

QCCL MEDIA RELEASE

SOFT SENTENCES FOR POLICE ASSAULTS ARE ‘SPIN’

The Queensland Council for Civil Liberties has rejected Police Union claims that courts are imposing soft sentences on offenders who assault police.

QCCL Vice-President Terry O’Gorman said today that it is clear that the Police Union are starting to wage a scare campaign under a “courts are weak” banner to try to force the State Government to follow Western Australia’s recent controversial legislation imposing mandatory sentencing for assaults on police.

Mr O’Gorman said that the Police Union President Ian Leavers should reveal actual case examples to illustrate his claim that Queensland courts are not applying the increased maximum seven year sentence for assaults on police.

Mr O’Gorman said that contrary to the Police Union’s scare campaign that assaults on police were getting out of hand, Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson has today indicated that assaults on police have remained steady over recent years.

“The Police Union’s stance appears to be contradicted by the Commissioner” Mr O’Gorman said.

Mr O’Gorman also challenged the Police Union to produce a schedule of Appeal Court sentences to demonstrate that courts are being lenient in sentencing offenders for assaults on police.

“If the police are unhappy with a particular sentence for an assault on a police officer and they don’t appeal, their contention that sentences are soft is just spin” Mr O’Gorman said.

Mr O’Gorman said the Police Union should acknowledge the scam engaged in by a number of police who seek to have so-called serious assaults moved from the Magistrates Court to the District Court so that an individual officer can get a higher compensation payout.

“This tactic has been criticised by the District Court and represents police playing the court system for their own economic advantage” Mr O’Gorman said.

Mr O’Gorman said that the Police Union should address the growing problem of violent and gratuitous assaults by police on citizens as illustrated by a recent Mackay court case and by a disturbing special report recently aired on Channel 7’s Today Tonight.

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Queensland Council for Civil Liberties