



Wednesday 22 May 2024

Statement re: Healing and Hope | Empowering Survivors and Making a Difference

Background

The School is aware of an article published in the *Geelong Advertiser* on Tuesday 21 May 2024 concerning Healing and Hope; an independent initiative established to provide support and practical assistance to survivors of child sexual abuse and those who have suffered trauma within our community.

The School wishes to confirm that Healing and Hope does not provide any form of financial redress for survivors. The School meets this obligation to those who suffered historical sexual abuse at our School (through the Courts, National Redress Scheme and Geelong Grammar School Redress Scheme). Engagement with Healing and Hope is subsequent to financial redress.

Healing and Hope is independent of the School – the School does not ask past students to make financial contributions to help victims of the School and pay for the School's own failings.

The support provided by Healing and Hope, such as counsellors, are independent of the School – they are not employed by the School.

In a statement provided to the *Geelong Advertiser*, Healing and Hope Director, Sarah Benson, said:

“As a Director, and as a sibling of a survivor of child sexual abuse at Geelong Grammar School, I am disappointed by the comments made regarding the work of Healing and Hope.

In his statement to the Royal Commission in 2015, my brother wrote: ‘I know that I will need ongoing help. I need the School to ensure that there is an opportunity for the victims of child sexual abuse to come together and receive support, while the School remains at an arm’s length and separate from this process.’

I believe that opportunity has been made possible through the creation of Healing and Hope and the work that we do, which is independent of the School and completely separate from the School’s obligations to survivors. Our staff work thoughtfully and tirelessly in the genuine interests of survivors and their families – families like mine. They provide meaningful, practical, and vital support to our survivor community, which is above and beyond anything delivered through financial redress.”

In recent years, the School has been working to provide an authentic response to survivors of sexual abuse. Healing and Hope is an important adjunct to that work, supported by our community, including survivors and their families.

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