

Maccabi Australia Statement Regarding the Sexual Assault of Maccabi Members by Shannon Francis

Thursday 15 August 2013

Maccabi Australia together with its member states and clubs would like to express its satisfaction with the sentence imposed by the County Court of Victoria on Shannon Francis for crimes committed against young girls under his care in 1999-2000. We sincerely hope this sentence brings some comfort to all those involved in the case, especially the victims.

Maccabi acknowledges the complaints of its handling of this matter made by some of the victims.

It is our understanding that, in 2000, the Maccabi officials involved behaved in what was genuinely believed to be the best interests of the victims and their families, and in full consultation and agreement with them.

Upon the commencement of criminal proceedings against Mr Francis, of which Maccabi was not a formal party, the organisation was placed in the invidious position of not having received any official notification that Maccabi members were involved in the case against Mr Francis.

Maccabi could, therefore, not respond publically and, due to the suppression order in place could not embark on any course of action that might have led to the identification of the victims by anyone outside the legal proceedings. As an organisation, we were constrained in our public response due to the suppression order in place, and genuinely sought to maintain the privacy of the victims and their families.

However, Maccabi recognises the distress of the victims in this matter. If our behaviours as an organisation and as officials were felt to be uncaring and insensitive, we unreservedly apologise. This was never the intent or the sentiment within Maccabi.

We will continue to privately reach out to those involved in this case, noting that our efforts to date have not met the expectations of some of the victims

Furthermore, we will continue to ensure that our child protection policies and practices remain strong and are implemented with rigour.

Finally, we would like to express our admiration for the courage of the victims and thank them for bringing this matter to justice. Maccabi encourages anyone who may have experienced anything of this nature, whether within Maccabi or not, to raise the matter with the appropriate authorities.

For further comment, please contact Lisa Borowick, President Maccabi Australia via the Maccabi Australia office on 03 9563 5865.