

26 March 2005



Job Search made simple careerone Number one for choice. Search now

The Courier-Mail

Home

NEWS

Breaking News

Queensland

National

Sport

Business

World

Perspectives

Entertainment

Home magazine

Lifestyle

Hi-tech

Motoring

Travel, tourism

Leahy's cartoons

Archive

Get us delivered



EXTRAS

Frodocam

Surf report

Fun and games

Competition winners

Your Stars

Our Future

Our Queensland

Editorials

Birth of our nation

Schools guide

Headstart

TTN

QUEENSLAND NEWS

[back](#)

[PRINT-FRIENDLY VERSION](#)

[EMAIL THIS STORY](#)

Council loses holy war on rates bill

Jason Gregory
26mar05

A RECLUSIVE religious sect that forbids contact with outsiders and shuns the use of radios, televisions, newspapers, computers and mobile phones has had a \$380,000 rates debt wiped.

The Supreme Court decision ends a decade-long stoush between the Exclusive Brethren – a splinter group from the Church of England – and the Brisbane City Council. The council questioned the group's religious status and claimed it should revert to full general rates.

Court documents show the council believed the group did not meet by-law exemption guidelines as its Bulimba premises gave no indication the building was used for worship and members of the public were not welcome to ceremonies.

Councillor Graham Quirk said the group was abusing the exemption privilege and believed the decision had now opened the door for other exclusive fringe groups to push for rates exemptions.

"The question is not the activities of the Exclusive Brethren but if the ratepayers should subsidise them. The council took the opinion that under the definitions they do not qualify for rate remission (because) we do not think you can walk into a facility and take your place to worship as a member of the general public," Cr Quirk said.

BCC misses out on \$4.3 million for non-rateable properties associated with religious groups every year.

The Supreme Court finding effectively wipes the \$380,000 debt accrued between 1994 and 2004 on the group's headquarters, a large industrial warehouse-type red brick windowless building enclosed by secure fencing on a 2.37ha property at 91 Lytton Rd, Bulimba.

In making her decision, Justice Debra Mullins accepted testimony from members that the group was open to outsiders but noted that almost all sect ceremonies barred the general public from attending.



SEARCH

Archive Search:

[Newstext](#) is our online newspaper library – with more than 150 papers archived. You need to register to search.

BUY A PHOTO

Seen a picture in the paper or on the website you'd like to buy? If we took it, you can buy a copy. [Pic order form](#)

For interstate pictures, try a [NewsPhotos](#) search:

Keyword(s):

[GO](#)

CARSGUIDE

Buy or sell your car, find spare parts and read the best motoring news in our [Carsguide](#) section.

CareerOne

advertisement ▼

Keyword(s)

Industry

- Accounting
- Admin
- Advertising
- Agriculture
- Architecture

Location

- All Locations
- Syd All
- Syd CBD
- Syd East
- Syd North

[Go](#)

powered by [careerone](#)

REAL ESTATE

[realestate.com.au](#)

Find a home anywhere.

Suburb or postcode:

State:



TALK TO US

Editors

Reporters

Send feedback

Read feedback

Letter to the editor

News Tips

Contacts

CLASSIFIEDS

Weekend

Shopper

free ads

General

Careers

Announcements

Motoring

Meeting Point

Travel

Real Estate

Homesite

Place an ad

SERVICES

Get us delivered

Pause your paper

Contacts

Ad rates

About us

Buy a picture

"In considering the evidence, it is relevant that in the current secular times, it is unlikely that the population of Brisbane at large would seek entry to the services of the Brethren," she said.

"It is not helpful to draw comparisons with the steps taken by other churches to let the public know about their services, when other churches may have a completely different approach to worship or seeking to expand their congregation."

Justice Mullins waived the debts and awarded costs against the BCC. The Council has not decided whether to appeal the decision.

Brethren trustee Stuart Jensen would make no comment except that "the court has granted our exempt status, as would be granted to any other church".

However court documents reveal a much clearer picture of the groups belief system.

The Exclusive Brethren, or Gospel Trust No 1, is an ultra secretive offshoot of the super-pious Plymouth Brethren that began in the 1830s.

Constituents are barred from voting, standing for public office, joining unions or clubs, attending university or going to places of public entertainment and military service because it is too "worldly".

Followers are normally born into the sect, rarely admit newcomers and are mainly employed by sect-owned businesses. Women wear scarves to indicate subservience to their husbands, modest clothes and no make-up.

STORIES IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ [Fire destroys historic college building](#)
- ▶ [Health system blamed after police kill son](#)
- ▶ [Controls likely as dams dry up](#)
- ▶ [Teacher death fuels schools' dust fears](#)
- ▶ [Grim Reaper reappears to cut road's toll](#)
- ▶ [Soaring fuel costs to spark airfare hike](#)
- ▶ [City charity takes more than it gives](#)
- ▶ [Council loses holy war on rates bill](#)
- ▶ [Ex-suspect Nuttall knows all about leaks](#)
- ▶ [State a tourist mecca](#)



Sponsorship

News Ltd

websites



Send a message to our troops

Responsibility for election comment on this website is taken by David Fagan, 41 Campbell St, Bowen Hills, Qld 4006.

List of editors

HAVE YOUR SAY

We welcome your comments on this story. Comments are submitted for possible publication on the condition that they may be edited. Please provide your full name and suburb/location. We also require a working e-mail address – not for publication, but for verification. The telephone field is optional.

Fill in the form below and click on the submit button.

Full name:

Location:

E-mail address:

Telephone (optional):

Your comment:

To send a formal letter to the editor for possible publication in the newspaper, please [click here](#).

[back](#)

[privacy](#)

[terms](#)

© Queensland Newspapers