

Investigation launched after allegations a retired teacher confessed to molesting boys at The Southport School

Paul Weston, Gold Coast Bulletin
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POLICE have launched an investigation into allegations of child abuse at The Southport School from the late 1970s and early 1980s.

A Gold Coast businessman said he had spoken to the elite private boys school after his father, a retired TSS teacher, allegedly made a public confession.

His father allegedly told him: "I've done some bad things. I raped and molested (student) while he was a boarder at the school. It wasn't just me. There were other teachers and other students."

TSS contacted the Brisbane Anglican diocese late last week and, as part of their protocol, police were immediately made aware of the complaint.

"The Child Safety and Sexual Crime Group, State Crime Command has received correspondence in relation to this matter and investigations are being conducted," a police spokesman said.



Private investigator Bill Edgar has played a key role in sparking a police investigation into "historic" claims of child abuse at TSS. Pic by David Clark

In an email headed “important message to TSS families” on Friday, TSS principal Greg Wain referred to allegations that occurred over 30 years ago in the 1980s and before”.

“Please be assured we take such matters very seriously” and that “we always encourage anyone with allegations of child sexual abuse to report the matter to the police”, the email read.



TSS headmaster Greg Wain has written to parents to reassure them of the school’s strong stance on reporting child abuse claims from the late 1970s and early 1980s.

A school spokesperson confirmed TSS had contacted the Brisbane Anglican diocese and the “historic claims”, which did not involve current students or staff, had been referred to police.

“Although these allegations date back several decades our highest priority continues to be extending care to victims of child sexual abuse,” he said.

“If anyone has been abused at the school, or has relevant information, please report it to the police and the school so that victims can receive the care and assistance they deserve.”



The Southport School. Pic by David Clark

Gold Coast private detective Bill Edgar said a victim told him last week of an alleged assault.

“He (alleged he) was raped in a dormitory room of a boarding house in 1971,” Mr Edgar said. “He is in his 60s now. He is absolutely shattered about it.”

The Bulletin revealed in 2013 how Mr Edgar, by chance, had met State of Origin footballer and former TSS student Peter Jackson during a visit to a Surfers Paradise drug dealer.

Jackson died of a heroin overdose in a Sydney motel room in 1997 having battled depression after keeping secret how he had been sexually abused by a football coach at TSS.

Lawyers for Jackson’s widow later reached a cash settlement reported to be about \$250,000.

After the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was launched, the Brisbane Anglican diocese in 2015 moved to include TSS as parents of victims were compensated for fees.

Mr Edgar claims 15 students have contacted him about alleged abuse at the school.

Complaints have targeted five former teachers with most of the alleged incidents between the late 1970s and early 1980s.