




SOLICITORS AND NOTARIES

Your Ref:
Our Ref: PL:APW

29 August 1996

Commissioner John Gowans
The Salvation Army
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Dear Commissioner Gowans

I have received instructions to act for Mr Laurie Wilson, a former Salvation Army Officer. Mr Wilson has been charged with a number of offences, including buggery, common assault and indecent assault. It will be alleged that each of these offences occurred while Mr Wilson was serving as a Salvation Army Officer, either at a boys' home conducted by the Salvation Army at Goulburn or at Bexley North.

The police have received complaints from FT who is represented by Mr Chris Murphy, Solicitor and from EP who is represented by Mr Doug Timmins, Barrister.

I understand that both FT and EP have made complaints to the Salvation Army, and I am informed by Mr Timmins that they intend to make claims for compensation arising out of the manner in which they were treated whilst they were inmates of these particular institutions.

The charges against Mr Wilson are serious charges and whilst he admits that he was a disciplinarian whilst he was in charge of these homes, he strongly denies any activity of a sexual nature that could result in the charges being brought. He has instructed us to deny each of the charges that have been laid against him.

Mr Wilson is now a pensioner with little or no funds with which to defend these charges. If they are not properly defended, then there is a strong possibility that he will be convicted and sentenced to a lengthy period of imprisonment. To assist him in that defence, I would like to gain access to some of the records of the Salvation Army relating to both these boys' homes. Please advise if I may have access to those records and if so, when and where they might be inspected.

I also write to ask if the Salvation Army would be willing to make some contribution towards the legal costs associated with the investigation and defence of the claims being made against both Mr Wilson and The Salvation Army. I have presently indicated that Mr Wilson may need to budget up to \$20,000 for his defence, although it is early days and difficult to be precise with the total cost involved.

No doubt, the Salvation Army will have an interest in these proceedings and the evidence that will be given. It will also be of interest to the Salvation Army to be aware of the evidence available from Mr Wilson and other witnesses who might be called in these proceedings. In this respect, the Salvation Army and Mr Wilson would appear to have a common interest.





- 2 -

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This firm is currently involved in major litigation for an international company that has received considerable adverse publicity concerning one of its products. The use of the media to bring undue pressure on corporations is a tactic that is now being used by some litigants in Australia and there is no doubt that that is a tactic that will be used against the Salvation Army in these claims for sexual misconduct against inmates in their institutions. Our experience indicates that the approach to be taken in these circumstances should include the total management of the situation by a team of people with a variety of skills, including public relations, lawyers and, in this case, psychologists. I would be happy to assist the Salvation Army in this procedure and would be willing to meet with you should you wish to discuss it further.

In the meantime, I would be grateful if you could confirm:

- (a) if the records of the Salvation Army can be made available to me for the defence of Mr Wilson;
- (b) if the Salvation Army will contribute to the legal costs for the investigation of these claims;
and
- (c) if the Salvation Army will contribute to the legal costs for the defence of Mr Wilson.

Yours faithfully
COLEMAN & GREIG

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Paul Lucas', written over a horizontal line.

Paul Lucas