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January 12, 2013

Dear Minister Gallacher,

I am the brother of Scott Russell Johnson, an American citizen whose body was found at the bottom of a cliff in Manly Beach in December 1988. Treasurer Mike Baird kindly shared your letter to him dated 19 December 2012 (Tab 3), in which you wrote that you were informed about the Unsolved Homicide Team's review of Scott's case. On behalf of Scott's surviving family, I would like to express my dismay and deep concern that the briefing you received before writing that letter was misleading and incomplete.

With this letter, I would like to share the reasons for that conclusion. We would be very grateful if you would read the attached letter and report (Tab 4) that the family has sent to Detective Senior Inspector Lehmann, detailing very specific new information about individuals who routinely assaulted gay men in Northern Beaches communities in the late 1980s. In compiling the report, based on private investigations conducted since the June 2012 Coroner's ruling, the family has consulted with many Australian experts in anti-gay violence, including former NSW police and police consultants, and they have completely supported our findings and requests for further police investigation.

My family is extremely upset about the Unsolved Homicide Team's representation to your office that their "review" of Scott's case adequately responded to the June 2012 Coronial Inquest ruling that remanded the case to them for "further investigation" (see attachment from Deputy State Coroner Carmel Forbes – Tab 6).

I met with Detective Senior Inspector John Lehmann at Parramatta the day after the June 2012 Inquest reversed the original "suicide" verdict in favor of "open finding." Lehmann stated that Unsolved Homicide normally would not review cases for three to five years, because he assumed that all cases he received had already been thoroughly investigated. We informed him that in this case no police investigation had taken place since 1988, which was itself extremely limited, especially in light of information not available to police at the time.

My wife and I explained to Lehmann that the Coroner's 2012 "open finding" was based solely on material that our family had submitted to the Coronial Homicide Unit. Prior to the Inquest, the Manly LAC reviewed the materials we had provided, but emphatically did not (I was told directly by Manly Detective Inspector Luke Arthurs) further investigate the case. Scott's death has still not been investigated.

In preparation for the June 2012 Inquest, we presented the Coroner with sworn statements from two of Australia's leading experts on anti-gay violence and homosexual "beats," former NSW Detective Sergeant Stephen Page and former NSW police gay/lesbian coordinator Sue Thompson. (We also include their reports here – Tabs 7 and 8.) Both Page and Thompson



concluded that the evidence amassed by the family strongly suggested that Scott may well have been murdered in the same manner as the cases investigated in Operation Taradale.

In December 2012, Scott's sister Rebecca and our family representative Daniel Glick personally shared findings from our attached report with Inspector Lehmann. Unfortunately, he was dismissive of the information and discouraging about the prospects of his team looking any further into Scott's case. He said the case, which his team had just finished evaluating, had received a "zero" solvability rating, ensuring it would not be looked at further until new information arrived 'on their doorstep.'

Our new report which you find included here represents an abundance of new information upon which to begin a proper investigation into Scott Johnson's death.

We believe that there are significant opportunities to investigate, as this attached report makes abundantly clear. As we related to Inspector Lehmann, ABC's *Australian Story* is scheduled to broadcast a segment on Scott's case in February. It has been our hope that the broadcast might generate more new leads and motivate police to pay close attention to the Persons of Interest we identify in the report.

The way things stand, as reflected in Inspector Lehmann's comments to date, we are deeply concerned that this opportunity will be squandered.

In your letter to Mr. Baird, you wrote that you had been informed that police have already conducted a "review" of Scott's case, with one aim being to identify "links" between Scott's death and the Bondi deaths from the late 1980s. If their conclusion has been that no links exist, we respectfully submit to you that their analysis is deeply flawed.

The family has never maintained that the same individuals who assaulted and murdered gay men in the eastern suburbs are the same perpetrators who committed similar crimes in the Northern Beaches. But the same culture of fear and hostility regarding homosexuality existed Australia-wide at the time (the "Grim Reaper" ads of the era were not limited to the eastern suburbs) and the relationship between the gay community and the police was at a low point. It is well-documented that the combination of this widespread homophobia and police apathy meant that young, disaffected gangs of youth would routinely victimize gay men at "beats" around Sydney, elsewhere in NSW, and around the country. These beats, including those in the Northern Beaches, flourished as meeting places for gay men and married men seeking gay sex. ~~These beats operated clandestinely, out of fear of harassment by police, or worse, fear of beatings, robberies and even murder by gay-bashing young men.~~

There is unequivocal evidence that violent crimes against gay men were occurring in Northern Beaches communities, as our report details. Operation Taradale, which spanned just the Bondi area, also indicated that there were many other unsolved murders of gay men throughout the Sydney area. We believe Scott's murder is one of them. Furthermore, we

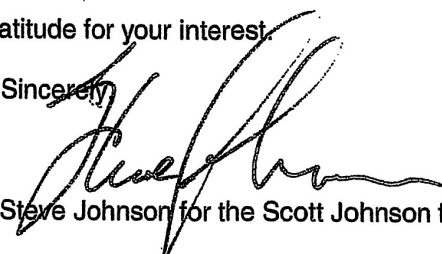
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believe any investigation into Scott's death will almost certainly uncover other unsolved homicides that may yet be solved.

If you can advise us how to ensure that our report is given a fair reading by the appropriate authorities, we would be most grateful. We are convinced that the material is quite compelling, but that Inspector Lehmann's position is hardening. Your kind attention is deeply appreciated.

With gratitude for your interest.

Sincerely,


Steve Johnson for the Scott Johnson family