

## Minutes of Meeting

July 15<sup>th</sup>

10.00am

### Children Commission

Present: Mr, John Britton - Mediator  
 Sisters of Mercy Delegation  
 Mr Phillip Bowan - Admin Staff for Srs of Mercy  
 Mr. Jeff Hancock - solicitor for Srs of Mercy  
 Childrens Commission Representative  
 Mr. Simon Morrison - Solicitor for N.A.S.G.C  
 Victims of Crime Association  
 Neerkol Action Support Group Committee  
 AYD [redacted] - Chairman  
 Mary Eather - Secretary  
 REDACTED - Assistant Secretary  
 Allen Allaway - Committee Member  
 AZB [redacted] - Committee Member  
 REDACTED [redacted] - Committee Member  
 REDACTED (Stand-in representative for REDACTED )

Chairman Mr. John Britton welcomes everybody to today's meeting and apologizes for the absents of commissioner Mr. Norm Alford who is unable to attend this meeting today.

Previous minutes of meeting taken as read - some issues need to be elaborated on and concluded.

The issues arising are:

- The need to clarify the progress within the Victims of Crime Assistance in the areas where needed.
- Funding for the Action Group
- Guidelines around the counselling
- Media Issue

President for the N.A,S,G, AYD [redacted] states the other issues the committee is hoping to clear up are:-

- The apology agenda item
- The Budget

The compensation issue we shall leave that for discussion with the lawyers towards the end of the meeting. The three main issues to clear up today are:-

- The funding
- The counselling
- The apology

John Britton reiterates the importance of preserving trust and confidentiality at these meetings.

Today is essentially for the matter of the Sisters of Mercy to respond to firstly the funding for the victims of Crime Association which has been previously agreed upon by Srs of Mercy representative for V.O.C.A. Ros Rogers asks for confirmation in letter form from the Srs of Mercy. Ros states the court procedures are likely to be an ongoing thing and want confirmation of the commitment over a twelve month basis.

- Committee Member, Alan Allaway questions what the Sister assistance to V.O.C.A is in that regard.
- Congregational leader for Sister of Mercy Dianne Rowan states they are committed to support V.O.C.A as long as there are on going hearings
- And has assured the Association of the same. - Mediator expressed his satisfaction on that agreement - all present agreed
- Mr John Britton now raises the "Counselling Guidelines" there needs to be some discussion and clarification with regards to amount of time and monies offered as this was the Action Groups concern when we last discussed this.
- President AYD [REDACTED] states changes as discussed with Di-Anne Rowan and assistant secretary [REDACTED] reads out same. Sr. Di-anne Rowan stated their agreement to the changes of "Time of Claimants Services". She hands over current draft copy to committee

- Funding Neekol Action Support group  
Secretary for the group Mary Eather gives details of trust account and expresses the groups appreciation for this funding.  
Sr. Di-anne Rowan hands over cheque for the amount of \$13800 as specified in budget proposal

Chairman, Mr John Britton states he has conducted meeting with lawyers and heads of the group at various times in between our general meeting with both parties basically in order to establish each others impressions so that we don't send things off the rail.

- Media issue is raised by Mr AYD, President for N.A.S.G, He states that the media is constantly in contact and his response to those interested is that "We are still meeting with the Sisters on the Rockhampton issue, and we don't have any statement at this stage while we are still negotiating and would not wish to pre-empt anything on these negotiations that might harm it one way or another with both parties."
- Mr John Britton states there are essentially two issues that the congregation leader Di-anne Rowan feels that we should discuss today and that is:-
  1. The apology Issue
  2. The compensation issue

### Apology

Sr. Di-Anne Rowan states she wants to apologise the best way she could and on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy in Rockhampton. Therefore she has drafted a letter on that. Sr Di-Anne Rowan reads out the apology and passes it on to the committee.

The letter of apology will be sent to all members along with counselling statement on what is available.

Meeting disrupts out of order with committee members over apology issue.

Chairman John Britton suggests a break in order for members to absorb apology draft.

Committee member Allen Allaway states to all present that we are not here for re-crimination, we are here to negotiate

TEA BREAK

Chairman John Britton refers to requisition various means of apologies and possible meeting with the Sisters from that era.

The meeting with the sisters may be some what difficult due to age and health and whether it would be helpful in what one wishes to achieve. There is much to consider and it is suggested we first contemplate over the draft letter of apology.

President for N.A.S.G Mr. JAYD suggests that we discuss this matter with our members at our next general meeting then get back to this group on the result.

Compensation

John Britton - this is a very difficult issue because what I understand is the multi-lateral - but this is bi-lateral as there are two parties here. There is the Neerkol Group and the sisters of Mercy but there are other people involved, as I understand it, in potential compensation.

Lawyer for N.A.S.G. Simon Morrison - The agreement between both parties has taken place, regrettably we haven't been able to formulate any agreement as to the resolution with the compensation issue.

Simon requests the chairman that formally the compensation issue be removed from the agenda and he anticipates legal proceedings to be issued in the coming weeks. There is a commitment on a part of the action group to persue other areas such as counselling and we'll address the compensation as a separate issue.

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Lawyer for Sisters of Mercy, Mr. Jeff Hancock. - The response simply reflects my obligations to the Srs of Mercy, for them the consequences are unknown and my recommendations to them was not to go into an area where the consequences are unpredictable. My advise was to talk through these issues and get more information and see just how they may be met. My formal reply to Simon isn't just shutting the doors.

Chairman suggests that we conclude here.

Obviously the agenda at our next meeting will reflect on what will arise at your next meeting between your groups.

Tentatively next meeting to be held Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1997 confirmed in due course.

Chairman - There has been some substantive achievements here today in amongst the difficulties that remain. There has been progress

- The counselling issues have been sorted out
- The victims of crime has had its full request
- The funding
- The legal compensation issue are to be dealt with, the door are not closed
- The apologies are under consideration

JAYD [ ] president for N.A.S.G states that we have fulfilled our obligations to refrain from giving statements to the media and now that the compensation issue is off the agenda we are now free to talk with the media and wants a ruling on the issues accomplished in order to include those in discussion.

John Britton states he can't make a ruling but can only make a suggestion that while still discussing issues, compensation aside, his personal view is that it would be helpful to keep the silence during this period until these issues are properly resolved.

President for N.A.S.G asks our legal representative for his opinion on how this would affect negotiating if we issue a statement on today's meeting

Lawyer recommends silence on the concept of issues being negotiated. "As far as compensation issue, it isn't an ongoing discussion as we need to seek redress in another forum. I'd be inclined not to recommend to the group that they be restricted and that is sensitive public information. If we come back onto the negotiating table with compensation issue then we resort back to our agreement on silence."

Sisters of Mercy Lawyer, gives his opinion and states it is very much an issue for your own group.

John Britton closes meeting and thanks all in attendance.