

Police reopen case



A report at the time.

“We are treating the recommendations seriously and we will be addressing them as appropriate”

Kevin Loomes



Our coverage of the case.

Fresh probe into sex abuse claims

By Matt Doran

POLICE will reopen a case involving allegations of widespread sexual abuse at a Mornington child-care centre in the early 1990s. Officers will also review the way a peninsula-based policeman handled the initial investigation into the sex abuse claims.

But the member, who cannot be named, last week said he would welcome an inquiry into his involvement in the case.

“The review will provide an opportunity for the truth to come out,” he said.

The revelations follow a two-year Victorian Ombudsman inquiry into the handling of four child sex abuse cases in Victoria between 1991 and 1999.

Part of the confidential Ombudsman’s report deals with the the Mornington case.

The report, seen by the *Leader*, found there was no evidence of any police involvement in pedophilia, as had been alleged in the original complaint to the Ombudsman.

But the report recommended that:

- Police “review the evidence” gathered in relation to allegations of child sex abuse at the Mornington Child Care Centre and Nursery School in the early 1990s; and
- “Given the concerns about the manner (in which an investigating officer) dealt with the initial

investigation”, police will review this aspect of the investigation.

The report also endorsed a move by a detective inspector from the Crime Department to evaluate the original police investigation.

As part of the inquiry into the Mornington case, the Ombudsman’s office interviewed police involved in the original investigation, counsellors, and parents of some of the children who were allegedly abused at the child-care centre.

Victoria Police spokesman Kevin Loomes said police would adopt the Ombudsman’s recommendations.

“We are treating the recommendations seriously and we will be addressing them as appropriate,” he said.

Psychologist and victims’ advocate Dr Reina Michaelson, who triggered the Ombudsman’s inquiry, said many broken Mornington families were now a step closer to justice.

“This is a step in the right direction, but I still feel the only option is a royal commission or a judicial inquiry,” she said.

The Mornington Child Care Centre and Nursery School was the subject of widespread sex abuse allegations in the early 1990s.

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Dr Reina Michaelson, who triggered the Ombudsman’s inquiry. Picture: RENAE DROOP. N45ML802

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