



Queensland
Council
for Civil
Liberties

MEDIA RELEASE

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BY TERRY O’GORMAN, VICE PRESIDENT, QUEENSLAND COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

The Queensland Council for Civil Liberties today criticized the CMC’s announcement that it would take over responsibility for investigating deaths in custody.

“While Coroner Hine was critical of the collusion between police in the investigation of Mr Doomagee’s death the CMC is as much part of the current problem of the police complaints process having no credibility in Queensland as is the QPS” Mr O’Gorman said.

Mr O’Gorman said that the Doomagee/Hurley scenario was symptomatic of the fact that the whole police complaints process in Queensland had broken down.

“The Palm Island scenario is not a credibility crisis for the police complaints process in Queensland simply because it involved a death in custody. Rather the Hurley/Doomagee saga is symptomatic of the problems that have plagued the whole Queensland Police complaints process since 2001 when the then Premier Beattie reversed the then existing Fitzgerald model of having all complaints against police investigated by the CMC”, Mr O’Gorman said.

Mr O’Gorman said that in the early 2000s when the then Queensland Crime Commission merged with the then Criminal Justice Commission to become the now Crime Misconduct Commission all complaints against Queensland Police except the most serious such as corruption were handed back to the QPS for police to investigate police with the CMC supposedly having an external oversight monitoring role.

“The fact that well over 5 years after Sergeant Hurley’s mates were called in to investigate his role in Mr Doomagee’s death the Crime Misconduct Commission

has still not produced its report as to what went wrong with the police investigation into Sergeant Hurley indicates that the CMC is itself part of the problem and it cannot be part of the solution”, Mr O’Gorman said.

Mr O’Gorman again renewed the Council’s call for a judicial inquiry into the whole complaints against police process in Queensland saying that the current system had totally broken down.

“We want to return to the Fitzgerald model which has effectively existed in New South Wales for well over the last 10 years where there is a separate New South Wales Crime Commission and a completely separate and distinct Police Integrity Commission where the Police Integrity Commission is solely responsible for investigating complaints against police”, Mr O’Gorman said.

Mr O’Gorman said that the criticism by Coroner Hine of collusion between police in investigating Sergeant Hurley needs to be extended into an independent inquiry looking at the CMC’s role in the whole sorry saga and why it has taken well over five years for the CMC to complete a simple investigation namely how did it come about that Sergeant Hurley mates were called in to investigate him.

Mr O’Gorman said that the Crime Misconduct Commission is a fundamentally flawed body as it is unable to reconcile the tensions of its super police force function on the one hand and its role of investigating complaints against police on the other.

“As well, we say that the Queensland Parliamentary Committee supervising the CMC has also got to explain its role in allowing the CMC to take five years plus to complete its investigation into the Hurley mates saga”, Mr O’Gorman said.

“We call on the Premier to acknowledge the fact that the Queensland Police complaints process twenty years after Fitzgerald no longer has any credibility nor does the Crime Misconduct Oversight role over the QPS any longer command respect from Queenslanders”, Mr O’Gorman said.

Mr O’Gorman said that twenty years after Fitzgerald only a judicial inquiry looking into the QPS, the CMC and the Parliamentary Committee can fix up what is now a totally broken down system of investigating complaints against Queensland Police.

Note Terry O’Gorman can be contacted today on 0418 787 182.