

This document has been redacted for Public Interest Immunity claims made by Victoria Police. These claims are not yet resolved.

Chief Commissioner Overland

Dear Simon

I find myself in the unusual and uncomfortable situation of delivering a letter to you from Petra Witness F. (At the request of the witness) However I consider the situation so serious, that I must take this action.

Over the past month I and I alone have been dealing with F as her relationship with the taskforce save for Cam Davey and I has broken down. The catalyst for the break down in relationship appears to be the decision made by whomever to terminate all contact with her due to issues relating to her ongoing claim or dispute against the department. I'm not sure of the details or the reasons why the decision was made as Davey and I have not been privy to the detail discussed between the department and F over the last 12 months relating to her management and her future. However the decision to cease all contact with her has had a severe impact on her.

As it stands today she refuses to have any contact with anyone from Petra except Davey and I. I have urged her to resume communication with her "minders" Graham ^{Evans} and Lloyd-DS but she won't, at this stage. I have also urged her to continue dealing with Steve Smith and Shane O'Connell with a view to resolving her issues; however she is so consumed with anger that I cannot get her to even agree to that. I am unsure if she will speak with them in the future. So I and I alone have been her contact.

I have visited her number of times in hospital over the past month and had numerous talks with her by phone. I have seen for myself the gravity of her physical condition. I have sat with her for hours at hospital and observed plastic drainage tubes inserted into large holes in her body. The tubes are attached to suction pump that literally sucks out dying tissue and fluids. I saw this for myself. She has holes, some small some the size of walnuts opening up over her body which have required surgery at times. I am told that she is suffering from a rare condition/reaction resulting from severe stress.

She is currently back at her original home receiving daily visits from a nurse who changes the dressings which cover her wounds. She is housebound and virtually immobile. Her condition is worsening and she may be re-admitted to hospital again.



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I have spent every day of my leave talking to her over the phone and exchanging text messages. I have been trying to keep her on board as a crucial witness and have also been supporting her through the crisis she is currently going through in her life. She has spoke of suicide to me on a number of occasions so the responsibility & stress on me has been difficult. The last thing I want is for this woman to take her life over this case or lose her health. This should never have been allowed to get to this point. Thankfully she has now agreed to receive psychiatric treatment for her depression.

The witness's transformation in terms of her psychological and physical health from last year when Davey and I finished taking her statement up to today is dramatic and very disturbing. It's hard to believe that she is the same person. If she was called upon to testify in court today I would say that she would be totally incapable of doing so because she is so damaged. I don't know what condition she will be in come Committal time.

We are 48 days away from a Committal hearing. At this stage I should be in a position where I am arranging conferences between crucial witnesses and the prosecutors. Instead the one witness whose testimony holds up the prosecution case against Dale is so physically and psychologically sick not to mention deranged with anger that I can't even get her to a conference let alone into the witness box. And I can assure you that without her testimony, the case against Dale will collapse, that is a certainty.

From what she explains to me, the issues causing her distress are these.

She wants to enter the witness protection program so that the prosecution will receive the legislated protections against discovery relating to materials called for via defense subpoena. Such materials she claims if produced would place her life in grave danger. She alludes to her cooperation with other Major Organised Crime investigations in the past but does not give me specifics. She pleads for flexibility and for Witsec to allow her in.

On this score I don't think this is unreasonable taking into account that she is not the typical type of individual who enters the program, that being a criminal who has been induced. She has not been induced, she has no criminal record and has not cooperated with us as a result of being detected committing any offence. The sacrifices she has made for us in terms of her personal life and career are enormous.

The other issue causing her distress is her desire that we (the dept) make good the assurances that were made to her early last year regarding her future. I don't know what particular assurances were made to her because as I said Davey and I were never kept in the loop regarding her management.



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We were excluded from discussions and arrangements. I do know this, that is for the last 9 months or so we (the Dept) have been controlling her movements and directing her life. She has on our instruction been living in [REDACTED], given up relationships, ceased driving her car, ceased her career, ceased living in her own home, etc etc. So I would imagine that there must have been some discussions relating to her future existence.

I end this letter to you by saying that F believes that you are the only person who can fix this problem which faces the witness and our case. This is why she has asked me to deliver her letter to you. I know she could have sent it via mail herself but in the fragile state she is in I accepted her request to bring it to you. She states that she has written to you in the past but never received any response from you other than correspondence from other officers.

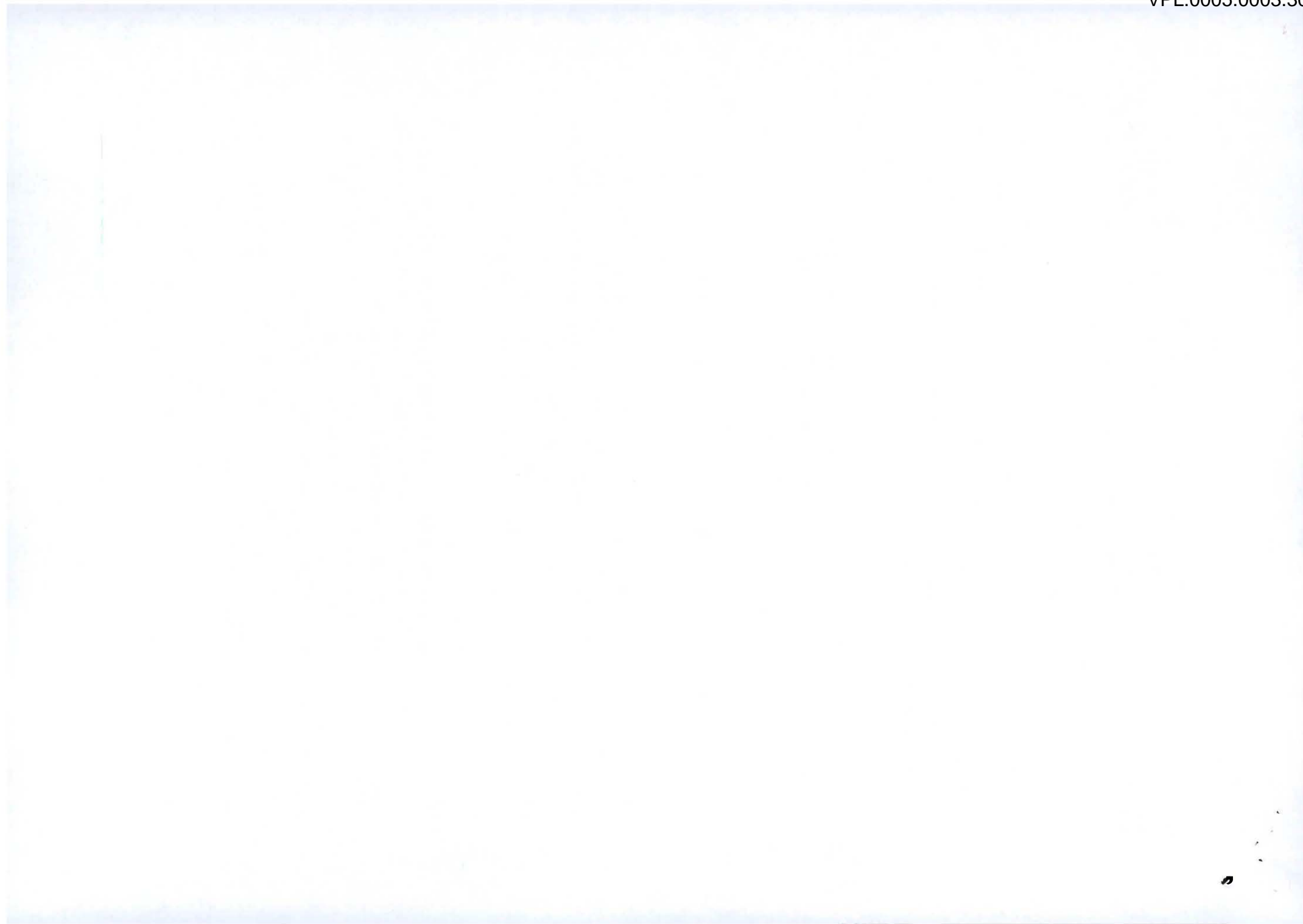
I believe that our case is in serious trouble due to the situation that has developed between F and the department. The ongoing dispute between F and the Dept has taken the focus off the murder prosecution and has already seriously jeopardised the prosecution case.

I also believe that you must now personally intervene to avert the collapse of the prosecution case.

I hope that I have not done myself professional harm in communicating with you in this manner. I do it with the only intention of protecting this important case and maybe even saving the life of witness F. Negotiations between F and the Dept over these issues appear at an impasse, which if left unresolved will destroy our case. Jeremy Rapke has indicated during a recent meeting with F's lawyers and the VGSO that if this problem continues down this path he may have to consider withdrawing F as a witness. That would certainly spell the end of the case against Dale.

On a final note I respectfully ask that if you can avoid notifying Steve Smith or Shane O'Connell that I have communicated to you in this manner I would appreciate that. I am sure that they would not be happy with me for doing this. These are my personal views I wish to convey to you in private. I feel that I have a right to air my concerns with you as one of the principle investigators who has led the Hodson investigation team. I have already lost the respect and friendship of a close friend and colleague in Charlie Bezzina over this case. I don't want to lose anymore.

Some quick decisions need to be made to save this prosecution.



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As these are my personal thoughts conveyed to you in an informal letter not compiled on departmental computer I respectfully recommend that it be shredded after you have read it so that it is not discoverable or subject to any future subpoena.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sol Solomon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sol Solomon

