

Godwin had told his partners that he could raise the capital for their venture, "claiming he owned property, shares, a car, cash and his father had just won lotto. He was lying."

In fact, Mrs Godwin says her husband had won a lottery. However, in the Press Council's view, the quote was obviously a reference to Godwin lying about the overall extent of his assets, not the various particulars. Further, the newspaper published Mrs Godwin's detailed clarification of the lottery issue in the February article.

Mrs Godwin also complained that the newspaper more than once gave the clear impression that her son had swindled his victims out of \$570,000 more than he actually did. Newspapers have an obligation to report court cases accurately and fairly. The paper appears to have misrepresented this crucial element of the case and this aspect is upheld.

Mrs Godwin also had two complaints about the February article, which was based on an e-mail from her and a lengthy telephone interview with her.

Mrs Godwin denied she told the newspaper that her son "wanted to big note himself" and was chasing "the good life", and said there are no such quotes in her e-mail. However, the newspaper maintains Mrs Godwin was accurately quoted, evidently from the telephone interview. As this is a case of one person's word against another, the Press Council cannot adjudicate on this point.

However, the Press Council also upholds Mrs Godwin's complaint in regard to another aspect of the article's publication. In her e-mail, Mrs Godwin asked the NT News not to make the article and photo of her available to The Centralian Advocate, as she had just moved to Alice Springs, with Lionel Godwin's son, to start a new life.

Mrs Godwin said the publication of the photo article in her new home town showed no regard for the privacy and sensitivities of herself and her grandson.

The Centralian Advocate said it was not made aware of Mrs Godwin's request but, that if it had been, it would not have published the photo. The NT News said it gave Mrs Godwin no undertaking in this matter. However, in the Press Council's view, that does not excuse the failure to give the Advocate the opportunity to make its own decision.

ABOUT THE PRESS COUNCIL

The Australian Press Council was established in 1976 with the responsibility of preserving the freedom of the press within Australia and ensuring the maintenance of the highest journalistic standards, while at the same time serving as a forum to which anyone may take a complaint concerning the press.

It is funded by the newspaper industry, and its authority rests on the willingness of publishers and editors to respect the Council's views, to adhere voluntarily to ethical standards and to admit mistakes publicly.

The Council consists of 21 members. Apart from the chairman (who must have no association with the press), there are 10 publishers' nominees, ten public members (7 attend each meeting), two journalist members and an editor member. The newspapers' representatives are drawn from the ranks of metropolitan, suburban, regional and country publishers as well as from AAP. The public is represented by people who can have had no previous connection with the press.

The Press Council is able to amend its Constitution with the approval of its Constituent Bodies. Significantly, great importance is placed on members acting as individuals rather than as the representatives of their appointing organisations.

Complaints Procedure

If you have a complaint against a newspaper or periodical (not about advertising), you should first take it up with the editor or other representative of the publication concerned.

If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may refer it to the Australian Press Council. A complaint must be specific, in writing, and accompanied by a cutting, clear photostat or hardcopy print of the matter complained of, with supporting documents or evidence, if any. Complaints must be lodged within 3 months of publication.

The Council will not hear a complaint subject to legal action, or possible legal action, unless the complainant signs a waiver of the right to such action.

Address complaints or inquiries to:

Executive Secretary
The Australian Press Council
Suite 303, 149 Castlereagh St
Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: (02) 9261 1930 or (1800) 02 5712

Fax: (02) 9267 6826

E-Mail: info@presscouncil.org.au

A booklet setting out the aims, practices and procedures of the Council is available free from the above address.

It, together with other relevant material, is available from the Council website: <http://www.presscouncil.org.au/>

MAILING LIST AND MAILING LABEL

If you change address and would like to continue to receive the Press Council's publications, please advise the office of any such change.

Also, check the label on the envelope or wrapper to ensure that it is accurate. Any correction to the information on the label should be forwarded to the Press Council's office.

As the *News* and all adjudications are now published direct to the Internet, if you would prefer to access it that way and therefore want your name removed from the mailing list for the printed version, please so advise the Council's office. The Internet address is printed above.

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