"Nine has major concerns that there are both fundamental misrepresentations and false assumptions at the heart of Media Watch's inquiries into this story.

"Contrary to your false assertions, 'Nick' was not a source or a key witness for our story in any way whatsoever and no allegation in our story came from him.

"We did engage with Exaro in the course of our investigation but as best we could at the time we tested the witness accounts with Police - who, at the time, strongly backed the veracity of the extraordinary VIP paedophile allegations - and other sources.

"Investigations into historical child abuse inevitably involve victims who have been significantly damaged by their experiences. We made extensive inquiries, and believe the story was an important and newsworthy one. We note also that the investigations are by no means over. Many of the allegations raised by these witnesses are still under investigation by the ongoing IICSA – 'The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse'."