



# RUSSELL SAVAGE MP

## Member for Mildura



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16 August 2006

Minister Tim Holding  
Minster for Police and Emergency Services  
Level 1, 55 St Andrews Place  
MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Minister,

In 1972 Detective Senior Constable Denis Ryan in Mildura investigated the activities of the late Monsignor John Day. Some 16 statements were taken from 14 males and 2 females that when examined display a disgraceful episode in the history of Mildura.

I have studied the documentation accessed by Denis Ryan under FOI, and it is a shocking indictment on the failure to prosecute Day, and on the subsequent persecution of Denis Ryan by the Victoria Police as a consequence of his investigation.

There were victim after victim, and yet the Victoria Police advised Bishop Mulkearns that there was no case to answer.

Here is a quote from a letter to Denis Ryan and Deputy Principal John Howden from Bishop Mulkearns, dated 16 December 1971:

*"I suggest that it might have been prudent, in view of the fact that the matter was already in the hands of the police, to have awaited the result of that interview before stating as a fact that Monsignor Day had been guilty of immoral conduct over a period of years. I have been assured that the police, who rightly take a very serious view of charges of this nature, have indeed investigated the accusations which have been found to be untrue and that they have satisfied themselves that there is no substance to these charges. I am confident that they would certainly bring this matter to my attention officially if they were not completely satisfied".*

*"I trust that the fact of the police investigation which has evidently cleared Monsignor Day of the charges which have been made against him will result in your demonstration of loyalty to him at a time when he has been subjected to very great embarrassment and strain."*

Ultimately, as a consequence of this investigation, Denis Ryan stopped Monsignor Day's activities in Mildura, but not at Timboon where Day was later sent by Bishop Mulkearns. Had the Victoria Police charged Day, the difficulties faced by his victims may have not been so profound as they are today.

Denis Ryan was forcibly transferred back to Russell Street for doing his job in an outstanding manner. Consequently, Ryan submitted his resignation, and on it in paragraph 2 wrote:

*"I can only hope that any member of the police force who in the future performs a similar type of inquiry that I performed in relation to the Monsignor does not suffer the same fate that I had suffered"*.

He was forced to re-write the resignation without this paragraph, but kept a copy of this original resignation report.

I acknowledge the separation of powers in relation to the government and your ministry, but I request that, through your office, the Chief Commissioner of Police Christine Nixon gives consideration to making an apology to Denis Ryan on behalf of the Victoria Police and to give him recognition for his outstanding efforts in exposing the notorious paedophile priest Monsignor John Day at Mildura in 1972.

I have attached the copy of my Grievance contribution on Denis Ryan.

Yours Sincerely,

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Mr Russell Savage MP  
**MEMBER FOR MILDURA**