

Summary written by Michael Deaker subsequently. (89)

EVENTS LEADING TO CANCELLATION OF LICENCE FOR CHRISTCHURCH CIVIC
CHILDCARE CENTRE, 3 SEPTEMBER 1992

MICHAEL DEAKER, MNO (SI)

I returned from 10 days in Australia on 31 August 1992. In my absence Bede Cooper had been acting MNO. On 1 and 2 September I had briefings by telephone from Bede Cooper and Grace Todd on meetings at DSW and at the City Council that they had attempted with police, DSW, Crown Law Office and Christchurch City Council officials, to do with information disclosed during police investigations of the actions of Peter Ellis.

At these briefings, Bede reported to me, the information from the police included reference to their view that five other staff might be charged, there were substantial allegations of child abuse and of generally poor supervision. The police had implored the Ministry to suspend the centre's licence.

I determined to travel to Christchurch on Thursday 3 September to attend a further briefing with all concerned.

I attended a meeting that morning at 10.00 am at the office of John Gray, City Manager. Present were Mr Gray, and at least two other city officials, a Crown Law Office representative, Detective Inspector Brian Pearce and one of his colleagues, plus the three of us from the Ministry.

As I recall there were three phases of discussion:

- a The police officers traversed their concerns, as expressed in the earlier briefings, and suggested strongly that children should not attend the creche. I was shown affidavits from parents of children at the creche which specified their worries. I skim-read these and noted sworn allegations of abuse and disturbed child behaviour. I do not recall any names or details now.

I was satisfied from this briefing that section 13(1) of the ECE Regulations applied. In other words, as the delegate of the Secretary I was satisfied that it was not in the interests of children that this centre continue to open.

- b John Gray and the council officers said that if we proceeded to suspend the licence they would have no representations to make and that we could therefore immediately proceed to cancel the licence. I presented Mr Gray with a letter announcing suspension, he responded in kind stating the council as licensee would not contest this, and I then gave him a letter stating the licence would be cancelled under 14(2) of the ECE regulations.

c There was discussion in which I played little or no part on handling the procedures of closure, ie notification of staff, media release, and the like.

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

EXHIBIT NOTE

This is the annexure marked "C" referred to in the within affidavit of MARIE KEYS CHRISTCHURCH, MOTHER and sworn at CHRISTCHURCH this 25th day of OCTOBER 1993 before me

A Solicitor of The High Court of New Zealand (Solicitor to sign in part on Exhibit)

[Handwritten signature]