

Language throws up red flags in Dawson case

EXCLUSIVE

HEDLEY THOMAS
DAVID MURRAY

A former NSW detective says there are telltale red flags for deception in murder suspect Chris Dawson's crucial handwritten statement about the disappearance of his wife, Lyn.

Paul Curby specialises in large white-collar crime investigations and is an expert in examining the precise wording and construction

of written sentences. He says Mr Dawson's 1982 statement, only recently discovered after being lost by police, is "showing deception" in key areas.

"If you're changing your language, you're doing it for a reason," Mr Curby said.

He was speaking for the return of the investigative podcast series *The Teacher's Pet*, examining Lyn's suspected murder at the hands of her husband on Sydney's northern beaches in January 1982.

Mr Dawson, who denies killing his wife, gave police the statement

in August that year, when Lyn was still being treated as a missing person. He claimed he dropped Lyn off at a Mona Vale bus stop on a Saturday morning, then went home alone with their two young daughters before his shift as a life-guard at the Northbridge Baths.

Lyn phoned the baths later that day to tell her husband she would not make it there as planned, he said. She was "with friends" and said she would call again during the week, according to his account.

When suspects are interviewed or provide statements, they sub-

consciously edit the truth, avoiding areas of risk. This gives investigators an opportunity to spot holes in their story.

"People want to provide a version of events that is believable," Mr Curby said. "It's just being able to pull that apart and find the change of language and the potential deception."

"If I had known this technique back in my policing days, I would have had a different outcome in some of the investigations I did."

Mr Curby says that when writing about the period before Lyn

went missing, Mr Dawson referred to the couple's "daughters".

That changed to "the girls" when Mr Dawson was writing about the day Lyn failed to turn up at Northbridge Baths as planned.

"The statement indicates that Friday night to Saturday is a highly sensitive area for him, and more likely the time of a crime being committed," Mr Curby said.

It was notable that Mr Dawson didn't discuss how his wife went missing until the end of the document, in which he was meant to be helping police find Lyn. Key facts

were omitted, such as a time when Mr Dawson was meant to have dropped Lyn off at Mona Vale.

It was significant that Mr Dawson wrote generically about contacting "all girlfriends" and "work colleagues" without naming them. "There's a lack of commitment that he's actually done that," Mr Curby added. "I don't see any pronouns. He doesn't say 'I have contacted all of her girlfriends.'"

A reference to Lyn having contact with a religious organisation did not name the group and "seems like filler".

Newcastle University forensic criminologist Xanthe Mallett backed the technique. "It's certainly a credible way of interpreting that document," she said.

The NSW DPP did not have Mr Dawson's statement in the past when it decided there was insufficient evidence to prosecute Mr Dawson with his wife's murder. But it has it now, after it was included in a new police brief of evidence handed to the DPP in April for a fresh assessment on whether Mr Dawson, 70, should be charged.

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Palmer hits back at WA Premier

ANDREW BURRELL

Clive Palmer has hit back at West Australian Premier Mark McGowan's "disturbing" threat to intervene in a bitter stoush between the businessman and Chinese giant CITIC over the \$US10 billion (\$13.7bn) Sino Iron project.

The Queensland magnate's war of words with the WA government comes as he ramps up his campaign to win seats at next year's federal election, with advertisements running in newspapers today seeking candidates for his United Australia Party. Unlike his television commercials and nationwide billboards, the latest ads do not feature an image of Mr Palmer, who is also involved in a court case over the collapse of his Queensland Nickel refinery.

On Thursday, Mr McGowan told state parliament the government was considering altering the state agreement that governs the Sino Iron project to break the impasse.

The Premier warned that 3000 jobs would be lost if the iron ore operation collapsed.

He strongly backed CITIC, the operator of the project, in the Federal Court battle that has erupted between the Chinese conglomerate and Mineralogy, which owns the mining leases. CITIC has accused Mineralogy of failing to sign off on the approvals required under the state agreement.

A state agreement is a legal contract between the WA government and the proponent of a major project that is intended to provide long-term certainty.

Mr Palmer yesterday accused Mr McGowan of favouring a Chinese government-owned group over an Australian company. "It is extraordinary that in parliament the Premier would put me and our company on notice when a matter is before a commonwealth court for resolution," he said.

"Australian control of Australian resources protects and defends the nation's independence. Mineralogy regards Sino Iron's approach to enlist the support of an Australian state government in its commercial dispute against an Australian company as disturbing."

"I do not understand why the WA government would discriminate against an Australian company that owns the project's mining leases in favour of a Chinese government-owned group."

Mr Palmer said CITIC needed to apply to the Foreign Investment Review Board to secure approvals for the Sino Iron expansion, but had refused to do so. He accused CITIC of misleading the WA government.

CITIC was contacted for comment. It has said Mineralogy's refusal to submit the proposals had caused loss and damage and could result in the suspension of the operations.

Faith schools face lawyers' picnic

CHRIS MERRITT
LEGAL AFFAIRS EDITOR

The nation faces years of legal uncertainty and litigation because of flaws in the religious freedom plans of both sides of politics.

This assessment, from legal academic Mark Fowler, comes shortly after Attorney-General Christian Porter warned that Labor's proposal provided no legislative ability for religious schools to act in accordance with the tenets of their faith.

Labor has introduced a bill aimed at protecting gay students

Kids pour scorn on climate-denying leaders



JENNY EVANS

Students voice their concerns over climate change, and the lack of political leadership on the issue, in Martin Place, Sydney yesterday

REMY VARGA

More than 2000 children flooded Sydney's Martin Place yesterday as part of a national student "strike" to protest at government inaction on climate change.

Co-ordinated rallies were held in almost 30 cities and towns around Australia, which included all state capitals as well as large regional centres such as Ballarat and Newcastle.

Scott Morrison chastised the children for choosing to be activists instead of students but some wore the rebuke with pride as they

came to Martin Place armed with placards and smartphones.

"We don't support the idea of kids not going to school to participate in things that can be dealt with outside of school," the Prime Minister said.

"We don't support our schools being turned into parliaments. What we want is more learning in schools and less activism."

One of the organisers, 14-year-old Jean Hinchcliff, beamed with pride when asked about the Prime Minister's rebuke. "Well he told us these issues should be dealt with outside of school and to that I agree ... except they're not being

dealt with outside of school," the Fort Street High student said.

"That's why we're getting involved. We feel like change has to be made while it's still possible."

Jean said the event was largely student-run, but a few adults helped out with "things like contacting the media and stuff".

Children cheered and chanted, and students spoke, sang and performed slam poetry while adults watched on behind them.

Longtime environmental volunteer Jason Wu said he and others from local environmental groups helped the kids but the event was largely their doing.

"It's very much student-led ... we're just helping them to deal with some of the logistics and organising," he said.

The inspiration for the event was Swedish student Greta Thunberg, who went on strike in September demanding that Prime Minister Stefan Löfven take action against climate change.

A few Victorian students decided to follow in her footsteps and the idea spread through social media.

Manly Selective School student Viv Paduch found out about the event after her mother received an email from environ-

mental group 350.org. She contacted the organisers and ended up speaking yesterday.

Viv, who lives in Tony Abbott's electorate of Warringah, said the former prime minister needed to be voted out of office because he was "the most destructive climate change-denier in Australian politics".

Ann-Charlotte Paduch said she was very proud of her daughter. "I think it's a great example of democracy," she said.

The event ended with the promise to pepper Mr Morrison's office with phone calls demanding action on climate change.

Four-year-olds play preschool politics

Continued from Page 1

in the lead-up to Universal Children's Day on November 20 "in solidarity with the children and families our nation has trapped on Nauru".

"Blue can symbolise sadness and depression — which is appropriate given the suffering these people are enduring in our name," the campaign's website says.

Ms Sundbye learnt about #BlueForNauru through a primary school and said she broadened the idea of introducing the concept at the kindergarten with parents first.

"It was important to approach it so that the parents are OK and the kids are OK," Ms Sundbye said. "It's not about running a scare campaign."

She said children were read the Mem Fox book, *I'm Australian Too*, which presents a child waiting in a refugee camp hoping that one day "I will be Australian too".

Ms Sundbye said the discussion that followed revealed that most children were clear in their view that the current situation did not seem fair.

"That was beautiful to see: how they got it on a deep level," the teacher said.

"It's never too early to get them to be part of the conversation. This is their world, their planet."

Melbourne Graduate School of Education early childhood expert Kay Margetts questioned whether such young children had the maturity to grasp the concept.

"I don't think what that teacher was doing was wrong, or that it could have damaged the children in any way, but it's asking them to consider quite a developmentally advanced concept for children of that age," Professor Margetts said.

"Kids very much see things through their own experience,

their real-life experience. That's why issues involving social justice are usually broached from the child's personal and immediate experience ... to teach about things like fairness, sharing and taking turns."

Child psychologist Michael Carr Gregg questioned the need for political content to be broached in schools or preschools.

"I don't think we should further dilute the curriculum with this information which is rightly the province of parents," he said.

'I don't think we should further dilute the curriculum with this information which is rightly the province of parents'

MICHAEL CARR GREGG
CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST

Centre for Independent Studies senior research fellow Jeremy Sammut said the situation was a concern and potentially risked "the emotions of impressionable children who can have no real understanding of the issues involved".

Kindergarten parent Kate Rowett was pleased to see the issue tackled at the kindergarten.

She said her son Walter was familiar with the issue already as the family had made donations to the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

"We've talked about why we do that and I think kids really do understand more than we give them credit for," Ms Rowett said. "We talk about a range of issues and are generally trying to raise empathetic children."

Call for inquiry into gangland convictions

DAVID KING

A high-powered Melbourne silk has called for an inquiry into a series of criminal convictions, following reports that they may be compromised because Victoria Police had misused intelligence to end the gangland war.

Reports yesterday suggested a special court might need to be set up to deal with a flood of high-profile criminal appeals related to cases during and after Melbourne's gangland war, which might be in doubt because of tactics allegedly used by police.

David Galbally QC yesterday said that if people had been wrongly convicted, their cases must be investigated.

"I think it's appalling. I think it's a great tragedy to think that we may have had people convicted in circumstances where (had) this evidence not been given they would not have been convicted," he told *Ten News*.

"Royal commissions are very expensive, but there should be some form of inquiry."

"Whether or not the government wants to do down the path of a royal commission, I think it's a very difficult decision to make."

The *Herald Sun* reported that the scandal was set to erupt next week and said calls for a royal commission would be likely.

The identities of the parties involved in the cases as well as the government agencies involved in a protracted legal dispute about the matter are covered by suppression orders.

The alleged misconduct concerned police intelligence-gathering methods and was motivated by a desire to bring to an end the Melbourne gangland war that raged from 1998 until 2010.

The gangland feuds, predominantly between crime families involved in Melbourne's drug trade, claimed about 20 lives including Jason Moran, Andrew "Benji" Veniamin, Graham "The Munster" Kinniburgh, and later Carl Williams.

Deputy Premier James Merlino refused to comment on the matter yesterday.

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Enquiries and applications can be directed to the Principal, Ms Helen Staindl via email to principal@stclaresofficer.catholic.edu.au

Applications open: Monday, 26 November 2018
Application close: Thursday, 27 December 2018

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Australian Government

USI Unique Student Identifier

Student Identifiers Registrar, Statutory Officer

Ongoing | Full Time

The Department of Education and Training is seeking applications from suitably qualified individuals to take the position of Student Identifiers Registrar, from the second quarter 2019. The role is based in Adelaide.

Background about the Unique Student Identifier

The *Student Identifiers Act 2014* (the Act) provides for a student identification number for all students in the vocational education and training (VET) sector. Currently, over 9 million students hold a student identifier. The student identifier is an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

The Role

Government and sector expectations are that a Registrar with exceptional judgement, leadership, integrity and experience will lead the student identifier initiative. The Registrar's role is to ensure the smooth operation of the student identifier system. The role entails advice, strategic development and leadership on matters relating to the student identifier. The Registrar will liaise at external fora and with central agencies as required, and will exercise strong human relations, financial and operational judgement.

The Registrar will protect the privacy of student information within the requirements of the legislative framework and will be able to deal with any privacy complaints and/or breaches with a high degree of diplomacy and sensitivity. The Registrar is expected to maintain public visibility as an advocate of the merits of the student identifier initiative, and as a spokesperson when contentious or sensitive issues arise. In this context, the Registrar will need to demonstrate excellent communication and media handling skills.

The Registrar will have substantial management experience, with a proven record of strategic development and program implementation that enhances organisational capability and outcomes. Experience working with, or in, a government organisation supported by substantial IT capability would be an advantage.

Remuneration

As a statutory office holder, remuneration is established by a determination of the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal. The current remuneration, specified in Remuneration Tribunal (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Full Time Public Office) Determination 2018 compilation no 3, is \$244,520 per annum.

Enquires should be directed to **Jonathan Beaumont**, Principal Consultant or **Fabrizia Luca**, Principal Consultant at **Gillian Beaumont Recruitment**, on **02 6126 4500**. Interested candidates should also submit their resumes in Word format to **education@gillianbeaumont.com.au** quoting Ref GBR4959.

Applications close on Monday, 17 December 2018.