

PAGAN AWARENESS NETWORK INC.

MEDIA RELEASE

March 19th 2004

Oates refuses apology to Witches, backs Wilson.

The former Mayor of Casey, Brian Oates, has refused to apologise or withdraw comments about Witches during mediation talks held at the Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria last week.

Cr Oates supported Cr Rob Wilson's bizarre allegations that a Satanic 'Witch Cult' was attempting to take over the City of Casey, in Melbourne's southeast, claims that outraged local Witches and Pagans. Newspapers quoted Cr Oates as saying, 'We need to make the Christian communities aware of the dangers of Witchcraft,' and he was also quoted referring to Pagans as a group he would not represent as Mayor, along with paedophiles, drug-dealers and Satanists.

PAN Inc. President David Garland said, 'We would have preferred to settle the matter with Cr Oates in mediation, but he appears determined to hitch his wagon to Rob Wilson's crusade. If we have to take him to court along with Cr Wilson, then we will.'

He added: 'We're puzzled by his decision to say the least.'

Cr Oates claimed in a letter to Mr Garland in October 2003, to have been misquoted by the Herald-Sun in a piece published June 20th 2003 and sought to cast doubts upon the professionalism of reporters covering the issue. Nine months on, however, he has yet to seek any kind of retraction or correction from the newspapers involved.

The Pagan Awareness Network, Inc, which is taking legal action on behalf of the Pagan community against Cr Wilson, has said that it would be satisfied if Cr Oates had his comments on the public record retracted.

[All names, places etc. have been spelled correctly.]

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