

# MERCY ADMINISTRATION CENTRE

SISTERS OF MERCY

ROCKHAMPTON CONGREGATION



THE RANGE,  
263 AGNES STREET,  
ROCKHAMPTON Q. 4700

P.O. BOX 1576,  
ROCKHAMPTON Q. 4700

TEL: 079 - 27 1866  
FAX: 079 - 22 3040

31st October, 1995

Mr. Peter Karp,  
McCabe Brown,  
GPO Box 235,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2001.

Dear Mr Karp,

**re MR. DAVID OWENS**

I have your letter of 10th October, 1995 regarding Mr. Owens. I apologise for not having answered before this but, as you were aware (my fax 21/9/1995), I was away for most of the month of October. I am disappointed with your response and the rejection of our offer of pastoral care.

I am also puzzled by the tone and contents of your letter to the point where I want to check my understanding of what has taken place to date:

1. As far as I am aware, there has been no direct communication between Mr. Owens and any member of this Congregation about the allegations being made.
2. The first notification I have of the allegations is contained in your letter of 22/6/1995 which reached me via Messrs Carroll and O'Dea of Sydney on 9/7/1995 and simply by their courtesy. The letter did not ask of me any form of reply. It is a notification and states "We shall be in contact with you shortly.". In the circumstances I did not feel I was neglecting the matter when I took this literally and awaited your further communication. I am not aware if your firm took any action to correct the error when informed by Messrs Carroll and O'Dea that the letter had been wrongly directed.
3. The next communication of which I am aware is your letter of 12/9/1995 addressed to The Mercy Sisters, ISMA National Office in Lewisham. This letter of 12/9/1995 also reached me by a circuitous route, this time via the ISMA office. When I received this letter I promptly informed you of the correct address and asked that any further correspondence be addressed to me. I answered within what I consider to be a very reasonable time frame, my letter being dated 20/9/1995 and sent by fax 21/9/1995. Although the Sisters of Mercy do not regard

themselves as responsible for the actions of a Diocesan Priest, my response to the information that Mr. Owens wanted to negotiate (the first suggestion I had of any way to proceed) was to offer to meet with him as soon as possible with a view to talking about the matter and offering counselling and pastoral support.

4. The third communication from you and the first to come directly to this office is the letter of 10/10/1995 received here on 13/10/1995, to which I am now replying. (The envelope was addressed to "The Mercy Administration Centre" not to me). In fact this letter, like the previous one, leaves me wondering what you want me to do next. Your statement about what will happen if "such settlement does not occur" does nothing to clarify for me what you regard as desirable action on our part.

It is regrettable that our offer of pastoral support is not accepted. I would like your assurance that Mr. Owens is clear that neither I nor my representatives have had opportunity to discuss this matter with him or with you as his representatives, and that communication with this Congregation has been both limited and recent.

In the circumstances I am left with no alternative but to refer your correspondence to our solicitor.

Yours sincerely,

*B. M. Loch*

Sr. Berneice Loch, R.S.M.  
CONGREGATIONAL LEADER.

*Copies 2/11 to J. Shaw  
J. Grace.  
Minter Ellison et al.*