

Scientologists keep tabs on Neighborhood Watch chief

By GREG ROBERTS,
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The Church of Scientology used contacts in the police and media to gather information on the chairman of Neighborhood Watch in Victoria, Mr David Lentin, according to an internal church report.

The report, a copy of which has been obtained by 'The Age', shows that Mr Lentin is regarded as a dangerous opponent whose opposition to sects had to be curbed.

Mr Lentin is a private investiga-

tor and leading "cult-buster" who has counselled people seeking to leave the church and other sects.

'The Age' reported last month that some Scientologists in Australia remained committed to a 30-year-old doctrine of revenge and intimidation against people they describe as enemies.

The report on Mr Lentin was addressed to the director of the church's office of special affairs, which allegedly conducts intelligence operations against opponents.

It said a contact in the Victoria Police would be used to obtain information on any criminal records that Mr Lentin might have. This would be "circulated widely so as to reach a lot of people".

A journalist working for the former Melbourne 'Herald' "had supplied the church with a file of newspaper clippings mentioning Mr Lentin", the report said.

The report said Mr Lentin had supplied "enemy lines" about Scientology to a Melbourne man,

Mr Roland Jauernig, which were used in a report submitted by Mr Jauernig to a South Australian parliamentary inquiry.

If Mr Lentin's activities were left unchecked, the report said, "he will slowly move on to push more and more anti-cult lines and, with the help of a future Liberal Government, start another attack on Scientology".

The report recommended that ways be examined to cut Mr Lentin's "major communication lines and funding lines for cult-busting

... to ensure that he finds it difficult to pursue his current interests".

Mr Lentin said he was not perturbed by the church's continuing monitoring of his activities.

"I will continue to help people in the church who want help."

The Church of Scientology in Melbourne declined to comment, other than a suggestion by a spokesman that it was unethical to publish the contents of "stolen" documents.