table in the column headed “Response by school / DoE to direct report”. See:

- (a) DH-2, pages 1-2, Wyatt [REDACTED]
- (b) DH-2, pages 7-10, Stan [REDACTED];
- (c) DH-2, page 18, Grahame Steele;
- (d) DH-2, pages 20-25, David MacGregor
- (e) DH-2, page 27, [REDACTED] and
- (f) DH-2, page 28, [REDACTED].

**Qn 4: What does the Department know as at the date of this notice about allegations or incidents of historical child sexual abuse at Beaumaris Primary School and Relevant Government Schools, including:**

- (a) the name of all Relevant Employees at Relevant Government Schools;

18. DoE knows that the Relevant Employees taught at the following Relevant Government Schools:

Relevant Employee	Relevant School
Wyatt [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] Beaumaris Primary School
Stan [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] Beaumaris Primary School [REDACTED]
Grahame Steele	Beaumaris Primary School
David MacGregor	Kunyang Primary School
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

- (b) **the year in which each allegation or incident of historical child sexual abuse occurred;**

19. The Perpetrator Narratives – Part B: Victim-survivor summaries sets out the years in which offending conduct occurred. See:

- (a) DH-2, pages 3-6, Wyatt [REDACTED]  
 (b) DH-2, pages 11-17, Stan [REDACTED];  
 (c) DH-2, page 19, Grahame Steele;  
 (d) DH-2, page 26, David MacGregor  
 (e) DH-2, page 27, [REDACTED]; and  
 (f) DH-2, page 28, [REDACTED].

- (c) **the number of children from Relevant Government Schools who, based on allegations or incidents of historical child sexual abuse known to the Department, may have been abused by a Relevant Employee;**

20. Based on allegations from victim-survivors who have engaged with DoE through legal claims processes (civil claims and redress), DoE is aware of 24 victim-survivors. DoE is aware of approximately 20 additional victim-survivors of abuse by a Relevant Employee based on allegations or incidents known to DoE through criminal processes. There are likely more. DoE does not have any information about victims or potential victims of [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

**(d) in relation to allegations or incidents of historical child sexual abuse in Relevant Government Schools:**

**(i) when an allegation, complaint or report was received by the Department;**

21. In the Perpetrator Narratives – Part A: Contemporaneous knowledge and response by school / DoE table, the column headed “Date info became known to DE” identifies the time at which the evidence of an allegation, complaint or report became known to DoE. See:

- (a) DH-2, pages 1-2, Wyatt [REDACTED]
- (b) DH-2, pages 7-10, Stan [REDACTED];
- (c) DH-2, page 18, Grahame Steele;
- (d) DH-2, pages 20-25, David MacGregor
- (e) DH-2, page 27, [REDACTED]; and
- (f) DH-2, page 28, [REDACTED]

**(ii) who made that allegation, complaint or report (for example, a child, parent, other teacher or another person);**

22. As indicated in the Perpetrator Narratives, allegations, complaints or reports of historical child sexual abuse were made by children, parents, teachers and others.

**(iii) what actions did the Department take or fail to take in response to each allegation, complaint or report;**

23. DoE’s response to allegations or incidents of historical child sexual abuse at or around the time of the abuse is addressed in questions 1 and 3 above.

- (iv) **what actions did the Department take or fail to take to investigate, discipline or terminate the Relevant Employee(s);**
24. DoE's response to allegations or incidents of historical child sexual abuse at or around the time of the abuse is addressed in questions 1 and 3 above.
- (v) **what actions did the Department take or fail to take in relation to transferring the Relevant Employee(s) to other schools or to or within the Department; and**
25. DoE's response to allegations or incidents of historical child sexual abuse at or around the time of the abuse is addressed in questions 1 and 3 above.
- (vi) **what actions did teachers, principals, District Inspectors or other Department officers who had any knowledge about the allegation, complaint or report take or fail to take in relation to them; and**
26. The actions of teachers, principals, District Inspectors and other DoE officers who had knowledge of an allegation, complaint or report of historical child sexual abuse is addressed in questions 1 and 3 above.
- (e) **any other information about allegations or incidents of historical sexual abuse at Relevant Government Schools.**
27. The information I am able to provide about allegations and incidents of historical child sexual abuse at Relevant Government Schools is set out in the responses to the questions in this statement and the annexures to the statement.

## **E. CHILD SAFETY PRACTICES OVER TIME**

**Qn 5: What were the legislative frameworks, child safety policies and Relevant Policies and Practices in place in government schools from 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1999, including:**

28. In responding to this question, I identify the legislative frameworks, policies and practices which existed in the period 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1984.
29. Between 1 January 1960 and to 23 March 1983, the employment of school based staff was primarily governed by the following legislation:



- (a) *Education Act 1958* (Vic) (**Education Act**);
  - (b) *Teaching Service Act 1958* (Vic) (**Teaching Service Act**);
  - (c) *Public Service Act 1958* (Vic) (**Public Service Act**).
30. From 24 March 1982, the employment of school based staff was primarily governed by the *Teaching Service Act 1981* (originally named the *Education Service Act 1981*).
31. This legislation set out the framework for the employment, transfer and discipline of school based staff.
32. The Acts listed in paragraphs 29 and 30 above referred child safety in schools in the context of the prevention of accidents and the physical safety of students.
- (a) what Relevant Policies and Practices were in place;**
33. DoE's records search identified the following documents which fall within the definition of Relevant Policies and Practices.
34. On 9 April 1952, at the request of head teachers, the Secretary issued a memorandum for the guidance of head teachers and male staff in relation to interactions between male teachers and female students (**1952 Memorandum**).
35. The 1952 Memorandum stated that it was advisable for male teachers to be warned "in their own interests, against any action liable to misinterpretation" and advised "never to place their hands on pupils". Head teachers were instructed to bring the memorandum to the attention of male teachers and insert it in the book of Regulations and Instructions.
36. Tellingly, the focus of the Memorandum was on the behaviour of male teachers towards female students and the protection of the interests of teachers. There was no focus on the interests of children, and no focus on the behaviour of male teachers to male students.
37. In a memorandum to head teachers dated 25 September 1960, the Secretary repeated a similar message to the 1952 Memorandum, although it omitted the instruction never to place hands on pupils (**1960 Memorandum**).

38. On 9 August 1963, the Secretary issued a memorandum to head teachers regarding accidents at schools (**1963 Memorandum**).
  39. The 1963 Memorandum noted DoE was receiving an increasing number of claims from parents of children who had sustained injuries at school. Heads of schools were requested to institute an accident file to record the following details of all accidents:
    - (a) name, age and address of the child;
    - (b) date, time, place and nature of the accident;
    - (c) names of reliable witnesses, including the head teacher and supervising teacher
    - (d) action taken for the child's welfare; and
    - (e) any other relevant details.
  40. The 1963 Memorandum noted "The keeping of this record should obviate the reporting of accidents to DoE, except for serious accidents which should be reported without delay".
  41. There is no indication this Memorandum was intended to directly address incidents of child sexual abuse.
  42. On 7 May 1964 the Secretary issued a memorandum regarding accident registers in substantially the same form as the 1963 Memorandum, although it narrowed the accidents that needed to be reported to "all accidents from which a claim could arise" (**1964 Memorandum**).
  43. I have attached the following documents to my statement:
    - (a) 1952 Memorandum attachment **DH-03**
    - (b) 1960 Memorandum attachment **DH-04**
    - (c) 1963 Memorandum attachment **DH-05**
    - (d) 1964 Memorandum attachment **DH-05**.
- (b) whether there were different Relevant Policies and Practices where a Relevant Government School or a Relevant Employee was the subject of**

**multiple allegations or known incidents of child sexual abuse and, if so, what were these different Relevant Policies and Practices;**

44. No policies or practices have been found relating to practices and procedures where there single or multiple allegations or known incidents of child sexual abuse.

**(c) were there different Relevant Policies and Practices for the handling of allegations of historical child sexual abuse (rather than allegations of contemporaneous child sexual abuse) from 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1999 and, if so what were these different Relevant Policies and Practices**

45. No policies or practices or procedures for dealing with historical child sexual abuse in the period 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1984 were found.

**(d) who was responsible within the education system for managing and responding to allegations or incidents of child sexual abuse (including the role of principals, District Inspectors and other Department officers); and**

46. As far as can be determined, there was no specific allocation of responsibility for managing and responding to allegations or incidents of child sexual abuse in the period 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1984.

47. Members of the teaching service with supervisory responsibilities had an obligation to report breaches of the Teaching Service Act 1958 or regulations to the Director-General. The Director-General could deal with minor disciplinary offences, or could refer more serious matters to the Minister, and such referral resulted in suspension of the Teacher. The Minister could refer matters back to the Director-General or to the Teachers Tribunal, which could take disciplinary action up to and including termination of the teacher's employment.

48. The *Education Service Act 1981* repealed the *Teaching Service Act 1958* and created revised disciplinary process. Disciplinary offences against 'officers' (including teachers) were heard and determined by the Director-General, who could impose penalties ranging from reprimand to dismissal. The Director-General also had powers to suspend an officer from duty for a breach under

the Act. Officers could appeal disciplinary penalties to the Education Service Appeals Board.

49. In 1983, the *Teaching Service Act 1983* was passed and renamed the *Education Service Act 1991* to the *Teaching Service Act 1981* and established the Teaching Service Disciplinary Board as the body responsible for inquiring into and determining disciplinary matters in relation to the teaching service.
50. The records searches undertaken by DoE identified a report dated 12 June 2018 by [REDACTED], prepared for the purposes of a civil claim. In the period 1972 to 1990 [REDACTED] held the roles of District Inspector, Assistant Regional Director and Regional Director. In his report, [REDACTED] described the role of District Inspectors in relation to child sexual abuse. Relevantly, [REDACTED] stated that “After receiving a serious complaint, District Inspectors would notify DoE by reporting it to the responsible Director of Primary Education at Treasury Place” and that if a complaint had involved sexual abuse, he would have contacted the police and the Education Department.
51. A copy of [REDACTED] report is annexure **DH-06** to my statement.
52. In addition to the documentary material, as noted in paragraph 9 above, DoE located a former employee who worked as a District Inspector for two years in the 1980s. The former employee did not work in the district in which Beaumaris Primary School is located.
53. Anecdotal evidence provided by the former employee indicated:
  - (a) the culture of responding to sexual abuse in a pro-active way was almost non-existent. In the 1980s, one of the responses of District Inspectors was to seek to move teachers between schools when allegations of sexual abuse were made, however the information surrounding these decisions was generally contained to the principal, District Inspector and a small number of other staff, and not disseminated more broadly within the department;
  - (b) movement between schools was achieved by adjusting the school’s “establishment number” (which refers to the ratio of teachers to students). If a school had more teachers than its establishment

number, teachers above the establishment number would be excess and had the potential to be transferred;

- (c) primary school staffing operated under a “classified system”, which saw teachers rated within a particular role. When applying for or being transferred to a role, the teacher with the highest classification was given the role. However, there were occasions when teachers were transferred outside their formal classification rating;
- (d) it was in the principal’s best interest to keep the process quiet, to facilitate a transfer;
- (e) the State’s correspondence school or the State School’s Nursery (which I understand to have provided horticulture education programs and services to schools) were an option for teachers who were being transferred;
- (f) there was a distinct shift in culture relating to the handling of sexual abuse matters in schools in the early 1990s. Teachers were routinely directed to take leave without pay while allegations were being investigated or a charge laid by Police. In this period, teachers would sometimes resign when allegations were made. There was also a considerable difference in the number of primary school teachers dismissed in this period compared with the previous decades.

**(e) what record-keeping and management policies and practices were in place in relation to allegations or incidents of child sexual abuse in government schools?**

54. In the period 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1984, there appear to have been no record-keeping and management policies or practices in place which specifically referenced allegations or incidents of child sexual abuse.

**Qn 6: How did the Department liaise with other government departments or agencies from 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1999 (including the Children’s Welfare Department, Victoria Police and the Teachers Registration Board) to manage and respond to child sexual abuse, including historical child sexual abuse, in government schools?**

55. No information about DoE's liaison with other government departments or agencies in relation to child sexual abuse has been found.
56. In 1960, the Committee on State Education in Victoria reported its findings to then Minister on 12 June 1960 (**1960 Report**). The Committee reported that DoE generally only had contact with the Children's Welfare Department in cases of truancy that combined action took place (1960 Report, [112]). Closer liaison was being developed between the Children's Welfare Department, the Police Department and DoE in cases involving children who had been committed to the care of the Children's Welfare Department (1960 Report, [415]).
57. The 1960 Report is attachment **DH-07** to my statement.

**Qn 7: What were the Department's policies and practices in relation to the:**

- (a) employment or engagement (including pre-employment vetting and/or reference checks);**
- (b) performance review and promotion;**
- (c) disciplinary actions or procedures;**
- (d) stand-down or suspension;**
- (e) transfer to another government school or to or within the Department; or**
- (f) termination,**

**of teaching and other staff in government schools from 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1999?**

58. The relevant legislation for the period 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1984 is identified in paragraphs 29 and 30 above.
59. No relevant policies have been identified for the period 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1984. Except as set out in response to questions 5 and 6 above, no information has been found relating to practices in place between 1 January 1960 and 31 December 1984 in relation to:
- (a) employment or engagement (including pre-employment vetting and/or reference checks)

- (b) performance review and promotion;
- (c) disciplinary actions or procedures;
- (d) stand-down or suspension;
- (e) transfer to another school or to or within DoE; pr
- (f) termination.

**Qn 8: What Department policies and practices were in place to ensure that teaching and other staff were advised of, trained in and implemented Relevant Policies and Practices in government schools from 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1999?**

60. No information has been found regarding any policies or practices in place between 1 January 1960 and 31 December 1984 that would have ensured that teaching and other staff were advised of, trained in and implemented policies and practices in relation to allegation of child sexual abuse.

**Qn 9: What policies and practices were in place at Beaumaris Primary School (and any other Relevant Government Schools) to ensure that teaching and other staff were advised of, trained in and implemented Relevant Policies and Practices from 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1999?**

61. No information has been found that indicates any policies or practices were in place at Beaumaris Primary School or any other Relevant Government Schools between 1 January 1960 and 31 December 1984 that ensured teachers and other staff were advised of, trained in and implemented policies and practices related to child sexual abuse.

**Qn 10: How did the Department monitor, audit or report on adherence to the relevant legislative framework, child safety practices and Relevant Policies and Practices in government schools from 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1999?**

62. No information has been found regarding steps taken by DoE in the period 1 January 1960 and 31 December 1984 to monitor, audit or report on adherence to the relative legislative frameworks, child safety practices and Relevant Policies and Practices.

**Qn 11: How did the Department monitor, audit or report on adherence to the relevant legislative framework, child safety practices and Relevant Policies and Practices at Beaumaris Primary School (and any other Relevant Government Schools) from 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1999?**

63. No information has been found regarding steps taken by DoE in the period 1 January 1960 and 31 December 1984 to monitor, audit or report on adherence to the relative legislative frameworks, child safety practices and Relevant Policies and Practices at Beaumaris Primary School (or any other Relevant Government School).

**Qn 12: How were the relevant legislative framework, child safety practices and Relevant Policies and Practices communicated to students, parents and school communities in government schools from 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1999?**

64. No information has been found regarding steps taken by DoE in the period 1 January 1960 and 31 December 1984 to communicate relevant legislative framework, child safety practices and Relevant Policies and Practices were communicated to students, parents and school communities.

**Qn 13: How were the relevant legislative framework, child safety practices and Relevant Policies and Practices communicated to students, parents and the school community of Beaumaris Primary School (and any other relevant Government Schools) from 1 January 1960 to 31 December 1999?**

65. No information has been found regarding steps taken by DoE in the period 1 January 1960 and 31 December 1984 to communicate relevant legislative framework, child safety practices and Relevant Policies and Practices were communicated to students, parents and school communities at Beaumaris Primary School (and any other Relevant Government Schools).

## **F. CONTEMPORARY CHILD SAFETY PRACTICES**

**Qn 14: What were the legislative frameworks and child safety policies are in place as at the date of this notice in Government Schools, including:**



**(a) what Relevant Policies and Practices are in place to respond to allegations or incidents of child sexual abuse in Government Schools;**

66. The relevant legislative framework includes:
- (a) *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
  - (b) *Children Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic); and
  - (c) Ministerial Order 1359 – Child Safe Standards.
67. The Security and Emergency Management Division has responsibility for the Managing and Reporting School Incidents (including Emergencies) policy (**Incident Reporting policy**).
68. The Incident Reporting policy requires a principal to report allegations or incidents of sexual abuse involving a current student to the Incident Support and Operations Centre (**ISOC**). Following the Standard Operating Procedure for Incidents of a Sexual Nature, the ISOC staff member who receives the report provides advice to the principal about actions to be taken. This advice includes reminders to implement the Four Critical Actions under the PROTECT Guidelines and to comply with reporting obligations.
69. There is an internal protocol for actions and information sharing which sets out the roles and responsibilities across DoE in relation to sexual harm matters. ISOC will refer the matter to other areas of DoE in accordance with that protocol.
70. After a report is received, regional staff will work with the school and the Sexual Harm Response Unit (**SHRU**) to identify what support might be required by the victim-survivor and their family. The Student Support Service (**SSS**) is the DoE's allied health staff. The SSS workforce includes social workers who can be engaged to assess the support needs of the victim-survivor and their family, supports for other students who may be impacted, and supports for staff to assist with their response to the victim-survivor and their family, and other students who may be impacted.
71. Where the alleged perpetrator is working in a government school at the time the incident or allegations are reported, this triggers a notification to the local

area team in the relevant Region. That team is responsible for supporting the school to respond to the allegations and support the victim-survivor, primarily through the SSS team at Area level. As part of the response:

- (a) the SSS team at the Area level are responsible for supporting schools to re-establish student safety and wellbeing. Depending upon the circumstances of the victim-survivor, this may require the SSS team in collaboration with SHRU to liaise with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (**DFFH**) and agencies such as Centre Against Sexual Assault (**CASAs**) and other community health and wellbeing support available in the relevant area, for the purposes of identifying and responding to the support needs of the victim-survivor and their family;
  - (b) SSS and ISOC are also responsible for supporting the school to report to Victoria Police, and for ensuring that advice from police (about information sharing, and communications with the school community about the response) is followed; and
  - (c) the SEIL / AED provide support to the school in responding, and encourage close collaboration between the school and SHRU, to ensure that any victim-survivor, and school community, is supported.
72. Area teams continue to work closely with SHRU, to support victim-survivors, and the school community, through all stages of response, including when charges are laid (or not), or if the alleged perpetrator is found not guilty in a criminal process.
73. The Security and Emergency Management Division administers the Counselling Assistance Program, details of which will be addressed by Kate Rattigan, Deputy Secretary, People and Executive Services (**CAP**). CAP allows victim-survivors of child sexual abuse, and their family members to seek reimbursement for the cost of counselling.
74. Attached to this statement are copies of:
- (a) Managing and Reporting School Incidents (including Emergencies) (attachment **DH-08** to my statement);

- (b) Standard Operating Procedure: Incidents of a Sexual Nature (attachment **DH-09** to my statement);
- (c) Sexual harm matters – internal protocol for actions and information sharing (attachment **DH-10** to my statement);
- (d) PROTECT Guidelines (attachment **DH-11** to my statement); and
- (e) Four critical actions for schools: responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse (attachment **DH-12** to my statement).

**Q15. How does the Department liaise with other government departments or agencies as at the date of this notice, to manage and respond to child sexual abuse, including historical child sexual abuse, in government schools?**

75. As stated above in my response to question 14(a), DoE's response to allegations and incidents of child sexual abuse includes ensuring a report has been made to Victoria Police. Depending upon the circumstances, the response may also include liaising with Victoria Police in relation to communications with the school community about the allegations, and liaising with DFFH and agencies such as CASAs for the purposes of supporting the victim-survivor and their family.

76. Where the alleged perpetrator is working in a school at the time the incident or allegations are reported (whether the allegations are current or historical), this requires the principal to contact Employee Conduct Branch (**ECB**), which manages the employee discipline response and DoE's reports to oversight bodies including the Commission for Children and Young People (**CCYP**) and the Victorian Institute of Teaching (**VIT**). ECB also notifies the CCYP and the VIT in circumstances where DoE is made aware of allegations of historical child sexual abuse and the alleged perpetrator is no longer employed by DoE, to ensure agencies are aware of the allegations and any child safety concerns. The role of ECB will be addressed by Bella Stagoll, Executive Director, Conduct and Integrity.

Signature:

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of David Howes.

Printed name: David Howes

Date: 3 November 2023