

Special Inquiry into St Andrew's Hostel

Hearing

Held at: Courtroom 4, Level 18,  
111 St Georges Terrace, Perth

Monday, 2 April 2012 at 10.05am  
(Day 14)

Before: The Hon Peter Blaxell

1 HIS HONOUR: Yes, Mr Urquhart?  
2  
3 MR URQUHART: Thank you very much, sir. The first witness  
4 that the Inquiry will be calling this morning is Shirley  
5 Joy Brokenshire. Mrs Brokenshire is already on the video  
6 link there from Katanning. She will take the oath, thank  
7 you, sir.  
8  
9 <SHIRLEY JOY BROKENSHERE, sworn:  
10  
11 <EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY MR URQUHART:  
12  
13 MR URQUHART: Q. Mrs Brokenshire, can you see and hear me  
14 there on the screen in front of you?  
15 A. Yes, I can.  
16  
17 Q. We have already done a little dummy run before we  
18 started this morning. We have noticed that there is some  
19 delay, so we will put everyone on notice about that. We  
20 will see how that goes. Are you currently retired or  
21 semi-retired?  
22 A. I am retired.  
23  
24 Q. But you also do a lot of voluntary --  
25 A. But I still work a lot.  
26  
27 Q. You reside in Katanning?  
28 A. Yes, I do.  
29  
30 Q. Have you lived in Katanning since 1972?  
31 A. Yes.  
32  
33 Q. Did you raise your family there in Katanning?  
34 A. From the ages of three and five, yes, I did.  
35  
36 Q. You are referring to two sons of yours by the name of  
37 Glenn and Ashley; is that right?  
38 A. That is correct.  
39  
40 Q. Did both your boys go to Katanning High School?  
41 A. Yes, they did.  
42  
43 Q. However, neither of them were boarders; is that right?  
44 A. Neither of them were boarders.  
45  
46 Q. With respect to your son Glenn, he's the eldest; is  
47 that right?

1 A. Yes.  
2  
3 Q. Was he at the Katanning Senior High School in 1980,  
4 1981, 1982 and 1983?  
5 A. Yes, he was.  
6  
7 Q. Then in 1984 did he go to Japan for a year as a Rotary  
8 exchange student?  
9 A. Yes, he did.  
10  
11 Q. In 1985 did he come back and complete year 12?  
12 A. Yes.  
13  
14 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, is it the case that your son Glenn in  
15 1983 was the Junior Citizen of the Year for Katanning?  
16 A. Yes, he was.  
17  
18 Q. Could you just tell me, please, how it is that someone  
19 gets nominated for either the Citizen of the Year Award or  
20 the Junior Citizen of the Year Award in Katanning?  
21 A. It comes from the public. Somebody nominates them and  
22 their nomination is taken into the shire council.  
23  
24 Q. Who is it who determines the eventual winner of that  
25 award?  
26 A. A committee is usually chosen by the shire council of  
27 usually three people to decide who the winner is.  
28  
29 Q. Is that an award that is still ongoing?  
30 A. Yes, it is.  
31  
32 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, can I just ask you some questions,  
33 please, about what you did during your working life? Was  
34 it the case that you worked part-time for the Katanning  
35 newspaper, the Great Southern Herald?  
36 A. Yes, that is correct.  
37  
38 Q. What were those years that you worked for that  
39 newspaper?  
40 A. 1984 until 2002.  
41  
42 Q. Did you also have other jobs from time to time during  
43 that period of time as well?  
44 A. Because it was part-time I did need to work in other  
45 jobs as well.  
46  
47 Q. At the Great Southern Herald did you do a variety of

1 jobs?  
2 A. Yes. I started off in the dark room developing the  
3 photos for the journalists at the time, and then that  
4 developed into collating and lots of other things to do  
5 with the herald, and printing.  
6  
7 Q. Did you also do some writing over that time?  
8 A. Yes, I did.  
9  
10 Q. What days of the week would you work at the herald?  
11 A. Always on a Monday. That was to develop the photos  
12 for the journalists, and then other days as required.  
13  
14 Q. On Wednesday would you actually go and collect the  
15 newspaper which was printed in Albany?  
16 A. Yes, I did take over doing that for about 14 years.  
17  
18 Q. The Great Southern Herald is and was back then a  
19 weekly newspaper; is that right?  
20 A. Yes.  
21  
22 Q. Was it distributed about the middle of every week?  
23 A. Yes.  
24  
25 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, did you know one of the journalists  
26 there by the name of Patricia Fraser?  
27 A. I did.  
28  
29 Q. Do you now know that her married name is Patricia  
30 Gill?  
31 A. I do.  
32  
33 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, I would like to take you now to a  
34 time around the mid-1980s, and it is to do with Dennis  
35 McKenna. But before I ask you some questions about that,  
36 did you come to know Dennis McKenna?  
37 A. Yes, I did.  
38  
39 Q. How was it that you came to know him?  
40 A. Well, because I had my eldest son at high school, or  
41 actually both my boys went to high school, and association  
42 with school.  
43  
44 Q. So you got to know him what, some time around 1980 and  
45 onwards, would that be right?  
46 A. I guess that would be from when I would have known him  
47 most, yeah.

1  
2 Q. Over the course of time how would you describe your  
3 relationship with him? Did you think you became a friend  
4 of his?  
5 A. I considered myself a friend of his and him a friend  
6 of mine.  
7  
8 Q. Now, some time around the mid-1980s did you become  
9 aware of some stories that were circulating around the town  
10 about a certain lady and Dennis McKenna?  
11 A. I did.  
12  
13 Q. Can you tell us about --  
14 A. I did.  
15  
16 Q. Can you tell us about that?  
17 A. Which is - I heard via the office that a certain lady  
18 was trying to expose things that Dennis was doing that  
19 wasn't good.  
20  
21 Q. Did you hear from that what those things actually  
22 were?  
23 A. That he was interfering with boys.  
24  
25 Q. Boys where? Boys from where?  
26 A. From the hostel.  
27  
28 Q. Did you know the name of this lady at the time?  
29 A. No. I didn't know at the time, but I know now.  
30  
31 Q. And who was that lady?  
32 A. It was a lady called Maggie. And I believe she's  
33 called Maggie Dawkins now.  
34  
35 Q. Going back to the time in the '80s when you heard  
36 about this story, did you become aware of what happened to  
37 her and how that happened?  
38 A. Well, I just heard via the office, and being out in  
39 the community, that she had been run out of town in a short  
40 time.  
41  
42 Q. By whom?  
43 A. Dennis McKenna.  
44  
45 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, when you heard this story about this  
46 woman who you now know as Maggie Dawkins and trying to  
47 expose Dennis McKenna for interfering with boys, did you

1 believe that story that that is in fact what he was doing?  
2 A. I was shocked to hear it. I was shocked.  
3  
4 Q. Did you believe it?  
5 A. Probably not at the time.  
6  
7 Q. Why was that?  
8 A. Until he was like --  
9  
10 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, this is not criticism --  
11 A. Cause he was a friend.  
12  
13 Q. This is no criticism of you at all. You were shocked.  
14 You didn't really believe it because he was a friend. Was  
15 there anything else about him that made you not believe  
16 these allegations?  
17 A. Well, he was just so well accepted in the community  
18 and did such good things with the hostel students, all the  
19 students, that it just didn't seem possible that he would  
20 be doing untoward things.  
21  
22 HIS HONOUR: Q. Mrs Brokenshire, I just want to ask you,  
23 you say it was about the mid-1980s, but are you in any way  
24 to say when you heard this rumour in relation to when this  
25 lady left town, or can't you say?  
26 A. I can't say. It's a bit too long ago. I can't just  
27 recall exactly when it happened. I just know it happened.  
28  
29 Q. You never met the lady yourself?  
30 A. No. No.  
31  
32 MR URQUHART: Thank you, sir.  
33  
34 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, the camera is going to come back  
35 around this way when it eventually wants to. Do you know  
36 how you found out that this lady was actually Maggie  
37 Dawkins?  
38 A. I don't really know. I think it was probably after  
39 that when he was - when it was exposed and Dennis was  
40 arrested.  
41  
42 Q. I see. Now, you spoke about this lady. Can you  
43 recall whether you heard any other stories about anybody  
44 else trying to expose Dennis McKenna for doing this type of  
45 thing?  
46 A. I did hear a whisper before this happened that there  
47 was somebody that was trying to expose him, but I cannot

1 recall who it was or who told me. There was just a whisper  
2 around town.  
3  
4 Q. This was a whisper that you heard before you heard  
5 about the lady you now know as Maggie Dawkins?  
6 A. Yes. Yes.  
7  
8 Q. With the passage of time that's about all you can tell  
9 us about that?  
10 A. That's all I can tell you.  
11  
12 Q. With respect to Dennis McKenna eventually being  
13 charged, was there one particular reporter at the Great  
14 Southern Herald that followed that story and reported it  
15 quite a bit?  
16 A. Yes.  
17  
18 Q. Who was that?  
19 A. Patricia Fraser.  
20  
21 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, could you just tell us something  
22 about the times that you would see Dennis McKenna? I'm  
23 talking about now during the 1980s. Would he ever come to  
24 the newspaper office?  
25 A. Yes, he often used to come to the office. But I was  
26 out the back so I didn't always see him. But I know he  
27 came for stories - to report stories and things like that.  
28  
29 Q. So when he would report stories, what would those  
30 stories be about?  
31 A. All good things that the hostel were doing - he and  
32 the students.  
33  
34 Q. Can you give us examples of that?  
35 A. Well, they had a deb ball and they used to do catering  
36 for functions and fundraising and that type of thing. It  
37 was good things.  
38  
39 Q. So he would come along and get the newspaper to report  
40 about those things; is that right?  
41 A. Well, that would be between him and the reporter,  
42 yeah. He didn't tell me, but it was to do with the stories  
43 in the paper.  
44  
45 Q. Did you ever see him come to the office? I know you  
46 said you didn't see him all the time, but were there  
47 occasions when you did see him?

1 A. Oh, yes. Yes. Yeah, I did.  
2  
3 Q. On those occasions that you saw him would he be by  
4 himself or would he be with other people?  
5 A. I think most times he brought some students with him.  
6  
7 Q. Can you remember if they were boys or girls or boys  
8 and girls?  
9 A. Most times I saw him he only had boys with him.  
10  
11 Q. Were there any other occasions when you would see him  
12 around town with just boys with him?  
13 A. I used to work part-time at a coffee shop in the  
14 arcade, and after school he would bring some boys with him  
15 and he would shout them special drinks and afternoon tea  
16 and laugh and joke and that. But he always had boys with  
17 him.  
18  
19 Q. So never any girls on that occasion?  
20 A. Not that I can remember.  
21  
22 Q. When you say, "special treat" --  
23 A. Mostly boys.  
24  
25 Q. When you say, "special treats", what were they?  
26 A. Well, milkshakes, spiders, whatever they seemed to  
27 want, and cakes and just - it just seemed like a special  
28 treat after school. We used to think, "Wow, these boys  
29 must have been really good because he's bringing them out  
30 for a treat".  
31  
32 Q. Can you recall how many boys would come with him on  
33 these occasions?  
34 A. Oh, probably three or four.  
35  
36 Q. Now, Mrs Brokenshire, you referred to a deb ball just  
37 a minute ago. Can I ask you some things about that? Were  
38 you involved in that in any way?  
39 A. The only way I was involved probably, or my son was  
40 involved, was as a partner. But I take photos, so I took  
41 photos of the deb ball and some of the partners and the  
42 whole group.  
43  
44 Q. Can you recall about what year that was?  
45 A. I was an onlooker; 1983 it would be, before my son  
46 went to Japan.  
47

1 Q. Your son went to Japan in 1984, so in 1983.  
2 A. Hm.  
3  
4 Q. Can you recall who the debutantes were presented to on  
5 that night?  
6 A. Yes.  
7  
8 Q. Who was that?  
9 A. Sir Charles Court and Lady Court.  
10  
11 Q. Who organised that particular event?  
12 A. Well, I surmised Dennis McKenna did because it  
13 involved the hostel students.  
14  
15 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, when you heard this story about  
16 Dennis McKenna running out of town Maggie Dawkins, did you  
17 believe that account of the story?  
18 A. I didn't want to because he was a friend - but I can't  
19 explain how it was. If it was true it had to be exposed.  
20 But because he was a friend I didn't want to think it was  
21 true.  
22  
23 Q. Can I ask you this: What sort of influence did you  
24 think Dennis McKenna had around the town at this time? I  
25 am talking about the 1980s.  
26 A. Oh, look, he was held in high esteem by everyone, you  
27 know, people that I knew. He was doing great things with  
28 the hostel, the students, and he was like a golden haired  
29 boy in town.  
30  
31 Q. Did everybody hold that view though? Were there some  
32 sections of the community that questioned that opinion of  
33 him?  
34 A. Yes, there were people that did question. Even though  
35 they upheld and liked what he was doing, they just thought  
36 he was a bit strange and used sort of words that I don't  
37 normally use about him.  
38  
39 Q. It's all right. What word would they use to describe  
40 him?  
41 A. For example, "He's a bit of a poofter".  
42  
43 Q. What about students at the school or at the hostel -  
44 from anything that you heard from them are you able to give  
45 an opinion about what they thought of him?  
46 A. Sorry, no, I never heard that from students.  
47

1 Q. What about your son, did he say anything about Dennis  
2 McKenna?

3 A. My son referred to - said to me, "Mum, I know Dennis  
4 McKenna is a friend of yours, but I do not like Dennis  
5 McKenna".

6  
7 Q. Did you ever ask him why that was?

8 A. That was the end of the conversation. He never  
9 explained why he didn't like him. I asked him but he  
10 didn't - said, "I don't like Dennis McKenna" full stop.

11  
12 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, can you just answer "yes" or "no" to  
13 this: Do you recall having a conversation with a boy who  
14 was at the hostel and him asking you something?

15 A. Yes.

16  
17 Q. It's best if you don't say his name, but can you just  
18 tell us, firstly, when it was that you had this  
19 conversation with this boy, about?

20 A. It probably was in - I can't remember whether it was  
21 before my son went to Japan or after. But it may have been  
22 after, because he was boarding at the hostel and he asked  
23 me could he come and live with our family.

24  
25 Q. When he asked you that can you remember what his  
26 demeanour was like?

27 A. He just wanted to come and live with us, and I said to  
28 him, "Why would you want to do that, because you've got  
29 everything going for you at the hostel?" He never said why  
30 he wanted to come and live with us.

31  
32 Q. Did he end up coming to live with you?

33 A. No, he didn't.

34  
35 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, can you recall one of the first  
36 meetings you had with Mr McKenna when he explained  
37 something about his background to you?

38 A. Yes.

39  
40 Q. Can you tell us about that?

41 A. Yes. I belong to or attended a Uniting Church Ladies  
42 Evening group to which they would invite a guest speaker,  
43 and Dennis was invited as a guest speaker. He came with  
44 several boys to explain what he did at the hostel and how  
45 he ran the hostel, and things like that.

46  
47 Q. Following that did he organise a tour of the hostel

1 with you and the other ladies that belonged to that group?  
2 A. Yes, he did. And we went one evening up there to have  
3 a look over the hostel to see how it work and what it  
4 looked like.  
5  
6 Q. During this time that you saw Mr McKenna can you  
7 recall him saying something to you about what he did before  
8 he became warden at the hostel?  
9 A. At the meeting, the first meeting that we had that he  
10 came as guest speaker, he explained to us that he was  
11 engaged to a beautiful young girl who got sick and died and  
12 he was broken-hearted about that. He went into the  
13 ministry to become a priest, but he left that to become a  
14 youth worker. And he explained that that's what he was  
15 doing at the time working at the St Andrew's hostel.  
16  
17 HIS HONOUR: Q. Did he say to you that he became a priest  
18 or he started the training?  
19 A. He just started his training. I don't think he  
20 completed his training as a priest.  
21  
22 MR URQUHART: Q. Now, Mrs Brokenshire, if we can go now  
23 to the time when Dennis McKenna was first charged with  
24 offences of a sexual nature against initially one boy at  
25 the hostel. You were in Katanning then at the time; you  
26 were still living there?  
27 A. Yes, yes.  
28  
29 Q. Can you recall the reaction of the community when word  
30 got out that he'd been charged?  
31 A. Well, people were shocked and there was disbelief.  
32  
33 Q. Did that include you?  
34 A. And I was shocked too. Yes. Definitely.  
35  
36 Q. Your son, had he moved out of the town by that stage?  
37 A. Yes, he was living in Canberra at that stage.  
38  
39 Q. This is your son Glenn?  
40 A. Yes.  
41  
42 Q. Did you speak to him about this major development?  
43 A. Yes, I did. I rang and told him that Dennis had been  
44 arrested.  
45  
46 Q. Did you tell him what he had been arrested for?  
47 A. I did.

1  
2 Q. Can you recall what your son said in response to that?  
3 A. He just said, "Mum, I knew all the time".  
4  
5 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, can I just ask you something. Do you  
6 know a man by the name of Len Wilkinson?  
7 A. I do.  
8  
9 Q. How did you know him, or how do you know him?  
10 A. I probably first got to know who he was when he was  
11 manager of Western Family, I think it was called then.  
12 Then he was manager of the local BKW Co-op.  
13  
14 Q. Did he have anything to do with the Katanning hostel  
15 board?  
16 A. He was on the board.  
17  
18 Q. Did you also do something for him by way of a  
19 part-time job during the 1980s?  
20 A. I used to do house cleaning. I can't remember whether  
21 it was once a week now or twice - or once a fortnight at  
22 his home for his wife.  
23  
24 Q. Were you able to observe anything about what sort of  
25 relationship he had with Dennis McKenna?  
26 A. Well, it just came across that he was a good friend of  
27 Dennis McKenna's.  
28  
29 MR URQUHART: Thank you, Mrs Brokenshire. That's all the  
30 questions I have.  
31  
32 HIS HONOUR: Yes, Mr Hammond.  
33  
34 <CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR HAMMOND:  
35  
36 MR HAMMOND: Q. Can you hear me, Mrs Brokenshire?  
37 A. I can.  
38  
39 Q. And you can see me as well?  
40 A. Yes. I can.  
41  
42 Q. My name is John Hammond, Mrs Brokenshire, and I act  
43 for a number of the victims of Dennis McKenna. I would  
44 like to take you back to one of the answers you gave  
45 Counsel Assisting about when the rumours were first  
46 circulating in Katanning, which was in the mid-1980s about  
47 Dennis McKenna.

1 A. Okay.  
2  
3 Q. Those rumours came to you, didn't they - you heard  
4 those rumours?  
5 A. Just in conversation around the town, yes, and in the  
6 office at the Herald.  
7  
8 Q. So the rumours that were circulating around the Herald  
9 and around town were that Dennis McKenna was up to  
10 something abnormal?  
11 A. Well, I guess that's what you would - you would say.  
12  
13 Q. And the rumours concentrated on the fact that he was -  
14 to use the word that you heard - a "poofter"?  
15 A. Yes, yes.  
16  
17 Q. And that those abnormal activities, if you like, were  
18 involving boys at the Katanning hostel?  
19 A. Well, that's what you would presume, that that's where  
20 he was, so that would be with the boys there, I guess, yes  
21 --  
22  
23 Q. And in the confines of --  
24 A. -- because that was his main place.  
25  
26 Q. In the confines of a small country town, that would  
27 have come as quite a shock to you, wouldn't it, that  
28 rumour?  
29 A. Absolutely. Absolutely.  
30  
31 Q. And, Mrs Brokenshire, did you then discuss that  
32 rumour, as I would expect you did, with other people in the  
33 town?  
34 A. No, not much, no. I just hoped that it wasn't true.  
35  
36 Q. But it sounds, from what you're saying to the Inquiry,  
37 that the rumour was certainly around the town in the mid  
38 1980s?  
39 A. Well, whenever there was somebody that was trying to  
40 expose it - there was another person who I mentioned before  
41 Maggie Dawkins, but it wasn't - weren't discussing it all  
42 the time.  
43  
44 Q. The person that you talked about that was before  
45 Maggie Dawkins, do you remember who that was?  
46 A. I got no idea. There was just a little murmur of it,  
47 and you just think, "Well, that's just somebody might have

1 something against him", yes.  
2  
3 Q. As time went on and you got to see Dennis McKenna more  
4 often mixing with boys, did you ever feel a little bit  
5 uncomfortable about the way he interacted with the boys?  
6 A. No, not really. They just seemed quite happy and  
7 getting on well. I didn't sort of see anything with my  
8 eyes that think, "Well, I don't like the look of that".  
9  
10 Q. So there was nothing --  
11 A. They always seemed to be a happy family.  
12  
13 Q. So there was nothing that he did --  
14 A. Untoward.  
15  
16 Q. Sorry, there was nothing that he did publicly, say, at  
17 the coffee shop, which gave you any cause for concern?  
18 A. No, no.  
19  
20 Q. Mrs Brokenshire, did you ever speak to Dennis McKenna  
21 about the rumours that you'd heard?  
22 A. No, never.  
23  
24 Q. And you say the rumours were also within the newspaper  
25 office in the mid 1980s?  
26 A. Just like newspaper chats in the office, yes; just -  
27 lots of things go on in - you know, you chat about things  
28 in general and it was there, but --  
29  
30 Q. So it would be fair to say that most people at the  
31 newspaper in the mid 1980s knew about the rumours involving  
32 Dennis McKenna?  
33 A. Well, probably be more late '80s that - yes, I guess  
34 they would have done. I haven't asked them. I don't - you  
35 know. I haven't chatted to them about it.  
36  
37 Q. And did you notice Dennis McKenna mixing with other  
38 people in the town, such as the local police?  
39 A. No. Most times I saw him was when they had shows on  
40 up at the hostel, or sporting events and things like that,  
41 not actually police or people like that.  
42  
43 Q. Were you present when he was awarded Citizen of the  
44 Year in the 1980s?  
45 A. I was.  
46  
47 Q. That was the same day that your son was awarded Junior

1 Citizen of the Year?  
2 A. No, no, it wasn't, it was the year before because when  
3 Dennis was awarded to, my son was in Japan, so it was the  
4 year before that my son got it.  
5  
6 Q. And did you ever have - did you ever go to the hostel  
7 yourself, the St Andrew's Hostel?  
8 A. I did - attended, do you mean --  
9  
10 Q. Yes.  
11 A. -- or just go to it.  
12  
13 Q. No, you attended there?  
14 A. No, I didn't attend the hostel myself.  
15  
16 Q. Sorry, not - what I mean is did you ever visit -  
17 sorry, did you ever visit the hostel?  
18 A. Visit, yes, yes.  
19  
20 Q. And you saw Dennis McKenna at the hostel?  
21 A. I did.  
22  
23 Q. Interacting with the boys?  
24 A. With all the students at the hostel.  
25  
26 MR URQUHART: Thank you, Mrs Brokenshire.  
27  
28 HIS HONOUR: Mr Jenkin, do you have anything?  
29  
30 MR JENKIN: No, thank you, sir.  
31  
32 HIS HONOUR: All right. Nothing arising.  
33  
34 MR URQUHART: No, there's not, thank you, sir.  
35  
36 HIS HONOUR: Allright. Well, thank you, Mrs Brokenshire,  
37 that completes your evidence. We're now going to cut the  
38 video link. Thank you for making yourself available.  
39  
40 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.  
41  
42 <THE WITNESS WITHDREW  
43  
44 HIS HONOUR: Yes, Mr Urquhart.  
45  
46 MR URQUHART: Sir, and the only other witness that's going  
47 to be called today is Patricia Adele de Freyne Gill, and

1 Mrs Gill's actually been outside the hearing room during  
2 the course of Mrs Brokenshire's evidence. Mrs Gill is not  
3 there. She was there a moment ago.  
4  
5 HIS HONOUR: Well, I'll wait while she's fetched.  
6  
7 MR URQUHART: I think Mr Gill has gone off to look for  
8 her.  
9  
10 HIS HONOUR: Very good.  
11  
12 MR URQUHART: I presume he can go into every room on the  
13 floor except one on the floor, so hopefully she will be  
14 there, because we all chatted with her before coming into  
15 the court.  
16  
17 HIS HONOUR: Right. Well, I don't mind waiting.  
18  
19 <PATRICIA ADELE DE FREYNE GILL, sworn:  
20  
21 <EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY MR URQUHART:  
22  
23 MR URQUHART: Q. Mrs Gill, your full name is Patricia  
24 Adele de Freyne Gill; is that right?  
25 A. That's right.  
26  
27 Q. And it's - "de Freyne" is spelt D-E and then separate  
28 word F-R-E-Y-N-E?  
29 A. That's right.  
30  
31 Q. And you currently reside in Denmark?  
32 A. That's right.  
33  
34 Q. And you still work as a journalist?  
35 A. I do.  
36  
37 Q. And how long have you been a journalist for?  
38 A. 30 years.  
39  
40 Q. 30 years. All right. Now, was there a time there  
41 though, where you lived in Katanning?  
42 A. Yes, from 1976 to 1994.  
43  
44 Q. And in that time did you have the surname Fraser?  
45 A. I was Fraser for 27 years.  
46  
47 Q. Including that time?

1 A. Including that time, yes.  
2  
3 Q. And there did you work as a journalist at the 'Great  
4 Southern Herald'?  
5 A. I did.  
6  
7 Q. And that was the Katanning's local newspaper?  
8 A. That's right.  
9  
10 Q. And you worked there from 1982 to when you left in  
11 1984?  
12 A. That's right, 19 - I'd actually gone and worked in  
13 '93. I was working in Albany, but I did return to  
14 Katanning in that time until I finally left and relocated  
15 to Albany in '94.  
16  
17 Q. I see. Now, the 'Great Southern Herald' - that has a  
18 distribution of - in what areas?  
19 A. The Upper Great Southern, I guess you call it - so  
20 that's Kojonup, Katanning, Tambellup, Cranbrook, Ongerup,  
21 Jerramungup and Nyabing, Pingrup. So all those small  
22 communities.  
23  
24 Q. Yes.  
25 A. Yes.  
26  
27 Q. And we've already heard that it's a weekly newspaper?  
28 A. That's right.  
29  
30 Q. Which is distributed midweek?  
31 A. That's right, yes.  
32  
33 Q. And whilst you were there, did you know a lady by the  
34 name of Shirley Brokenshire?  
35 A. I did, yes.  
36  
37 Q. And what sort of - how many staff worked at the 'Great  
38 Southern Herald' at the time that you were there, and just  
39 roughly?  
40 A. Around about a dozen.  
41  
42 Q. I see.  
43 A. But, yes, as it became less mechanised, the staff  
44 shrank, of course.  
45  
46 Q. Now, Mrs Gill, I want to ask you now some questions  
47 regarding Dennis McKenna. We'll start off, I suppose, with

1 when he was initially charged, which we know was in --  
2 A. 1990.  
3  
4 Q. -- 1990, towards the end of 1990, and he was again  
5 charged with further offences at the beginning of 1991.  
6 A. That's right.  
7  
8 Q. And that he had his Albany District Court trial in  
9 June 1991.  
10 A. That's right, yes.  
11  
12 Q. Am I right in saying that you covered - were you one  
13 of --  
14 A. I attended one day of the trial.  
15  
16 Q. One day of the trial?  
17 A. Yes.  
18  
19 Q. But you also covered when he was charged, and the  
20 aftermath as well?  
21 A. Yes, yes.  
22  
23 Q. Right.  
24 A. Not that you could say anything obviously, because  
25 once he was charged there was very little - there was very  
26 little we could, right until he went to court --  
27  
28 Q. Of course, yes.  
29 A. -- obviously.  
30  
31 Q. Yes. Now, can you recall how it was that the  
32 newspaper found out that he initially had been charged?  
33 A. Sergeant - the officer-in-charge, Sergeant Graham  
34 Wasley, rang the newspaper. I was out at the time and my  
35 cadet went down to the court.  
36  
37 Q. And this is Mr McKenna's first appearance, was it, in  
38 court?  
39 A. This was Mr McKenna's first appearance, yes. Sorry,  
40 he'd just appeared for mention.  
41  
42 Q. Now, you mentioned Sergeant Wasley. Can I just ask  
43 you, did you know him for a number of years whilst he was  
44 officer-in-charge of Katanning Police Station?  
45 A. Yes, yes, we spoke often.  
46  
47 Q. And what would your assessment be of Sergeant Wasley?

1 A. A very straight fellow, a very decent man.  
2  
3 Q. Now, Mrs Gill, following the charging of Mr McKenna,  
4 and, indeed, his conviction - in particular following his  
5 conviction - did the newspaper receive a number of letters  
6 and/or phone calls from Katanning residents regarding the  
7 coverage?  
8 A. Yes. We received letters and I spoke to various  
9 people - various people spoke to me about it. We received  
10 various letters saying how our coverage was over the top,  
11 that I should - that I should pull my head in, that I  
12 should back off, that I was bringing bad publicity to  
13 Katanning, that all this was a regrettable matter that -  
14 that we needed to move on from this.  
15  
16 Q. And were these letters that you got after he was  
17 charged or after he was convicted or both?  
18 A. After he was convicted, yes. I mean, there was - we  
19 couldn't publish letters in support of or against him  
20 obviously, until the man was convicted.  
21  
22 Q. Yes. So did you get any letters praising the  
23 newspaper's coverage, or phone calls, or whether --  
24 A. Yes.  
25  
26 Q. You got that as well?  
27 A. Yes, yes.  
28  
29 Q. But was there more of negative --  
30 A. More negative, yes. By far more negative, yes.  
31  
32 Q. And, indeed, did you know the shire President at the  
33 time?  
34 A. Yes, Peter Kerin.  
35  
36 Q. Did you have a conversation with him regarding this  
37 matter?  
38 A. Yes, Peter Kerin told me that it was - that I was  
39 bringing bad publicity to town. I was actually interviewed  
40 on GWN and I think it was - I'm not sure - Channel Nine,  
41 after the trial I was interviewed. Yes, and Peter sort of  
42 said, you know, like, "What are you doing? This is far too  
43 much, haven't you had enough of this? It's time we moved  
44 on. I just think it's - I just think it's over the top."  
45  
46 Q. And what was your response to these sort of  
47 accusations?

1 A. I would have said, "This is a very serious matter,  
2 Peter. This is a very serious matter. This is something -  
3 the newspaper hasn't been able to report this matter until  
4 the trial has been completed. This is the information that  
5 I gathered in the meantime. I'm - it was my responsibility  
6 as the senior reporter in Katanning to report those  
7 matters. It was time they were aired, over time that these  
8 matters were aired."  
9

10 Q. So is it fair to say then that insofar as support for  
11 you from the township, was that --

12 A. No, there was very little of it.  
13

14 Q. Did you get any support --

15 A. From the parents of the complainants or parents who  
16 were interested in the trial, who thought that - thought  
17 that there was something awry and thought that - yes, those  
18 sort of people were supportive of me, but in the main, the  
19 community - I got - in the main my impression of the  
20 community's view of what I was doing was that it was over  
21 the top.  
22

23 Q. So did you get any support from people who held  
24 positions of authority within the town?

25 A. None. Ainslie Evans was never critical of what I - of  
26 what I wrote.  
27

28 Q. Right.

29 A. She was never - she was never supportive of it, but  
30 she was - she never criticised me.  
31

32 Q. And with respect to Mrs Evans, did you know her over a  
33 long period of time?

34 A. Yes.  
35

36 Q. And did you have a friendship with her?

37 A. Yes. I met her for lunch. Primarily I would meet her  
38 for lunch to talk about - like, she was a councillor, she  
39 was involved in the Historical Society. It was very much  
40 in her interest to have a relationship with me --  
41

42 Q. Yes.

43 A. -- but we also had children of the same age, so there  
44 were many things that we could discuss.  
45

46 Q. Yes. So apart from - so she neither criticised you  
47 nor supported you?

1 A. Yes. She was always - she was - Ainslie was always  
2 very supportive of the 'Great Southern Herald'.  
3

4 Q. Yes.

5 A. She seemed to - she liked the paper. She liked - I  
6 got the impression that she liked me.  
7

8 Q. So apart from her, the others - the other people in  
9 positions of authority --

10 A. Thought I was - thought I was foolish in the way I  
11 pursued the matter.  
12

13 Q. Did you know a Mr Garth Addis?

14 A. Yes.  
15

16 Q. All right. And how did you know him?

17 A. He was Chairman of the hostel board. I knew him when  
18 he - I think he must have been on the Kent Shire Council,  
19 and I also knew his wife who was involved in community  
20 projects. They were very much a community-minded family.  
21

22 Q. And you are aware now that Mr Addis has passed away?

23 A. Yes, yes.  
24

25 Q. So how would you describe your relationship with him?

26 A. Well, we weren't - we weren't friendly on a social  
27 basis, but I felt that - I felt that Garth was able to take  
28 me into his confidence. I thought that Garth liked me and  
29 liked the work I did.  
30

31 Q. Did you speak to him after Dennis McKenna had been  
32 charged?

33 A. Yes, I would have spoken to Garth. I can't be - I  
34 can't be accurate, but I would imagine I spoke to Garth  
35 several times in matters relating to McKenna.  
36

37 Q. Right. And was that in his capacity as the St  
38 Andrew's Hostel Board Chairman?

39 A. Yes, yes.  
40

41 Q. Now, can you recall what his reaction was to Dennis  
42 McKenna being charged?

43 A. He was in - in relation to McKenna being charged, I  
44 think initially - initially he was prepared to - initially  
45 he was prepared to be unbiased about it, "but maybe he was  
46 innocent, maybe not". Yes. I think he took a - yes, he  
47 sort of sat on the fence for a bit.

1  
2 Q. And did that --  
3 A. That changed.  
4  
5 Q. -- to your observations change?  
6 A. That changed dramatically.  
7  
8 Q. And do you know when that changed?  
9 A. It certainly changed once his children - he - he was  
10 considering putting himself forward as a character witness.  
11 His children urged him not to do so.  
12  
13 Q. So this is a character witness for Dennis McKenna, at  
14 his trial?  
15 A. For Dennis's trial.  
16  
17 Q. Yes.  
18 A. His children urged him not to do so. He - and he -  
19 and his children said to him, "Those allegations, dad, are  
20 true."  
21  
22 Q. Is this something that he told you?  
23 A. Yes.  
24  
25 Q. Mr Addis told you?  
26 A. Yes.  
27  
28 Q. And did he accept the word of his children?  
29 A. He certainly did.  
30  
31 Q. And is that when his reaction changed?  
32 A. He - well, I don't know exactly at what point Garth's  
33 reaction changed, but certainly after that conversation  
34 when I spoke to Garth, he was extremely remorseful about  
35 his previous attitude --  
36  
37 Q. Right.  
38 A. -- that he hadn't seen through this man, he felt he'd  
39 been made a fool of by McKenna and Murray.  
40  
41 Q. Now, when you say "Murray", do you mean Ian Murray?  
42 A. I certainly mean Ian Murray.  
43  
44 Q. We'll get to him in a moment. But how would you  
45 describe Mr Addis? I understand was he a farmer?  
46 A. He was a farmer. I would describe Mr Addis as a  
47 well-meaning, though simple man, which I don't mean - I

1 don't mean that in an unflattering way. I would imagine  
2 Garth went to high school locally and went straight on the  
3 farm. I don't imagine Garth had many experiences of the  
4 outer world.  
5  
6 Q. Right. Now --  
7 A. He was a well-meaning man.  
8  
9 Q. Yes.  
10 A. He saw good in people that didn't deserve it.  
11  
12 Q. And you've mentioned there something about Ian Murray.  
13 A. Murray.  
14  
15 Q. Yes. Yes. Just to put things in background: what was  
16 your relationship like with Mr Murray before Dennis McKenna  
17 got charged?  
18 A. Troubled.  
19  
20 Q. Right. Are you able to describe to us what - why it  
21 was troubled?  
22 A. Mr Murray was a very officious self-promoting person,  
23 and certainly prepared to promote the hostel - the -  
24 anything - anything as long as it reflected well on the  
25 school and Mr Murray, he was happy, but he wasn't happy if  
26 it - yes, if anyone questioned that.  
27  
28 Q. Right. I see. I suppose most principals would like  
29 things to reflect well upon their school?  
30 A. We all do that, but the reality is that things don't  
31 always reflect well on you. There was a series of strikes  
32 in the community, I was reporting on the series of strikes.  
33 They related to pay claims, and they related to the  
34 standard of GEHA, which is Government Employees' Housing  
35 Authority --  
36  
37 Q. Are we talking about teachers?  
38 A. -- accommodation. Teachers, yes - poor standard of  
39 them.  
40  
41 Q. Was this across the State, this matter, these  
42 disputes?  
43 A. They were particularly bagging Katanning. They were  
44 also the - I just need to sort of think what - what were  
45 the other matters. The other matter, of course - the other  
46 matter was the lowering standard of teachers due to the  
47 poor - due to the poor pay levels; that, in fact, you could

1 become a teacher or you could enter into teaching on a  
2 failed TEE. This was part of their material --  
3  
4 Q. Right.  
5 A. -- they were using in promoting the need for higher  
6 paid claims.  
7  
8 Q. Yes. Now, was there an incident in Katanning  
9 regarding some material that a teacher had written that  
10 the --  
11 A. Yes.  
12  
13 Q. -- the newspaper used to --  
14 A. To demonstrate the fact that - yes.  
15  
16 Q. Yes.  
17 A. There had been a movie shown at the hostel. I don't  
18 remember the exact nature of the movie. It was about  
19 witchcraft or demon worship, something like that.  
20 Katanning is a very conservative town. Katanning - the  
21 basis of the Katanning community is the Baptist Church.  
22 There are very - there are many fundamentalists and  
23 Pentecostal, and also in the outerlying areas - what do you  
24 call them - Christian Brethren families - very strong, very  
25 strong church background. We received letters - a letter  
26 or some letters to the editor about how inappropriate this  
27 movie was.  
28  
29 Q. Was this movie shown at the theatre?  
30 A. At the St Andrew's Hostel Theatre.  
31  
32 Q. Yes.  
33 A. Yes.  
34  
35 Q. It was part of the recreational shed there?  
36 A. It was a part of the recreational activities that took  
37 place routinely at the hostel, yes.  
38  
39 Q. So there was some negative publicity?  
40 A. Some negative publicity, and McKenna came with  
41 indecent haste with - with this film review that had been  
42 written in longhand by a teacher, which was full of  
43 spelling errors.  
44  
45 Q. And so --  
46 A. And so the newspaper published the film review as a  
47 bromide. In other words, it's a scan and it's just used

1 like a photograph.  
2  
3 Q. I see. And the purpose of the - publishing that  
4 review --  
5 A. Demonstrated that, yes, the low standard of literacy  
6 among teachers.  
7  
8 Q. So it was actually used for a different purpose --  
9 A. Purpose.  
10  
11 Q. -- to what Dennis McKenna --  
12 A. Yes.  
13  
14 Q. -- wanted it used for?  
15 A. Yes.  
16  
17 Q. Right.  
18 A. Yes.  
19  
20 HIS HONOUR: Q. Did you make a story of that, about the  
21 spelling errors, or was it just something --  
22 A. It was just a - it was just a picture, and perhaps a  
23 caption. I didn't make a story - apart from reference -  
24 perhaps reference to the claims that the teachers were  
25 putting forward. Yes. That was in a community - this was  
26 in a community where commodity prices were very low.  
27 People were not - the community was not particularly  
28 interested in a group of people who lobbed into town in  
29 February, had three months holiday and complained about the  
30 housing and the low pay rate. This was a community where  
31 the government of the day was needing to fund emergency  
32 programs so - to stop people from committing suicide due to  
33 the financial hardship of their - of the farming at that  
34 time.  
35  
36 MR URQUHART: Q. Are you talking about the people  
37 lobbying in and taking a three month holiday from February  
38 onwards?  
39 A. Yes.  
40  
41 Q. You're talking about teachers, are you?  
42 A. Yes, I'm talking about teachers, yes.  
43  
44 Q. All right.  
45 A. Yes. It just seems - it just seemed very incongruous  
46 in this community, which was having a battle.  
47

1 Q. What was the reaction by Dennis McKenna and the school  
2 to --  
3 A. Outrage.  
4  
5 Q. -- the publication of this review?  
6 A. Outrage, and I was asked to apologise to the teacher.  
7  
8 Q. Who were you asked by, to apologise?  
9 A. Ian Murray.  
10  
11 Q. And did you do that?  
12 A. No.  
13  
14 Q. Did he enforce a ban upon you?  
15 A. He enforced a ban upon me. I was banned from the high  
16 school.  
17  
18 Q. Could that work in practice?  
19 A. It could not work in practice because I had a daughter  
20 who was a student at the high school at the time.  
21  
22 Q. So how was the impasse broken or --  
23 A. It wasn't.  
24  
25 Q. It wasn't?  
26 A. Yes, Mr Murray left.  
27  
28 Q. Mr Murray left?  
29 A. Yes.  
30  
31 Q. Left the school?  
32 A. Left the school.  
33  
34 Q. Was that --  
35 A. Before we - before the - before the Great Southern  
36 Herald resumed reporting on the school.  
37  
38 Q. I see. So there was no further reporting --  
39 A. No.  
40  
41 Q. -- by the Herald?  
42 A. He said the young cadet was welcome to come to the  
43 school, but I wasn't.  
44  
45 Q. And did you ultimately make alternative arrangements  
46 for --  
47 A. I did.

1  
2 Q. -- your daughter?  
3 A. My daughter needed to be sent to a private - my  
4 daughter was sent to a private school. My daughter was a -  
5 my daughter was a capable student. I didn't wish to see  
6 her education jeopardised in any way. I made - her father  
7 and I made the decision to remove her to a private  
8 school --  
9  
10 Q. Right.  
11 A. -- at considerable cost to ourselves.  
12  
13 Q. So using that as a time frame, can you say what year  
14 it was that you had this falling out with Mr Murray and Mr  
15 McKenna in relation to the review article?  
16 A. My daughter is 38. She went to - she went to the  
17 private school when she - in Year 11 and 12. So she was 16  
18 and 17. So it would have been '91 - so it would have  
19 been - she would have gone away. So this would have  
20 occurred in '91, yes, that I was banned from the school,  
21 which was the year of the trial.  
22  
23 Q. Okay. So would it have been a bit earlier than that  
24 because Mr McKenna was suspended from being warden --  
25 A. In '91.  
26  
27 Q. -- at the school in 1990?  
28 A. Okay.  
29  
30 Q. Might it have been the year before that? We don't  
31 need to be precise.  
32 A. Okay, it would have been 1990. It would have been  
33 1990. See, she would have turned 16 the year she went away  
34 to school in Perth.  
35  
36 Q. So what year was she born?  
37 A. She was born in 1974.  
38  
39 Q. 1974, so that means she would have been in --  
40 A. 1990.  
41  
42 Q. 1991 she would have been Year 12?  
43 A. Yes, that's right.  
44  
45 Q. 1990 she would have been Year 11?  
46 A. That's right.  
47

1 Q. All right. So what does that indicate - that this  
2 happened in 1999 then?  
3 A. Must have been, yes.  
4  
5 Q. Yes.  
6 A. Must have been then.  
7  
8 Q. Okay.  
9 A. Must have been, yes, which was --  
10  
11 HIS HONOUR: Q. 1989?  
12 A. Yes.  
13  
14 MR URQUHART: Q. It was before she went to school  
15 privately in Perth, which was for years 11 and 12?  
16 A. Yes, yes.  
17  
18 Q. Okay. Yes.  
19 A. All the years - no, I would have made the arrangements  
20 and then sent her the next year now, wouldn't I? Yes, yes.  
21  
22 Q. All right. Now, you've just now given that background  
23 regarding your relationship with Mr Murray, but you were  
24 going to say to us something about what Mr Addis said to  
25 you regarding Mr Murray. Mr Addis - you got to a point  
26 there where Mr Addis was telling you about that, how  
27 remorseful he was for --  
28 A. Not seeing through both these people.  
29  
30 Q. Yes. We know about Dennis McKenna, but what did he  
31 say about Ian Murray?  
32 A. He was sickened by Ian Murray's attitude towards  
33 Dennis. He thought it was - he thought it was - well, he  
34 referred to - Mr Murray in meetings referred to "our little  
35 friend" and "the need to protect our little friend".  
36  
37 Q. Mr Addis said that to you?  
38 A. Mr Addis said that to me.  
39  
40 Q. That was a description that Murray gave --  
41 A. This was a description of Mr Murray in meetings  
42 discussing the matter of Mr McKenna, yes.  
43  
44 Q. He referred to Mr McKenna as --  
45 A. "Our little friend" and "our little friend that we  
46 need to protect".  
47

1 Q. Mrs Gill, do you remember speaking to Dennis McKenna  
2 before he was actually charged but after a student at the  
3 hostel had come forward with a complaint about him?  
4 A. I certainly do.  
5  
6 Q. That student who'd come forward with a complaint, can  
7 you recall who that student was?  
8 A. That was Todd Jefferis.  
9  
10 Q. You have told us about the falling out that you had  
11 with Dennis McKenna which would have been prior to him --  
12 A. The falling out I had with Murray, yeah.  
13  
14 Q. Sorry, Murray?  
15 A. Yeah.  
16  
17 Q. Had you had a falling out with Dennis McKenna though  
18 as a result of you using that teachers' review in your  
19 article?  
20 A. McKenna basically scuttled away and never complained  
21 about it to me. He just went to ground about that one. I  
22 never heard any complaints.  
23  
24 Q. So we know --  
25 A. It all came through Murray, not McKenna.  
26  
27 Q. Turning our attention to your relationship with Dennis  
28 McKenna --  
29 A. Was tested.  
30  
31 Q. What was it like before that?  
32 A. My relationship with McKenna before that - uneasy.  
33  
34 Q. Do you have any explanation as to why it was uneasy?  
35 A. I went to the hostel one time - I don't remember what  
36 for. I went there and the students were in the process of  
37 receiving triple antigen shots for entering into year 12.  
38 A young lad, a very small year 8 boy, had fainted. The  
39 child was lying in McKenna's arms. McKenna was stroking  
40 his arms and supporting him across his chest, like cradling  
41 a baby. To me it didn't look like somebody rendering first  
42 aid.  
43  
44 Q. What was your reaction to that?  
45 A. I thought "Hm".  
46  
47 HIS HONOUR: Q. What does that mean?

1 A. Oh, I thought it was inappropriate. I thought it was  
2 inappropriate. I thought it was inappropriate from a man  
3 who is advertently camp in such a conservative community.  
4  
5 Q. About when was that incident?  
6 A. I can't remember exactly.  
7  
8 MR URQUHART: Q. Can you put a decade to it?  
9 A. Well, it's the '80s. It certainly is. It's certainly  
10 from 1984. It was well before he was charged. It was  
11 before he was charged, yes.  
12  
13 Q. Mrs Gill, this is no criticism at all. So you clearly  
14 felt uneasy about that?  
15 A. Hm.  
16  
17 Q. Did you do anything about it? Did you mention it to  
18 anyone?  
19 A. No. No.  
20  
21 Q. Again, no criticism --  
22 A. No, no.  
23  
24 Q. -- can you say why that was not --  
25 A. Why I didn't do that?  
26  
27 Q. Yes.  
28 A. This was in an era - I mean, these days it would seem  
29 to me to be down right inappropriate straight away, and you  
30 would complain because the man was not rendering first aid.  
31 I did not know about those sort of things. Those sort of  
32 matters were not clear; just as I think in that era it was  
33 very hard to make a complaint about sexual abuse. My  
34 understanding was that a lot of sexual abuse complaints  
35 came to the courts through a program called Operation  
36 Phenix whereby people --  
37  
38 Q. Paradox.  
39 A. Paradox. That's it. Whereby people could make  
40 complaints and get some sort of assistance anonymously,  
41 without necessarily having to go to the local sergeant.  
42  
43 HIS HONOUR: Q. Going back to your first comment. You  
44 said back then you didn't have an awareness that this sort  
45 of thing went on?  
46 A. No. No. No. I just thought "Hm".  
47

1 Q. You were a fairly sophisticated person within that  
2 community, weren't you, really? Would you agree?  
3 A. I suppose so. I guess so, yeah.  
4  
5 Q. I have heard evidence from at least --  
6 A. I've spent 60 years living in the country. I'm not  
7 that sophisticated.  
8  
9 Q. I have heard evidence from at least one farmer, a  
10 parent of children who said, "we are just ordinary decent  
11 people. We had no conception that this sort of thing could  
12 happen".  
13 A. Yes.  
14  
15 Q. Would you understand that comment?  
16 A. Yes, I certainly could understand that comment because  
17 I think --  
18  
19 Q. Back then in the 1970s and 1980s?  
20 A. Yes, I certainly could understand that.  
21  
22 Q. Because even you, in the mid-1980s, had trouble  
23 conceiving --  
24 A. I looked at that and thought "Hm" --  
25  
26 Q. -- that this might happen?  
27 A. I looked at that and thought "Hm, now do I take" -  
28 yeah, but who would I take that matter to?  
29  
30 HIS HONOUR: Yes, I understand.  
31  
32 MR URQUHART: Q. Maybe the principal of the school?  
33 A. Oh, yeah.  
34  
35 Q. That wouldn't have been Ian Murray at the time,  
36 though. Would that have been an option?  
37 A. It could have been an option, yes - yeah. It could  
38 have been an option. I did not - had I known I would  
39 surely have done something right there and then, had I  
40 known.  
41  
42 Q. Is it fair to say at that time that was the only  
43 thing --  
44 A. That was the only thing I saw apart from - apart from  
45 McKenna coming into the office and being followed by young  
46 fresh faced lads with calf eyes.  
47

1 Q. With what, sorry?  
2 A. Calf eyes. You know, with --  
3  
4 HIS HONOUR: Q. Yes, I know.  
5 A. Love struck. You think "What on earth are these boys  
6 doing trailing around" --  
7  
8 Q. I haven't heard that expression for a long time, but I  
9 know exactly what you mean. Yes.  
10 A. Thank you.  
11  
12 MR URQUHART: Q. Did you notice anything else about seeing  
13 Dennis McKenna with students?  
14 A. I saw him in his - is it the Trans Am Pontiac.  
15  
16 Q. The car?  
17 A. The car. This very, very flash car. These are rural  
18 children. Rural boys love their cars.  
19  
20 Q. You saw him with --  
21 A. I saw him with assistants and I think senior students  
22 in this car driving around. It looked - it looked like a  
23 man trying to impress young people.  
24  
25 Q. Prior to him being charged, though, what was his  
26 reputation like within the community, talking about Dennis  
27 McKenna of course?  
28 A. Well, plenty of people thought he was wonderful.  
29 Yeah. I mean, he provided entertainment for the students  
30 there. He provided movies. He had visiting rock bands  
31 come to the school. I think at one stage he actually ran  
32 the hostel - actually ran a roller skating rink, I think.  
33 He was seen as doing things that were good for young  
34 people.  
35  
36 Q. Are you aware of the year he was nominate and won  
37 jointly the Citizen of the Year?  
38 A. I think he actually won it three times.  
39  
40 Q. We have heard that. The Honour Board only says once.  
41 A. Oh, maybe. Okay.  
42  
43 Q. In 1984.  
44 A. 1984. Yes. I was new to my job. I did not cover  
45 that event.  
46  
47 Q. Were there any occasions where you actually heard

1 parents talk about St Andrew's Hostel and what they might  
2 do with their children? I am talking about parents who  
3 resided in Katanning.  
4 A. Oh, yes. He was thought as being so gifted with  
5 handling young folk that I heard of a family who was having  
6 difficulties with their teenage son, and they had  
7 considered sending the boy to the hostel for discipline  
8 that Dennis would be able to mete out that they were unable  
9 to as parents.  
10  
11 Q. These parents, did you know where they lived?  
12 A. Yes. They lived in the town.  
13  
14 Q. There wasn't any need for them to send --  
15 A. There was no need. And they didn't send the child  
16 there, I don't think.  
17  
18 Q. When you heard a story like that did that surprise you  
19 at all, given the reputation that he had?  
20 A. There was an uneasiness in my head and then there was  
21 the public persona. So these people were on the side of  
22 the public persona.  
23  
24 Q. Did you ever come across someone who had those uneasy  
25 feelings that you had?  
26 A. No.  
27  
28 Q. We were going to ask you about a conversation you had  
29 with Dennis McKenna after Todd Jefferis had come forward,  
30 not necessarily made a complaint to the police but had come  
31 forward and made a complaint regarding Dennis McKenna. Can  
32 you recall having a conversation with him after that event  
33 but before he was actually charged?  
34 A. Yes. Actually at the hostel.  
35  
36 Q. Can you recall how that came about that you and he --  
37 A. There was a pergola erected by the students in the  
38 hostel grounds and he wanted publicity for this pergola.  
39 It seemed like a very flimsy reason for publicity, but  
40 nonetheless - but nonetheless it is a quiet day so I went  
41 and took a photograph - went, prepared to take a photograph  
42 and do a story about the erection of this pergola. There  
43 was no students there.  
44  
45 Q. Is this something that he often sought, publicity --  
46 A. Yeah.  
47

1 Q. -- for any achievements that the hostel had done?  
2 A. Yes, yes. And we freely gave it. We were a community  
3 newspaper, why wouldn't you?  
4  
5 Q. That is my next question. The newspaper pretty  
6 much --  
7 A. Would freely give. Yes, yes. Because I personally  
8 don't like somebody doesn't mean to say they are not worthy  
9 of coverage.  
10  
11 Q. So you go along to see him. There are no other  
12 students there?  
13 A. No.  
14  
15 Q. Did the conversation move beyond a conversation about  
16 the pergola?  
17 A. The conversation moved to a mother of a student from  
18 Wagin had accused him to Ian Murray - and I am not sure  
19 whether it was Garth Addis also - and fiddling with his kid  
20 - her kid. The mother had taken - I think at that  
21 conversation the mother had taken the boy away from the  
22 hostel. She had been - yeah.  
23  
24 Q. Had you heard anything about this up until that point  
25 in time?  
26 A. No, no.  
27  
28 Q. So your first source about this story actually came  
29 from him?  
30 A. Was from McKenna himself.  
31  
32 Q. Did he say anything about the truthfulness of that  
33 allegation?  
34  
35 HIS HONOUR: Did he say it was true or false, or what did  
36 he say about them?  
37  
38 MR URQUHART: Q. Yes. What did he say about it?  
39 A. Well, he didn't say, "this is not true". He  
40 strenuously defended himself. He told me his nerves were  
41 bad because he was worried about it and his hair was  
42 dropping out. It looked like just a plain, ordinary case  
43 of male balding to me.  
44  
45 Q. I know that I can relate to that. Yes. Okay, go on?  
46 So did he deny it?  
47 A. Did he deny it?

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Q. Yes.

A. In everything he said he denied it, but he didn't sort of say to me "Oh, look, Pat, this is not true". He didn't turn around and say that. But in every part of the conversation he was saying that it was not true, in every inference.

HIS HONOUR: Q. So it was implicit in what he said that he was denying it? He wasn't expressly denying it, but implicitly he was?

A. Yeah. Explicitly.

Q. "Explicitly", all right.

A. Through everything he said.

MR URQUHART: Q. Although you hadn't heard that particular allegation --

A. Oh, I was taken aback. I was taken aback that he would tell me.

Q. Have you got any explanations as to why he would be telling you? You are hardly a friend of his.

A. Okay, there he is getting his photograph taken for being a big hero about the students putting up a pergola. But he was like that. He was like that. Another time I went and took a photograph of them putting up a grotto in the Reidy House grounds, you know, with religious effigies. One particular member of the community just described that as a total travesty of Christianity.

Q. Can you recall anything else he said to you on that occasion about these allegations?

A. Can I recall anything else he said to me about those allegations? Gosh, without trying to think through the whole conversation --

Q. I know it is a while ago. If you can't, that's fine.

A. The mother - the mother telling Ian Murray, yes.

Q. Can you recall anything that Dennis McKenna said to Ian Murray about the allegations?

A. Well, it seemed to me that Murray and McKenna were set on denying the allegations. It seemed to me that both Murray and McKenna were set on a track whereby it was assumed that McKenna was innocent at this point. There was no - there was no margin for the fact that he was anything

1 else other than innocent.  
2  
3 HIS HONOUR: Q. Is that what you gathered from McKenna?  
4 A. That is what I gathered from it, yes.  
5  
6 Q. From McKenna, what he said?  
7 A. From McKenna. There was no - no possibility.  
8  
9 MR URQUHART: Q. Now, aside from that incident you saw  
10 with the young boy fainting, which would have been some  
11 time around '84 or thereabouts?  
12 A. No - who knows. I just can't put it - I can't say  
13 it's '84.  
14  
15 Q. That's all right. You hear these allegations for the  
16 first time but you haven't heard anything of substance?  
17 A. No. Nobody has come to me and said, "I was sexually  
18 abused by McKenna". No-one has come to me and said their  
19 child was sexually abused by McKenna.  
20  
21 Q. What about stories or gossip or rumours around the  
22 town, had you heard anything along those lines?  
23 A. I had heard about Nicki McLennan, the school psych,  
24 being virtually sacked when she tried to deal with her  
25 boys' concerns.  
26  
27 Q. Can you recall who you had heard that from?  
28 A. I certainly heard all these matters from the Reverend  
29 John Taylor.  
30  
31 Q. Was that before you had this conversation with Dennis  
32 McKenna?  
33 A. No. It must have been afterwards.  
34  
35 Q. It was after that, was it?  
36 A. Yes. Because I - yeah, yeah.  
37  
38 Q. Can you recall anything else that the Reverend John  
39 Taylor told you?  
40 A. The Reverend John Taylor told me that Maggie Maruff  
41 could see through McKenna. The Reverend John Taylor told  
42 me that his own wife, who was a teacher at the high school,  
43 had concerns about a student from the hostel and the way  
44 Dennis had been treating the student.  
45  
46 Q. These conversations you had with John Taylor, that  
47 wasn't in your capacity as a reporter?

1 A. No. I went there - I went there to talk to him on a  
2 personal level, yes. But we certainly - I mean, he was  
3 well aware of - he was well aware of who I was and what I  
4 did. And in fact John Taylor wrote a letter to the editor  
5 about the matter of the film and calling McKenna  
6 "paranoid", saying --  
7  
8 Q. Was that letter published?  
9 A. Yes.  
10  
11 Q. How many children did you have at the Katanning high  
12 school?  
13 A. Two.  
14  
15 Q. Was it just two?  
16 A. Hm.  
17  
18 Q. Did you hear jokes, innuendo?  
19 A. Yes.  
20  
21 Q. But they were nothing more than just jokes  
22 regarding --  
23 A. Well, teenage boys, hey. The hostel - the senior -  
24 but the head boy - the head boy of the school was also the  
25 head boy of the hostel and he was called "head boy" with  
26 the inference of performing fellatio on Dennis McKenna.  
27  
28 HIS HONOUR: Q. So that was amongst the students; is that  
29 right?  
30 A. Yes, yeah. Yeah. And that particular boy, I remember  
31 him giving a kind of valedictory speech at the graduation  
32 ceremony and the boy was weeping and my own son saying,  
33 "you wouldn't get me crying about leaving school" - yeah.  
34  
35 Q. Again, how did you hear about these jokes if they were  
36 amongst students?  
37 A. Well, my own son and daughter went to the high school.  
38 They had friends at the hostel.  
39  
40 Q. I see.  
41 A. But, you know, there's --  
42  
43 HIS HONOUR: Q. Approximately when did you hear that  
44 sort of comment? How long before he was charged?  
45 A. Oh, my son went to the high school in 1980 - he would  
46 have been in - he was born in '71. So he would have been  
47 turning 13 in --

1  
2 MR URQUHART: Q. '84.  
3 A. '84. Okay. So my son entered the high school in '84  
4 as a year 8 student.  
5  
6 Q. So he is older than your daughter?  
7 A. Yeah, he's three-and-a-half years older than my  
8 daughter.  
9  
10 Q. He went all the way through to year 12?  
11 A. He did.  
12  
13 Q. Which would have been 1988?  
14 A. Yes. So this is around '88 when he was, sort of, more  
15 of a senior student. And just general - general inference  
16 - general sort of slurs about McKenna's campness which, I  
17 mean, a person - yeah, because a person is overtly  
18 homosexual - has overtly homosexual characteristics doesn't  
19 necessarily make them --  
20  
21 Q. Of course not. No.  
22 A. -- an abuser.  
23  
24 HIS HONOUR: Q. No. There is a difference.  
25 A. There certainly is. In fact, I did say that. I was  
26 bringing - I was bringing a young man up in a very, very  
27 conservative community where people talked about "boongs"  
28 and "poofters", and I tried to make my son aware that that  
29 way of thinking is not what I want my son to have.  
30  
31 MR URQUHART: Q. Just on that, I know we are talking  
32 about a conservative society 30-odd years ago.  
33 A. Yeah.  
34  
35 Q. You mention about the conservative nature they had  
36 towards homosexuals.  
37 A. Yes.  
38  
39 Q. That, however, didn't seem to play a part in the good  
40 reputation that Dennis McKenna had?  
41 A. No. Well, there was so - well, there were so many  
42 stories that he put out about himself - that he trained as  
43 a brother in the priesthood. The Reverend John Taylor told  
44 me that his gut feeling was that he was never a novitiate.  
45 He may have been. I don't know. McKenna also used to talk  
46 about having studied psychology. Now, I know he never  
47 graduated. McKenna also had stories about how he was

1 engaged and tragically his wife - his fiancée had died of  
2 leukemia or in an aircraft - an aircraft crash, I'm not  
3 sure. But he certainly was a very busy man.  
4

5 Q. But you heard that story about his fiancée dying  
6 tragically?

7 A. Yes, I heard that, and that he was a training brother,  
8 a novitiate, or whatever you call them.  
9

10 Q. Can I ask you something about the characteristics of  
11 this man? From your own personal observations and  
12 conversations with him, could you say how he interacted  
13 with people with respect to - put it this way, was he a  
14 gossip?

15 A. Yes, he was. He loved to come and stand around and  
16 give you the scuttlebutt.  
17

18 Q. Would he do that in relation to, in your own personal  
19 experience, yourself?

20 A. Yes.  
21

22 Q. What would he do?

23 A. He would tell - he would say to me in front of a group  
24 of people, he would say, "Oh, Ainslie Evans said this,  
25 this and this about you". You would think, "Hm, oh, did  
26 she. Gosh". And then I would just say, "Oh, well, you  
27 know, hey".  
28

29 Q. So you --

30 A. Yeah, "I'm not going to be on your string, buddy".  
31

32 Q. So that's how you viewed it, he would have people on a  
33 string?

34 A. Yeah, I'd just think that's how he was, pulling people  
35 on strings, hm. But he ingratiated himself, would stand  
36 talking about football to the male employees at the Great  
37 Southern Herald. Yeah, just sort of stand talking - just  
38 general town gossip.  
39

40 Q. Do you know, from personal experience, what his  
41 reaction would be when things didn't go his own way?

42 A. Oh, well, I mean he just - he just organized it so he  
43 did. Like, he tended to be - and he tended to be very  
44 bitchy, which is - actually, that's - Maggie Maruff said  
45 that about him, yeah.  
46

47 Q. Your personal observations about him?

1 A. My personal observations about him --  
2  
3 Q. Regarding if he wasn't satisfied with something? For  
4 example, if --  
5 A. He just went - he just went and spread his version of  
6 it about the town. He made sure - he made sure, like with  
7 Murray and McKenna, he just made use of Murray to make sure  
8 that his point of view was strenuously supported. I have  
9 no doubt that Murray was only too keen to do that.  
10  
11 Q. Through the contact you had with Ainslie Evans, which  
12 I understand was quite regular --  
13 A. Yeah.  
14  
15 Q. Was that during the '80s?  
16 A. During the '80s and the '90s.  
17  
18 Q. She never mentioned anything to you about Dennis  
19 McKenna and sexual abuse?  
20 A. No. She - yeah, she was always discrete anyhow, if  
21 she thought - yeah.  
22  
23 Q. Did you know what sort of relationship she had with  
24 Dennis McKenna?  
25 A. Well, they worked together - she cooperated with  
26 McKenna to get the Westrek Group at Reidy House. And  
27 presumably McKenna and Ainslie worked together so that the  
28 Westrek people worked in community projects around the  
29 town, which was, from recollection, principally on the  
30 restoration of the old flour mill - the Pearce's old flour  
31 mill.  
32  
33 Q. We do know that is actually 1985 when that happen.  
34 A. That's '85, yes.  
35  
36 Q. So apart from that did they have any other similar --  
37 A. Projects?  
38  
39 Q. No. Did they have any other similar --  
40 A. Oh, they were - they were - Ainslie was a member of  
41 the Catholic Church and McKenna seemed to have an alliance  
42 with the Catholic Church as well.  
43  
44 Q. Did Ainslie say anything to you about - I should go  
45 back a bit - we know Maggie Maruff, now Dawkins --  
46 A. Yeah.  
47

1 Q. -- was one of the supervisors of the Westrek project.  
2 A. Yeah.  
3  
4 Q. I understand you met Maggie Maruff in 1985 when she  
5 was there at Katanning?  
6 A. Yes.  
7  
8 Q. Did Ainslie ever mention to you anything about Maggie  
9 Maruff and Dennis McKenna?  
10 A. They had a big falling out.  
11  
12 Q. Did she say what that was about?  
13 A. Ainslie told me that Dennis had accused her of  
14 cohabiting on the weekends with the man who became her  
15 husband. I mean, we're talking about a woman in her  
16 forties here.  
17  
18 Q. You're talking about Ainslie being in her forties  
19 or --  
20 A. Maggie Maruff.  
21  
22 Q. She might take offence at that. I think she was only  
23 27 at the time.  
24 A. Really?  
25  
26  
27 Q. Yes. I gave you a way out there by suggesting it was  
28 Mrs Evans, but you didn't take it, Mrs Gill. Never mind.  
29 A. So, yes, it was '85. Yeah. Somehow though the time  
30 between - the time between the Westrek group being there  
31 and the charges being laid in my mind was closer than what  
32 it was - than what it was; '85 and then it was --  
33  
34 Q. It was five years before the first set of charges, six  
35 years the second set --  
36 A. Yeah.  
37  
38 Q. -- which were all part of the one trial in 1991.  
39 A. Hm.  
40  
41 Q. Now, I am going to ask you something about Maggie  
42 Dawkins, and I will refer to her by her married name now,  
43 if that is okay.  
44 A. Yes.  
45  
46 Q. You have told us what Ainslie said to you about Dennis  
47 McKenna and Maggie Dawkins?

1 A. Yes.  
2  
3 Q. Did you become aware that Maggie Dawkins left the  
4 Westrek project before it had been completed?  
5 A. I was aware that she left.  
6  
7 Q. Yes. All right. And did you hear any rumours as to  
8 whether Dennis McKenna had any involvement in that?  
9 A. Dennis had - had - I've heard rumours that Dennis had  
10 smeared her - her performance as a supervisor.  
11  
12 Q. Yes. And, again, would you place it no higher than  
13 that - just rumours?  
14 A. I'd heard that - I'd heard that from the shire  
15 president.  
16  
17 Q. Right. And who --  
18 A. At the time Geoffrey Beeck, yes.  
19  
20 Q. That was Geoffrey Beeck at the time?  
21 A. Yes, I'd heard that.  
22  
23 Q. Right.  
24 A. But only - but I did not hear from Geoffrey Beeck that  
25 there had been an accusation of sexual abuse against a  
26 student.  
27  
28 Q. No. All right.  
29 A. I heard - I'd heard - and he was not specific - I'd  
30 heard it was on for young and old at Reidy House. I mean,  
31 these were people aged from 17 to 25. I mean, these are  
32 adults --  
33  
34 Q. Yes.  
35 A. -- they're not students, and Maggie - I mean, I've got  
36 her age wrong, but Maggie was a grown woman. What she did,  
37 as far as I was concerned, was none of my business.  
38  
39 Q. I see.  
40 A. And what the students did - what the Westrek  
41 participants did, was, I mean, really none of my business.  
42  
43 Q. Okay. I'll clarify. Was it the case that you hadn't  
44 heard anything at the time - this is 1985 - that Maggie  
45 Dawkins left Katanning because of allegations she was  
46 making against --  
47 A. Against McKenna.

1  
2 Q. -- McKenna regarding sexual abuse?  
3 A. I had not heard that, no.  
4  
5 Q. Now, before she left, did you actually visit --  
6 A. Her in hospital.  
7  
8 Q. -- Mrs Dawkins in hospital? Was that in Katanning?  
9 A. Yes, in Katanning Hospital.  
10  
11 Q. Now, are you able to say when that visit was in  
12 relation to when she left?  
13 A. Pretty soon before she left.  
14  
15 Q. Sorry?  
16 A. Pretty soon before she left --  
17  
18 Q. Yes.  
19 A. -- but I can't be specific in terms of days or weeks,  
20 but it seems in my mind that she moved away - or she was  
21 moved on obviously pretty quickly.  
22  
23 Q. Okay. Now, can you recall having a conversation with  
24 her --  
25 A. About her falling out?  
26  
27 Q. Yes.  
28 A. Yes, I do.  
29  
30 Q. All right. Falling out with --  
31 A. McKenna.  
32  
33 Q. At that time, I suppose?  
34 A. Yes, yes.  
35  
36 Q. And what did she say?  
37 A. She said - she said it seemed to me that they'd had a  
38 row, and it was about - it was about her qualifications -  
39 her qualifications and his qualifications; that he was  
40 smearing her professionally and it was a jealousy thing.  
41  
42 Q. I see.  
43 A. Yes. It was not - it wasn't - she did not raise the  
44 matter of a boy being abused by McKenna. Now, whether  
45 she'd been told to shut her mouth and get out of town by  
46 then, I don't know, but it - yes. It's - Maggie's a fairly  
47 outspoken woman. I wonder in retrospect why on earth she

1 didn't tell me.  
2  
3 Q. Well, one reason might be that she hadn't been told  
4 about that yet.  
5 A. About the accusation?  
6  
7 Q. Yes. Yes.  
8 A. But there was - there was a big row going.  
9  
10 Q. Yes.  
11 A. There was a big row going between them.  
12  
13 Q. And you got that --  
14 A. And then she might have known - she might have known -  
15 she might have had this - she might have - the boy might  
16 have come to her and she - she accused McKenna and then - I  
17 mean, this is all what might have happened.  
18  
19 Q. Yes, I know.  
20 A. And then McKenna said, "Oh, but look at the way you're  
21 behaving", blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.  
22  
23 Q. So had you come to know Maggie Dawkins quite well?  
24 A. No, not particularly well. I mean, I went there to  
25 visit her because I - she was in the - she was a woman much  
26 the same age as myself. She was a woman in a community and  
27 I went to see her because of - just to be friendly. You  
28 know, like I'd heard she was in hospital.  
29  
30 Q. But from the limited contact you had with her, and --  
31 A. She was an outspoken woman.  
32  
33 Q. Yes, and how would you --  
34 A. And confident woman.  
35  
36 Q. Yes. And how would you think her personality would go  
37 with the personality of Dennis McKenna?  
38 A. She'd eat him.  
39  
40 Q. Okay. There was a suggestion is - also that it's  
41 unlikely that would get on?  
42 A. Get on, yes.  
43  
44 Q. Would that be fair to say?  
45 A. Yes, as far as a brain went, she'd eat him.  
46  
47 Q. Okay. Just bear one moment with me, Ms Gill. That

1 might be all I have to ask of you. I should ask you this:  
2 so that day that you mentioned you went to one day of  
3 Dennis McKenna's --  
4 A. Yes.  
5  
6 Q. -- District Court trial in Albany in June 1991, can  
7 you recall anyone who gave evidence on that day?  
8 A. I can recall Murray and Mr Gatti giving evidence, yes.  
9  
10 Q. Right.  
11 A. Character evidence.  
12  
13 Q. And can you recall the tenure of Mr Murray's character  
14 evidence?  
15 A. I can recall the nauseating - yes, tenure, yes,  
16 grandiloquent in his praise of McKenna. Likewise Mr Gatti,  
17 the district superintendent.  
18  
19 Q. Yes.  
20 A. It seemed to me that nobody had thought that this man  
21 was not innocent. Nobody had given any thought to it.  
22 They had run - they had run to defend him.  
23  
24 Q. Did you know Murray Gatti before you saw him in the  
25 witness box on that day?  
26 A. No. I might have seen him or met him once, but had  
27 never established any sort of a relationship with him, yes.  
28  
29 MR URQUHART: Thank you, Ms Gill. That's all the  
30 questions, thank you, sir.  
31  
32 HIS HONOUR: Mr Hammond.  
33  
34 MR HAMMOND: Yes, thank you.  
35  
36 <CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MR HAMMOND:  
37  
38 MR HAMMOND: Q. Ms Gill, I'd like to take you back to  
39 the piece of evidence where you told counsel assisting that  
40 there were a wave of letters which were quite negative when  
41 you were covering the Dennis McKenna --  
42 A. Yes.  
43  
44 Q. -- charged - having been charged, and I imagine the  
45 trial as well. Those letters came in particular after the  
46 trial, didn't they?  
47 A. They came after --

1  
2 Q. Or was it after the charge?  
3 A. It couldn't have been after the charge. We would not  
4 have published them after the charge. Anything we  
5 published was after the trial.  
6  
7 Q. And the negative letters which you say were the  
8 overwhelming quantity that came through the door of the  
9 paper.  
10 A. Not just letters. The negative - the negative  
11 comments I got.  
12  
13 Q. Because you were covering --  
14 A. Because I was covering this matter.  
15  
16 Q. And do you remember --  
17 A. And the extent of my coverage of it.  
18  
19 Q. So do any of those negative comments or letters stand  
20 out for you today?  
21 A. Yes, yes.  
22  
23 Q. And who --  
24 A. From a Mr Brad, Brad Lee, who was - he's - his wife  
25 was Peter Kerin's sister. And he basically told me I  
26 should grow up and move on and that; that the saturation  
27 coverage was a disgrace and bringing the town down, and  
28 look at the positives of our town.  
29  
30 Q. And another comment that you made, Ms Gill, in  
31 relation to your reporting of the matter was you said it  
32 was time it was aired?  
33 A. Yes.  
34  
35 Q. What did you mean by that? What was time - what was  
36 aired - the fact that McKenna had been charged and was  
37 before trial, or you thought it --  
38 A. Well, I thought - I thought that it would bring  
39 forward more complaints. I thought that these - in fact, I  
40 think there were - there were more than just Todd  
41 Jefferis's and Mike Hilder's complaints. I think there  
42 were other complainants, and I think their - I don't recall  
43 their - their complaints must have not been supported  
44 enough by evidence.  
45  
46 HIS HONOUR: No, there were other complainants at the  
47 trial --

1  
2 THE WITNESS: Yes.  
3  
4 HIS HONOUR: There just wasn't two at the trial.  
5  
6 THE WITNESS: Great, good.  
7  
8 MR HAMMOND: Q. And you described Dennis McKenna as  
9 being overtly camp in what was a very conservative town?  
10 A. Yes. Which doesn't make him an abuser of itself, of  
11 course.  
12  
13 Q. No, no, and I'm not suggesting it to you.  
14 A. Yes.  
15  
16 Q. What I'm going to ask is what features about him give  
17 rise to you putting that label on him? What features at  
18 the time made you think he was overtly camp?  
19 A. I'm a woman. I know what a camp man looks like, and I  
20 know what a man --  
21  
22 Q. It was intuitive?  
23 A. Yes. It's his demeanour. In fact, my 13-year-old  
24 son, when he went to the high school, said, "Gee, mum, that  
25 man needs a bit of wire in his wrist", and I sort of say.  
26  
27 Q. In relation to --  
28 A. He had a - he had - and this doesn't make every man  
29 who speaks like this a homosexual, but he had a kind of  
30 mincing way of talking.  
31  
32 Q. Given that Katanning is and was a very conservative  
33 town, wasn't that - was that a cause for rumours that he  
34 was camp. Did that circulate in the mid 1980s?  
35 A. Well, I can only think that I discussed it with one or  
36 two people, and that would have been fellow reporters at  
37 the paper.  
38  
39 Q. In relation to the incident where he was cradling that  
40 child, and you --  
41 A. Yes.  
42  
43 Q. -- thought it was highly inappropriate the way he was  
44 cradling the child --  
45 A. Yes.  
46  
47 Q. Exactly what was he doing to the child?

1 A. Stroking its wrist. Stroking its wrist and its arm.  
2  
3 Q. And were there other adults present at that time?  
4 A. Yes, yes, yes. There were - and there were other  
5 students present. It was not done in - it was not done in  
6 a covert way at all.  
7  
8 Q. And during your time in Katanning, you were well aware  
9 that Murray, Principal Murray and McKenna were friendly?  
10 A. Yes.  
11  
12 Q. And was that just through your personal  
13 observations --  
14 A. Yes.  
15  
16 Q. -- of your relationship?  
17 A. Yes.  
18  
19 Q. What, they'd often be seen together?  
20 A. They would often be seen together, and Murray was  
21 always trumpeting McKenna's praise.  
22  
23 Q. And can you offer an explanation as to why Murray was  
24 so protective of McKenna?  
25 A. The man was either at very best totally stupid.  
26  
27 Q. And do you know someone called Con Burros?  
28 A. No, I don't. The name's familiar, but it doesn't ring  
29 a bell straightaway.  
30  
31 Q. Was there talk in the town when McKenna was in charge  
32 of the hostel, about the fact that other members of his  
33 family were involved in the running of the hostel?  
34 A. Yes.  
35  
36 Q. And was that something that concerned you?  
37 A. Just looked like what it was, a very closed little  
38 microcosm.  
39  
40 Q. And did you have occasion to report on crime in  
41 Katanning?  
42 A. Yes.  
43  
44 Q. And what general observations can you make about crime  
45 in the 1980s in Katanning?  
46 A. Well, if you went to court it was just a parade of the  
47 piety and the desperate. They were - yes, they were

1 trivial matters of people.  
2  
3 Q. What, break and enters?  
4 A. Yes, from Aboriginal - yes, drunken - yes, drunk and  
5 disorderly, marijuana charges.  
6  
7 Q. Were the police kept busy?  
8 A. Yes, I would say so.  
9  
10 Q. And a marijuana crop was discovered at one point,  
11 wasn't it --  
12 A. Yes, that's right.  
13  
14 Q. -- in Katanning. Do you remember that?  
15 A. Yes, I do remember that. And I remember the person  
16 who was charged.  
17  
18 Q. And did McKenna take boys out to inspect the crop. Do  
19 you remember that?  
20 A. I don't know that, I've never heard that.  
21  
22 MR HAMMOND: I have no further questions.  
23  
24 HIS HONOUR: Nothing for you, Mr Jenkin.  
25  
26 MR JENKIN: No, thank you, sir.  
27  
28 HIS HONOUR: Mr Urquhart?  
29  
30 MR URQUHART: Just one matter, your Honour.  
31  
32 <RE-EXAMINATION BY MR URQUHART:  
33  
34 MR URQUHART: Q. Mrs Gill, in fairness to Mr Murray - I  
35 mean, he wasn't the only person who was singing Dennis  
36 McKenna's praises?  
37 A. No, he was not the only person singing Dennis  
38 McKenna's praises.  
39  
40 Q. Right. So --  
41 A. He was in a position - he was in a position - my  
42 understanding is that he had - that his role was to  
43 supervise the school.  
44  
45 Q. Right.  
46 A. The school operates principally for the students, not  
47 for the staff.

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MR URQUHART: All right. Okay. Thank you, that's the only matter I need to clarify.

HIS HONOUR: Thank you very much, Mrs Gill. Your evidence has been very enlightening. You're now free to go.

THE WITNESS: Thank you. Thank you very much.

HIS HONOUR: Thank you.

<THE WITNESS WITHDREW

MR URQUHART: And, your Honour, that's now going to complete this part of phase one of these public hearings. Sir, we are now going to be adjourned to next Tuesday, 10 April, allowing for Monday being the public holiday. And the Inquiry will continue with the calling of witnesses relating to the second phase of the public hearings. Those witnesses largely comprise those who it's been alleged were told of concerns that people had regarding Dennis McKenna's behaviour, and these witnesses will be afforded the opportunity of giving their account of what they were told or not told, and about what action, if any, they took in response to the concerns that had been raised with them.

Sir, the Inquiry also intends to call witness in the second phase who may not have necessarily been told anything regarding Dennis McKenna's offending behaviour, but who, nevertheless, might have been aware of what he was doing due to the positions they held. I only say, "Might have been aware."

Now, it's intended also, sir, that the Inquiry will sit for one day in Katanning once the second phase commences. It's expected that that day will be Thursday, 12 April, though that hasn't been finalised. Confirmation of that date, the location in Katanning, and the time the Inquiry will sit on that day will be posted on the Inquiry's website in due course.

HIS HONOUR: Thank you for that. Very well, we'll adjourn until 10 April.

AT 11.51AM THE HEARING ADJOURNED TO  
TUESDAY, 10 APRIL 2012