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lawyersDate 24 December 2004  
Pages 2 (including this page)*FROM* ~~to~~ The Most Reverend Denis J Hart, DD  
Archbishop of Melbourne  
Fax 9926 5613*To* ~~from~~ Richard Leder  
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Your Grace

Re Graeme Sleeman

*Dear Richard,  
Response on p. 2.  
Ted conveyed (1) yesterday. ds*

I enclose for your attention a copy of a letter dated 16 December 2004 received from the Commissioner in relation to Graeme Sleeman. Ted may well have already discussed this letter with you.

You will recall that Peter has previously recommended that Mr Sleeman be paid the sum of \$150,000. This recommendation was made notwithstanding the Commissioner's view that Mr Sleeman has no valid legal claim against the Archdiocese (including the Education Office).

Your Grace indicated your preparedness to accept the Commissioner's recommended payment amount and indeed, the settlement funds have been placed in the Corrs Trust Account.

However, the Commissioner had also recommended that Mr Sleeman be given the opportunity to meet with you. I was, and remain, firmly of the view that while it might be appropriate for Mr Sleeman to meet with you after settlement has been reached, it is not appropriate for him to meet with you at this stage, particularly as there is every indication that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the settlement amount. If he does want to discuss the settlement amount, that meeting could appropriately be with me, Ted and/or the Vicar General.

You will see that the Commissioner has proposed a form of letter to be written to Mr Sleeman by me. The final paragraph of that proposed letter does not reflect my recommended position as set out above, because it leaves the way open for Mr Sleeman to meet with you and to seek to argue with you about the compensation amount. I remain of the view that such a meeting would be inappropriate.

The final paragraph of the Commissioner's letter propose a further alternative. I do not support that alternative, for the following reasons:

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- The Commissioner has made his recommendation as to a settlement amount, and you have agreed to accept that recommendation. That should be an end to the matter;
- Notwithstanding the evident sympathy that the Commissioner has for Mr Sleeman, but bearing in mind the fact that Mr Sleeman would not appear to have any prospects of succeeding in a legal claim, a settlement of \$150,000 is to my mind extremely generous;
- While Mr Sleeman's case does not fit neatly into the compensation panel system, because he is not a victim of sexual or other abuse, I consider that it is important for there to be some parity between settlements. Clearly this amount is well outside the ordinary range of settlements, and I have misgivings about it for that reason alone.
- For all of these reasons, I do not support the payment of any higher amount to Mr Sleeman;
- Turning to the specific recommendation that a house be bought, I have grave reservations about this suggestion because of all of the logistical difficulties and hidden costs that are associated with it, particularly when one considers that the house would be in Queensland. Inevitably there will be disputes about maintenance, rates and the like and as our experience in other difficult matters has demonstrated, the devil is in the detail, and the proposal is always more difficult to finalise than one would expect.
- As I see it, the decisions for Your Grace are:
  1. Do you wish to stick at \$150,000 or consider the latest suggestion that a house be bought?
  2. Are you willing to meet with Mr Sleeman?; and
  3. If you are willing to meet, will you do so before the settlement offer is made (as the Commissioner recommends) or only afterwards?

*\$150,000.  
YES*

*AFTER SETTLEMENT*

*+ Dennis J. Karl  
24/12/04*

Kind regards

Richard Leder  
Partner