

WF 23 DEC 2014

REDACTED

Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

REDACTED

17 December 2014

CONFIDENTIAL

Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia
PO Box 280
INGLEBURN NSW 1890

Dear Brothers,

ACCUSATION OF CHILD ABUSE

We refer to the attached handwritten letter received from BCB [REDACTED] of REDACTED [REDACTED] on 10 December 2014 in relation to the above matter.

The following background information is provided:

Background

- 1) BCB [REDACTED] is of good standing; however, she has struggled spiritually from time to time with meeting attendance and field service. She is 47 years old having been born in 1967.
- 2) The alleged perpetrator is Brother Bill Neil, now deceased, who was serving as an elder in the Narrogin Congregation in Western Australia. His wife's name is Bronwyn Neil. The allegation of child abuse is reported to have occurred from 1982 to 1986 inclusive, when BCB [REDACTED] was 15 to 19 years of age. The accusation of child abuse was apparently reported to the Body of Elders in the Narrogin Congregation by BCB [REDACTED] in 1989 when she was 22 years of age. We are advised that the matter was handled at the time by Brother Max Horley and the Circuit Overseer.

Involvement of the REDACTED Congregation

- 3) Brothers Joe Bello and David Wood undertook a shepherding visit to BCB [REDACTED] approximately one year ago. At this time, BCB [REDACTED] outlined the alleged child abuse that had previously occurred. This was for the purpose of simply advising the brothers in the event of anything arising in the future. No further action was requested by BCB [REDACTED] and, as the matter had been dealt with many years ago, the brothers offered comfort from the Scriptures.

- 4) Following this visit, Brother Bello recalls sending a letter to the Watchtower B. & T. Society and receiving a response, possibly by email. However, no record has been kept of this letter and response.
- 5) Sometime after the events described in 3) and 4) above, BCB [redacted] handed Brother Joe Bello a typewritten letter giving further information of the accusation of child abuse. A further couple of weeks after receipt of the first letter, a second letter was handed to Brother Bello giving additional details of the accusation. Following receipt of the second letter, Brother Bello destroyed the first letter as it had been superseded. Brother Bello was then approached by BCB [redacted]'s husband, BCC [redacted] who requested that the second letter be handed back to them as it was the only copy. The second letter was duly given back to BCC [redacted]
- 6) In about July 2014, Brother Bello paid a friendly visit to both BCC [redacted] and BCB [redacted] at their home. It was only at this time that BCB [redacted] made mention that she was considering reporting the matter to the Royal Commission on Child Abuse and seeking compensation. Brother Bello offered comfort and encouragement from the Scriptures and *did not* suggest to BCB [redacted] that she should not report the allegation of child abuse to the authorities. No further action was taken on the matter at this time.
- 7) During the recent Circuit Overseer's visit by Brother Warren Reynolds to the REDAC [redacted] Congregation from 4 to 9 November 2014, both Brother Reynolds and Brother David Wood visited BCB [redacted] at her home expecting to discuss her concerns in relation to the allegation of child abuse; however, BCB [redacted] did not take the opportunity to raise the matter. As a result, the accusation of child abuse was not discussed.
- 8) Subsequent to this, the attached handwritten letter was given to Brother David Wood by BCB [redacted]'s mother, BCD [redacted], at a congregation meeting on Wednesday, 10 December 2014. It should be noted that the letter is not signed and is not dated, but is reported to have been written by BCB [redacted]. Furthermore, BCD [redacted] now aged 79, apparently only found out about the accusation of child abuse a week prior to handing over the letter and had no previous knowledge.
- 9) Brothers David Wood and Robert Boardman then telephoned the Watchtower B. & T. Society's branch office on Friday, 12 December 2014 and spoke to the Service Department to seek their direction.
- 10) Brothers Wood and Boardman also briefly met with BCC [redacted] and BCB [redacted] on Sunday, 14 December 2014. The purpose of this meeting was to ascertain the congregation where the alleged abuse occurred and the period involved.

Your further direction on this accusation of child abuse is sought. Thank you for your assistance with this important matter. It is our privilege to serve unitedly with you in furtherance of Kingdom interests.

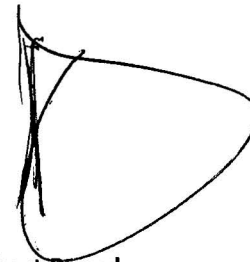
Your brothers,



Joe Bello



David Wood



Robert Boardman