

To: The Principal Research Officer  
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee  
Legislative Assembly Committee Office  
Level 1/11 Harvest Terrace  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

From: Matthew Carroll  
Former WA Police Officer 8545  
Medically Retired

Subject: (Calls for Submissions) Formal report and submissions regarding my removal and medical retirement from the WA Police Service on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2012.

I wish to report to you on my 22 year career as a Police Officer with the WA Police Service and how my career ended with me being diagnosed with PTSD and how East Metropolitan District Office disgracefully handled my case leading to my subsequent medical retirement from the service.

I joined the WA Police Force as it was called then on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 1990 and completed my academy training at the Maylands Police Academy.

I was about 20-21 years of age at the time of joining the Police Force.

I graduated from the academy as a Police Constable and served the first 6 months at Fremantle, Central and Warwick Police Stations before being transferred to the Narrogin Police Station.

My duties varied from General and Traffic duties attending to all types of policing matters as required.

After serving some years at Narrogin I returned to the Metro area and worked at the Central Law Courts detention area for approximately 1 year.

I then joined an organisation called the Bureau of Criminal Intelligence and worked as a Technical Surveillance Officer. My primary role was to assist in Covert Operations as required through the use of cameras and listening devices. During my 3 years' service with BCI I was seconded to the Australian Federal Police for 18 months as a sworn special member and even worked with ASIO in a joint covert operation.

I left BCI and returned to frontline policing at the Armadale Police Station for approximately 2 years before returning to the Central Law Courts detention area. I was promoted to Senior Constable during this time and eventually took the OIC position at the Supreme Court until the detention areas became privatised.

I continued my duties at the Central Law Courts at the Police Post (Prosecuting Division) for the next 6 years and furthered my police education by becoming a fully qualified Police Prosecutor (commonly called a Prosecuting Sergeant within the court arena) in 2006.

I spent my remaining years as a Police Prosecutor up until my unfortunate medical retirement on the 23/2/2012.

Prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2010 I had been working as a prosecutor at the East Metropolitan District area conducting prosecution duties at the Midland Magistrates Court.

A few years prior to this date I began to suffer work stress and pressure. My prior frontline policing experiences was also having an effect on me.

I was having difficulties in sleeping and developed early stages of PTSD as a result of these past policing experiences (sights, sounds and smells etc.) subsequently began to catch up with me as the years passed by.

My marriage began to deteriorate as a result and I became divorced from my wife on Friday the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2015. We had formally separated on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2014.

After I became medically retired on the 23/2/2012 I attempted to resume a working career in the mining sector working for BHP and Rio Tinto. This employment lasted approximately 12 months and as a result of my stress / anxiety and neglecting my medication due to fear of the alcohol and drug testing policy, I had to leave the mines and have been on the pension ever since unable to work.

One of the most frustrating factors in suffering PTSD has been undoubtedly my memory. As a former Police Prosecutor I remember being so sharp and spontaneous in my work and judgment whilst before the courts. But when the PTSD fully set in I really noticed my memory had diminished. The doctors tell me one day I'll get it back it's just when is the question. To date my memory is not fully right and still frustrates me.

The 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2010 was the day I broke down in front of my then wife who had noticed my symptoms and deterioration months prior to this date and pleaded for me to seek medical intervention. It was on this date I finally sought medical help from Dr [redacted] and was placed on medical leave forthwith.

I returned to work on or about the 1/2/2011 on a "Return to Work Program" through the Police Health and Welfare Branch.

My body was suffering both physically and mentally from the stress, workload and expectations placed on me as a Police Prosecutor and PTSD was now increasing within my body.

Other Prosecutors at Midland submitted reports to our Managers (namely EMDO Inspectors) on a regular basis requesting extra prosecuting assistance. We had meetings with them and provided yearly statistics on the ever increasing criminal offender numbers attending the Midland Court but no assistance by EMDO in providing us an extra prosecutor ever occurred.

Our workload only increased and I found myself taking work home with me over the weekend during my weekly leave to prepare for the following week. I was paid accordingly for the hours I spent working over various weekends for my prosecution preparation.

Taking Annual Leave or Long Service Leave was extremely difficult due to staff shortages.

I even submitted a written request outlining my suffering within the workplace to EMDO to job share my position or go part-time and this was declined by my managers.

Upon a return to work program I commenced duties of 2 days per week. From memory I think I chose a Wednesday and a Friday consisting of an 8 hour dayshift.

My then immediate District Office OIC, Inspector \_\_\_\_\_, took control of my medical situation and at first helped me in offering a slow and gentle easement back into the work environment.

I had been stood aside from my prosecuting duties and offered a placement as an Assistant Brief Manager at the Midland Police Station under the direction of Sergeant Ingolf Stange.

Sergeant Stange was extremely supportive of my situation and assisted me with total professionalism in my return to work program.

I had been in constant contact with Inspector \_\_\_\_\_ upon my return to work and after agreeing to relinquish my prosecuting position to him it was agreed that I continue my rehabilitation with Sergeant Stange at the Midland Brief Management Section.

I was however reluctant to surrender my prosecuting position but I knew my work colleagues had been suffering from my absence and I was not in a mental and physical state to return to my prosecuting duties.

I now provide to you an email from Inspector \_\_\_\_\_ dated.....

This email clearly states the Inspector's intentions and promise in assisting my rehabilitation and return to work process at the Brief management Section.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2011 I commenced duties at the Brief Management Section when Acting Midland Police Station OIC Senior Sergeant \_\_\_\_\_ entered the Brief Management Office and said "Matt, your transfer has come through and your mine. We're sending you to the property office".

Present in the office at the time was Sergeant Stange and Prosecuting Sergeant \_\_\_\_\_. (A report from Sergeant Ingolf Stange has been sought and attached to this report).

I said "No \_\_\_\_\_ that's not right, my position is here at Brief Management as instructed by Inspector \_\_\_\_\_ and furthermore I have back injuries that you well know of. You can't send me to the Property Office". Senior Sergeant \_\_\_\_\_ then advised that sending me to the Property Office had come directly from Inspector \_\_\_\_\_.

The Property Office is a dingy brick and tin shed at the rear of the Midland Police Station that required lifting and physical work. It houses the lost, stolen and found property plus court exhibits. There is one other unsworn public servant working in this area. I remember the building didn't even have air-conditioning.

This sudden decision by Inspector [redacted] was not an uncommon practice in the workplace of bastardisation on its members and a practice that had been going on for years within the Police Service by management.

At a time where I needed support and help in attempting to recover myself from my breakdown I instead got a kick in the guts from management and sent to a degrading area of work and with no consultation or warning from Inspector [redacted].

I showed Senior Sergeant [redacted] the email sent to me by Inspector [redacted] outlining my working position at the Brief Management Section and he replied "Matt, I'm not aware of this, I haven't seen this email from [redacted]".

It was very clear to me at this stage what Inspector [redacted] motives and intention where when my transfer became effective.

The lies and deceit shown by Inspector [redacted] towards me was shattering to say the least. I was doing everything in my best interest to achieve positive results in my Return to Work Programme and now that had all come undone.

Inspector [redacted] was punishing me for suffering PTSD.

Senior Sergeant [redacted] and I returned to his office and spoke about the matter. It was clear to me that Senior Sergeant [redacted] was uncomfortable with the circumstances unravelling before him. Senior Sergeant [redacted] was aware of my spinal impairment as was Police Health and Welfare because his surgeon for his own spinal issues was the same as mine (Dr [redacted]) and we had spoken about our back problems some 3 months prior.

At approximately 10 am after speaking to Senior Sergeant [redacted] Inspector [redacted] appeared in the Brief Management Office and said "Matt, you're going to the Property Office". I replied "So I have heard". He then left the area.

At 11am the same day Senior Sergeant [redacted] and I attended the East Metropolitan District Office (EMDO) and awaiting our arrival was Inspector [redacted], my case officer with Police Health and Welfare [redacted] and another EMDO female public servant (name unknown).

[redacted] did most of the talking during the meeting in trying to convince me that a transfer to the Property Office was the best thing for me at this stage. I spoke of my spinal condition and my concerns with lift heavy items.

Senior Sergeant [redacted] spoke up stating that if I required any assistance then a phone call to the police station front office was all that was required and they would send someone to assist. This was later refuted by Midland Police Station OIC [redacted] ( [redacted] was on Annual Leave and [redacted] was relieving in his position). Senior Sergeant [redacted] later told me that there was no way an officer would ever be made to assist me at a moment's notice as he was struggling with staff shortages as it was at the time.

I recall saying that if this method does not work then everyone will hear about it. I don't know why I said that and can only envisage that I was frustrated and upset at the time.

Inspector [redacted] during all this remained silent and was continually wrote on paper during the meeting up until I spoke to him. I said "Inspector, what about your email, why?"

Inspector [redacted] knew the email I was referring to and put his pen down. He looked at me and said "I'm sorry Matt but that's just the way it is". I'll never forget his words.

I looked at him and repeated what he said "That's just the way it is". I began to look at the others in the room whilst saying this and they all went quiet. [redacted], [redacted] and the other female in the room knew exactly what the Inspector and I were referring to.

I recall getting angry and emotional. I excused myself from the meeting and went to the amenities area. I washed my face and attempted to gain composure. This failed as I went back into the meeting and looked at Senior Sergeant [redacted] and said " [redacted] I need to go for a walk".

Senior Sergeant [redacted] looked at me and said "No worries Matt that's fine".

I could sense that Senior Sergeant [redacted] was unhappy with what had just occurred. Why he did nothing to stop it, I don't know.

I left EMDO and proceeded down the busy street. I recall tears flowing from my face and I had to stop on one occasion and sit on a park bench. I was in full police uniform and my sunglasses shaded my tears to a certain degree from the members of the public. It was at that stage that I knew my police career was over and that my body could handle no more pain and suffering from within the Police Service.

My feelings and emotions because of this unfortunate situation placed me in a dark and lonely environment and a feeling I wish never to experience again. The many mixed emotions of distrust and betrayal was overwhelming. I kept thinking of how the hell did this happened to me and why I deserved such treatment from superiors I thought I could trust and who I thought were there to help me. I was sadly mistaken. To be so close to recovery with a willingness to recover to my full potential and then have my career shattered by one Inspector is soul crushing and destroying.

I was a 20 year veteran police officer who served the state of WA with a distinguishing career and deserved better treatment and understanding from my superiors and managers.

In a way my feelings are one of being punished by Inspector [redacted] because of my demise and falling from the perch so to speak and letting the team down by being on medical leave.

What happened to me was a disgrace and should never happen to another Police Officer again.

I just want to add that while Senior Sergeant [redacted] was a party to these unfortunate events it's only fair that I mention that he was placed in a precarious situation at the last moment and clearly the left hand was not telling the right hand what was going on so to speak. Senior Sergeant [redacted] was caught off guard in my view by Inspector [redacted].

The next day Senior Sergeant [redacted] contacted me and I was with my mother in Narrogin. He checked on my welfare and wanted to know if I was alright. I received no such courtesy call from Inspector [redacted].

I remember getting angry with Senior Sergeant [redacted] on what had occurred the day before and never spoke to him again after that.

Approximately 1 week later Senior Sergeant [redacted] returned from Annual Leave and contacted me via telephone.

He told me that he had been informed of the situation that had occurred with me and had he not been on annual leave that this situation would have never occurred. He told me of his disgust in how I had been treated and advised that if I returned to work he would remove me from the Property Office and be returned to Brief Management Section.

I thanked Senior Sergeant [redacted] for his support but told him it was too late. My faith and trust with the WA Police was completely demolished and my body had given up the will and fight to try and recover. I was finished and done.

I recall attending Senior Sergeant [redacted]'s office at Midland Police Station later down the track and he did everything to convince me to return to work reiterating his intentions for me as discussed previously on the telephone. This unfortunately did not happen.

I remember my wife at the time sending a scathing email without my knowledge to Inspector [redacted] and [redacted] when all this occurred and I enclose a copy of that email for your reference.

You may wish to note the greeting Inspector [redacted] commenced in his reply email to my wife.

After another interview with Police Health and Welfare Psychiatrist Dr [redacted] my process with medical retirement commenced.

My frustration during this process was nothing but immense to say the least.

The help I received from the Police Union was very minimal and I tried to express my concerns and treatment but to no avail. George Tilbury (now the Police Union President) was a union representative at Midland Police Station at the time of my situation. I recall talking to George approximately 1 month after this issue with Inspector [redacted] and he even expressed his concerns regarding the way I was treated but did nothing to help me.

The assistance I received from the Police Service has been absolutely nil. I was just a number and a hindrance to the WA Police Service.

I now attach some documents I feel may assist you in understanding this error of management judgement placed on me by the WA Police Service.

I wish to conclude in saying that Management techniques within the WA Police Service have failed me immensely. To loose police officers such as myself with a vast amount of training, experience at government expense because of management malpractices such as this is a disappointment to our Police Service and the general public / society.

I may be contacted anytime on [redacted] should you wish to discuss my matter.

Yours truly.

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Matthew Carroll  
Former Police Officer 8545  
3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2015