



Leading culture change at New Zealand Police (B)

“Let me state at the outset: I accept the Commission of Inquiry’s findings in full,” New Zealand Police Commissioner Howard Broad said on 3 April 2007, in his first public response to Dame Margaret Bazley’s *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Police Conduct*, released that day. He went on to say that he had given the Minister of Police a commitment to implement all of the recommendations relating directly to Police, and would work closely with those implementing the 12 recommendations relating to the Police Complaints Authority.

He emphasised that the report “illuminates the actions of a very few officers who have behaved disgracefully”, and in doing so had damaged the reputations of the force as a whole and undermined the high expectations the public had of Police. Work had already started to implement the recommendations, he said. A draft Code of Conduct had already been drawn up, and further changes would be introduced with the reform of the 1958 Police Act, due later in the year.

“My role as Commissioner is to provide the leadership needed to cement this organisation’s reputation for performance and integrity. That’s a responsibility I am proud to accept and determined to meet.”¹

The Commission of Inquiry’s recommendations on Police culture²

The Inquiry recognised positive changes in police culture since the late 1970s and recommended four practical steps for ensuring these changes became firmly

This epilogue was written by Dr Todd Bridgman, Senior Lecturer, Victoria Management School, Victoria University of Wellington, as a teaching resource to accompany the case study 2008-82.1. The use of teaching materials is restricted to authorised persons.

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¹ Media release, New Zealand Police, “Opening Statement from Howard Broad, Commissioner”, *Scoop Media*, 3 April 2007

² Bazley, M. (2007). *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Police Conduct*, Wellington, NZ,

embedded in New Zealand Police. Bazley noted that changing the culture of an organisation was difficult and could only be done over time. She believed the key to effective change was to have clear and consistent messages reinforced regularly throughout the organisation, so that staff knew how to deal with difficult situations. Positive leadership was critical in the culture change process because unless lower ranks believed that senior leaders were making policies a matter of priority, they were likely to be seen as “flavour of the month” and therefore something that could be ignored.

Another recommended step was giving high priority to the retention and recruitment of women and minority groups. This would make it more likely that the culture and values of NZP reflected those of the rest of society. It was also important to have strong representation of women at higher levels to make it more likely they would challenge the male-dominated environment rather than feel pressure to adapt to it.

The third practical step was a periodic external audit of police culture to assess the “health of the organisation”, which could be conducted by an independent body such as the State Services Commission. The audit could canvass the views of police, measure the representation of women in the organisation and monitor instances of sexual harassment and discrimination.

The Inquiry recommended the continued development of effective whistle-blower mechanisms based on the principle of “report and be protected”. Bazley also recommended the promotion of a culture that encouraged the reporting of misconduct. This could be achieved through a mandatory ethics training programme and leadership within NZP making their expectations that allegations of sexual misconduct made against colleagues would be reported.

The report asked that the Auditor-General’s office should report to parliament on the implementation of the recommendations each year for the next ten years.

Developments after the Commission of Inquiry reported

May 2007. Less than two months after the release of the Inquiry’s report, Howard Broad was forced to respond to allegations of improper conduct of his own. *Investigate* magazine made allegations of police corruption, linking Dunedin police officers in the 1980s to “extortion, bribery, rape, indecent assault, underage sex, drug dealing, bestiality and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice”.³

The article alleged that a pornographic film containing bestiality was shown at a Police Rugby Club fundraising party held at Broad’s Dunedin home in 1981. It also contained claims from a former policeman that Broad had indecently assaulted women. Following the *Investigate* article, Broad admitted the film had been shown, but said he was not in the room at the time. While he was unhappy with the film being screened, he admitted that he had not taken any further action. He said that if such behaviour occurred today, he would expect the matter to be reported through to

³ Wishart, I. “To serve and protect”, *Investigate*, May 2007, Retrieved on 10 December 2007 from http://www.thebriefingroom.com/archives/2007/08/to_serve_and_pr.html

supervisors. The fact he did not take further action demonstrated the culture of the Police at the time, he believed.⁴

August 2007. A fourth trial arising from Louise Nicholas' allegations concluded, with former policeman John Dewar convicted on four charges of attempting to obstruct or defeat the course of justice. He was later sentenced to 4½ years in prison. Dewar had been chief inspector of the Rotorua Criminal Investigation Branch when Nicholas approached police in 1993, alleging she was sexually assaulted by Rickards, Shipton and Schollum. The Crown alleged a cover-up, with Dewar said to have tried to pervert the course of justice during the rape trials of a former policeman, who has permanent name suppression, by giving inadmissible evidence. It was during those trials that allegations against Shipton, Schollum and Rickards first came to light.⁵

November 2007. Clint Rickards resigned from Police. A month earlier, he had been charged with 11 disciplinary offences and was due to go before a special police tribunal in early 2008. In a statement made by his lawyer, Rickards maintained that the disciplinary proceedings had no foundation but said that he was resigning to maintain the public's confidence in the New Zealand Police.⁶

The Police Complaints Authority became the Independent Police Conduct Authority in a series of changes based on the 12 recommendations made by the Inquiry. As well as a name change to emphasise its enhanced independence from the police, the new authority had the power to investigate historic complaints dating back to before the PCA's establishment in 1989 and could refer an unsatisfactory police response to the Police Minister or Attorney General. The changes also provided for the appointment of up to five authority members, compared to two in its previous form. This was designed to ensure a range of community views would be represented on the authority, thereby increasing accountability and public confidence.⁷

⁴ New Zealand Police, "Police Commissioner Broad responds to allegations", *Scoop Media*, 14 May, 2007.

⁵ "The Louise Nicholas saga – Out of the shadows", *New Zealand Herald*, 11 August, 2007.

⁶ "Rickards resigns – Fight to clear his name abandoned", *Timaru Herald*, 23 November 2007, page 2.

⁷ Media Release, Independent Police Conduct Authority, 28 November 2007.