



Letter to the Queen's College community

I am writing to you as a member of the Queen's College community about an important matter Council has been considering, related to the use of the name and image of Dr Raynor Johnson, who was Master of the College from 1934 to 1964.

Dr Johnson made a positive and significant contribution to the College during his time as Master, however he is considered to be the co-founder of a sect commonly known as 'The Family'. The sect was involved in the adoption of young children in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the children were subjected to severe mistreatment. While there is no evidence that Dr Johnson was involved in the mistreatment, it is clear that he lent legitimacy to the sect and played a key role in its formation and ongoing activities, and on at least on one occasion was its public defender.

It is Council's view that Dr Johnson's legacy at Queen's College cannot be viewed in isolation from his involvement with the sect. His legacy includes a period of strong contribution to the College, but it also includes his involvement with 'The Family' both in the later years of his term as Master and subsequent to him concluding his time as Master of Queen's. It is clear to Council, that taken as a whole, Dr Johnson's legacy is not consistent with the core values, vision and mission of the College.

As a result, Council has determined to re-name the building officially named the Johnson Wing and commonly referred to as 'J Wing'. The building will be immediately but provisionally renamed the 'West Wing', with a more substantive renaming to take place as a priority. Council has also given careful consideration to the appropriateness of Dr Johnson's portrait being displayed alongside other former Masters. Council has determined that Dr Johnson's portrait will continue to be displayed, however the portraits will be accompanied by explanatory plaques, with Dr Johnson's plaque referencing both his contribution to the college as well as his association with 'The Family' and the College's disapproval of that association. Council has no intention of erasing Dr Johnson from Queen's history, but it does wish to ensure that the complexity of his legacy is transparently and appropriately referenced.

To be clear - Queen's College deplores Dr Johnson's association with the sect known as 'The Family' and condemns in the strongest possible terms the mistreatment of children. Queen's College reiterates its expression of profound sympathy to the survivors and their families.

In coming to these decisions, Council has been through a detailed process which has included the introduction of a formal Renaming Policy, as well as the establishment of a Review Panel to provide input on these matters. Council would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work and diligence and to the members of the Wyvern community who provided their perspectives to the Review Panel. Council also thanks our student leaders for requesting that Council reconsider these important matters.

Council is conscious that there are some strongly held and differing views in our community. We would like to reassure everyone that the matter has been given careful and due consideration. We have taken this decision in the best interests of the College and our community as a whole and we believe it is strongly aligned with Queen's values and purpose.

If anyone in the community would like to discuss this matter further, I invite you to make contact with me via Michele Mulder (Secretary of Council) at wyvrens@queens.unimelb.edu.au.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Marshman
On behalf of Queen's College Council