



## Australian politics

# Brittany Higgins: federal police reveal five officers investigating rape allegation

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A team of five Australian federal police officers has been assembled to investigate [a rape allegation](#) raised by former Liberal staffer Brittany Higgins.

The police deputy commissioner, Neil Gaughan, revealed the details on Wednesday but would not say whether the alleged perpetrator had been interviewed.

“Natural justice has to be held here in relation to this particular issue,” Gaughan told ABC radio on Wednesday.

“Of course, this person that has allegedly undertaken any crime is not obliged to be actually subjected to an interview, they have the right to remain silent. It’s up to them, it’s a matter for them, that’s the way our democracy is and the way our laws have been crafted.”

Higgins has alleged she was raped by [a male colleague](#) inside a ministerial office in Parliament House in Canberra after a night out in 2019. No

charges have yet been laid.

The former government staffer initially decided not to pursue a police complaint - fearing her job could be affected. But Higgins re-engaged with the federal police regarding the alleged rape [in February](#).

Four investigators assigned to her case are being overseen by an AFP detective inspector.

“We will follow the evidence to where it takes us,” Gaughan said on Wednesday.

“We’ve got to get this right, clearly, and we will be methodical. We will work through the evidence, we will work with the DPP and when we are ready and when they are ready, we will make some further public announcements about it.”

The deputy commissioner would not say how long the investigation might take.

“How long is a piece of string,” he said. “I don’t want to put a timeline on it - I think that’s really dangerous - I don’t want to put pressure on investigators. My job is to provide them with time and space to do their job and that is my intention.”

Gaughan said he would not provide “blow-by-blow” details on progress of the case but any major milestones would be accompanied by public media releases. “We’ll just have to see where that takes us in the coming weeks,” he said.

In Australia, the crisis support service [Lifeline](#) is 13 11 14. If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, family or domestic violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit [www.1800RESPECT.org.au](http://www.1800RESPECT.org.au). In an emergency, call 000. International helplines can be found via [www.befrienders.org](http://www.befrienders.org).