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11 APR 2012

Mr William Hahn
[REDACTED]

Our ref: CD/12/81314

Dear Mr Hahn

The Victorian Working with Children Check

Thank you for your letter dated 2 January 2012, regarding the Working with Children (WWC) Check and your concerns as they relate to the religious organisation, the Jehovah's Witnesses. As the WWC Check falls within the Justice portfolio, I am responding on behalf of my fellow Ministers.

As you may be aware, the purpose of the *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act) is to assist in protecting children from sexual or physical harm by ensuring that the people who work with, or care for, children have their suitability to do so checked by a government body.

The Department of Justice has met with representatives of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia to discuss requirements of the WWC Act. I understand that following that meeting, there has been a shift of position by the Watchtower Society, and a large number have now applied for and received a WWC Check card.

While the department administers the WWC Check Scheme, it is not authorised to investigate suspected breaches of the Act and accordingly recommends that concerns regarding such breaches be referred to Victoria Police for investigation.

I have been briefed by my department in respect of the cases to which you refer and will follow their progress and outcome.

I thank you for your interest in the WWC Check and hope the information provided addresses your concerns.

Yours sincerely

ROBERT CLARK MP
Attorney-General

10/4/12

