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Submission 108

BY:.....

Peter Martin

22 October 2002

Ms Gillian Gould
Secretary
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Gould

Re: Inquiry into crime in the community: victims, offenders and fear of crime

Having recently been advised of the existence of your committee, I am grateful to have the opportunity to make a submission. I believe that my submission falls within the terms of reference for this inquiry, and as such I am prepared to testify before the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs if required. Further, I can provide extensive documentation to support the serious allegations contained within this submission.

My name is Peter Martin and I am a Constable in the New South Wales Police (NSWP). I entered the NSWP in May 1994, Class 258, under the Police Recruit Education Program (PREP) at the Police Academy Goulburn. After completing PREP I have been stationed at the following Commands, Broadway, Redfern and Manly. Since the 6th of February 2002 I have been on long-term sick leave due to work related stress.

During my time at the Academy under PREP, my class was informed of the upcoming Wood Royal Commission. As such we were repeatedly reminded that we were the "new breed of police, free of corruption". It was also reinforced on a daily basis that there would be an absolute zero tolerance stance towards corruption within the NSWP. I like many of my classmates thoroughly believed that this would be the case. Although it now seems that while the Academy was busy ramming this message home on a daily basis, someone forgot to tell the police management.

Briefly my situation involves untruthful documentation with regards to my work performance. Lies that have not only tarnished my reputation, but have also prevented me from gaining employment with the Queensland Police.

My efforts to correct these lies internally were all met with a wall of resistance. Basically the more complaints I made, the greater the efforts were to discredit me, and the greater the buck passing. I even received correspondence from Assistant Commissioner Tim Sage of the Police Integrity Commission (PIC), dated 19/02/01, advising, "Further correspondence with the Commission in relation to this matter will be of no benefit to you".

By this time it became abundantly clear to me that a very strong culture of self-protection amongst management existed. If you are a police complainant under the current system and your allegations relate to management, then you are on your own with no support. The Internal Witness Support Unit of the NSW Police does not want to know you.

Further complaints to the Office of the Minister for Police simply resulted in my complaints being referred back to the NSW Police and the very people I was complaining about. This practice that seems to be the unwritten standard operating procedure for dealing with the complaints of police complainants, which is totally contradictory to the recommendations of the PIC Dresden Report.

At considerable expense to myself I eventually managed to have these lies corrected through the Administrative Decisions Tribunal. Armed with this new information, every effort I made to have my complaints investigated ethically, were met with the same revolving door treatment.

Summarised, the PIC always need more information, the Special Crime and Internal Affairs Command believe that your complaint is not in line with their criteria and thus refer it to the region you are complaining about. Once the complaint is in the region, the region Professional Standards Manager maintains his preformatted response, "You have no grounds for a complaint and we decline to investigate". Further, the NSW Ombudsman, who has no power to investigate, must rely on what selective information they are presented with by the officer you are complaining about.

My reason for attempting to gain employment in the Queensland Police was due to my elderly parents failing health, to which I have carer's responsibilities. However due to the lies supplied to the Queensland Police by the NSW Police, my application was unsuccessful. I then subsequently applied for a compassionate transfer to Tweed Head Local Area Command, which would have enabled me to fulfil my carer's responsibilities. My application for compassionate transfer was refused on the grounds that Tweed Head Local Area Command is a desirable location. You see, this is how the NSW Police operates. My father was dying in Queensland, and I applied for a compassionate transfer to Tweed Heads Local Area Command so that I could care for my mother and father. However, it was rejected because Tweed Heads is a desirable location.

On the 23rd of December 2001, the Police Minister, Mr Michael Costa, directed that I be transferred to the Tweed/Byron Local Area Command "forthwith". On the 11th of February 2002 I received notification that Commissioner Moroney was not prepared to "accede to my transfer". My effort then for further assistance from the Minister office proved fruitless. As my father's illness was diagnosed as terminal, I was left with no other alternative but to take sick leave. Since being on sick leave I have been

subjected to ongoing harassment and efforts to discredit my service, all of which have caused tremendous stress to my family and myself. Stress that greatly contributed to my father's illness right up until he passed away on the 28th of August 2002.

On the 3rd of April 2002 the NSW Police North Region Commander, Robert Waites, was quoted in an interview as saying that my compassionate transfer "was assessed but found to be lacking substance". Commander Robert Waites was making reference to his wife's assessment, Inspector Sue Waites, the North Region HR Manager. We have a situation where a husband and wife literally run a region. Surely someone must see that this presents an obvious conflict of interest. Incidentally, when Inspector Sue Waites applied for her promotion she used her maiden name before the interview panel. Why you might ask? Maybe it had something to do with the fact that her husband was one of the selectors on that panel.

Given the disgraceful behaviour of the NSW Police senior management, I have never been more ashamed or embarrassed to be associated with the NSW Police. I say this with great regret given my initial enthusiasm when I first joined the NSW Police. Such is the extent of corruption within the NSW Police management that I actively discourage anyone contemplating joining the NSW Police.

Morale amongst front-line police within the NSW Police is at an all time low. The overwhelming majority of front-line police attribute this to a lack of trust and respect for management.

NSW Police Management, through highly skilful use of deception, lies, intimidation, nepotism and duplicity, has created the ultimate "boy's club". So extensive are their contacts that they remain an untouchable and extremely protected species. Even to the point that I strongly suspect that the NSW Government to be unwilling and unable to address their conduct as it would not be in their best interest should the public of NSW become knowledgeable to their ways. Especially given that it is now so close to a State election that it going to be won or lost on law and order issues.

Having said this, the turmoil within the NSW Police, as witnessed by the public this year, should indicate that all is not well within the NSW Police. The Wood Royal Commission quite clearly failed. The finding merely scratched the surface and dealt with easy targets, ignoring the real criminals – senior management. Senior management manipulates any situation to suit them. In complete contrast, should a junior or front-line police officer come under notice, the NSW Police management will do its utmost to crucify that officer. The selective hypocrisy displayed by management is beyond description and leaves front-line police with no alternative but to leak information to the media and politicians.

No longer do front-line police officers consider the NSW Police to be a rewarding long-term career path. Many reach a stage where they find themselves looking for a more rewarding career path outside the NSW Police. Not because of what they may experience on the streets as a police officer, but more because of a corrupt police management culture who have complete disregard for occupational health and safety with regards to physiological welfare. This wilful disregard is in itself a very serious breach of other Occupational Health and Safety Act. Currently, issues pertaining to psychological welfare are of nil importance to police management.

In conclusion I believe that this is my last chance to have the disgraceful and appalling state of affairs of the NSW management exposed and addressed. If not, the people who stand the most to lose are the law-abiding citizens of NSW.

Yours faithfully

Peter MARTIN