

Top lawyer set for fight with CHE

By: BRADWELL Simon

THE LAWYER who won big settlements for train-fall boy Morgan Jones and Cave Creek victims now has troubled Christchurch Hospital in his sights.

Grant Cameron, who has become one of this country's top lawyers by fighting for the "little guy", told Sunday News he was approached by the family of a patient who died at the hospital in 1996.

The family wanted to sue for compensation. Cameron said he is confident of an out-of-court payment.

The patient is one of seven whose deaths were investigated by Health and Safety Commissioner Robyn Stent during a probe into patient safety at the hospital.

In a damning report released three weeks ago, Stent said under-funding, poor management and communication and sub-standard care contributed to the deaths.

Cameron said he expected any lawsuit would be taken against CHE Canterbury Health and settled out of court.

"We do not anticipate the CHE would be well-disposed to litigation," he said.

"That means they are better resolving the matter than going to court and I don't think they're going to need much persuasion. The question is, what's the damage?"

Cameron did not expect there would be much progress on the case for at least a couple of weeks.

Class action legal specialist Michael Okkerse said ACC covered negligence by a health professional.

But legal action could be taken against a hospital or CHE if it could be shown the institution was flawed.

Cameron is a former **New Zealander of the Year**. He won a substantial confidential sum for victims and their relatives of 1995's Cave Creek disaster, in which 14 people died.

In 1996, he won a settlement believed to be around \$250,000 from Tranz Rail for train fall victim Morgan Jones. The boy was blinded and lost a leg after falling from the platform of a train in 1994.

Cameron's also represented paralysed rugby players against the New Zealand Rugby Football Union, the family of a Raurimu massacre victim and clients who lost money in the collapse of law firm Renshaw Edwards.