

11 August 2004



Rebecca Boyack
Executive Officer
Commission of Inquiry into Police Conduct
PO Box 5684
Wellington

Dear Rebecca

Thank you for informing me of the forthcoming meeting on Friday 13 September. One of the purposes of this meeting is to address whether the Commission should conduct its hearings in public or private, and if in public, what should be the Commission's approach to name suppression. On behalf of several agencies that work with survivors of rape and sexual abuse in the Wellington Region I would like to make the following comments to be considered by the Commission.

Firstly, as agencies (see list below) working in this area it was felt that we can really only comment from the survivors perspective and therefore will not make any comments re maintaining the anonymity of the alleged offenders.

We believe that it is important that each individual complainant should be given the option of whether she or he would wish to have their story told in a public hearing. It is the experience of our agencies that individual women have differing needs in terms of the desire to publicly tell their story and we strongly believe that this should be respected.

As you will be aware a significant factor in rape or sexual abuse is the loss of power and control and giving women the choice in this circumstance is one way of redressing the hurt, albeit many years later.

Therefore we would support any measures that would provide individual complainants the opportunity to tell their story in the manner in which she or he is most comfortable, which may mean that at times the hearings are closed to the public or name suppression is necessary. Given that the focus of the

Inquiry is on the processes used to deal with these complaints we feel that this could be achieved without compromising the integrity of the Inquiry.

Thank you for considering our comments on the issue.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Sullivan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Helen Sullivan
Manager

On behalf of

- Wellington Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation
- Wellington Independent Rape Crisis
- Hutt Rape Counselling Network
- Whare Mahana