

10 March 1992

District Superintendent
Central Police Station
Cnr of Hereford Street &
Cambridge Terrace
CHRISTCHURCH

Dear Sir

re: Peter Hugh McGregor Ellis

REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO OFFICIAL INFORMATION (Section 12 Official Information Act 1982)

I act on behalf of the abovenamed who has been the subject of investigation by the child abuse unit for a period or periods from November of last year.

The investigations concern allegations of sexual abuse by Mr Ellis against a child or children during the course of his employment as a childcare worker at the Civic Childcare Centre, Christchurch.

At the end of November last year I spoke to Detective Colin Eade of the child abuse unit at some length on Peter's behalf. At that stage Detective Eade confirmed to me that an investigation was underway and that enquiries had been and were being made but that prosecution was not being considered at that time. I heard nothing subsequently from Detective Eade and received no written communication from him.

On the 20th of December 1991 Detective Eade wrote to the Christchurch City Council indicating that there had been no disclosures of any sort of any indecent touching by any person employed at the Childcare Centre and that the investigation was complete as far as the police were concerned.

Mr Ellis has now been advised, informally and through friends, that a continuing and widespread enquiry is being undertaken by the child abuse unit involving interviewing a great number of children who have attended the Childcare Centre over a period of years. Mr Ellis has been told that a number of obscene and graphic activities are alleged to have been carried out by him on various children and that details of these alleged activities are well known amongst parents and workers involved with the Civic Childcare Centre. He has also been advised that members of the child abuse unit are actively soliciting children and parents and inviting information with a view to complaints being made.

I have had a discussion with Detective Eade today who advises me that he is not prepared to provide me with any information concerning the above nor is he prepared to contact Mr Ellis concerning the matters.

My client's reputation has unquestionably been damaged by the investigation and the rumours which are circulating as a result of it. He is greatly distressed and utterly at a loss to know how he can answer any allegations which are being made.

In the circumstances I am of the view that the handling of this matter by the child abuse unit has been inappropriate as far as Mr Ellis is concerned. In particular it seems that it is well past the time when full disclosure should have been made to Mr Ellis as to the nature and extent of the allegations and the basis for the current investigation.

I accordingly formally request, under Section 12 of the Official Information Act, the following:-

- (a) The full file relating to Mr Ellis for perusal.
- (b) Full disclosure of all statements made by any witnesses which are in the possession of the police.
- (c) Full disclosure of any video-taped interviews in respect of any children concerned with the investigation.
- (d) Full and explicit details of the basis of the current investigation, the parameters of the enquiries, and the reasons why Mr Ellis has not been provided with any information regarding any of these matters.
- (e) Such further or other information as is necessary properly to inform Mr Ellis as to the matters covered in this letter.

Because of the length of time which has elapsed since the enquiries were commenced, and because of the totally unexplained resumption of the enquiries (given the contents of Detective Eade's letter of the 20th of December 1991) and because of the explicit refusal of Detective Eade to provide information, I am of the view that the request should be accorded urgency.

I look forward to receiving your reply to this letter by return.

Yours faithfully

Chris Knight