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Madam Chair, Members of the Committee.

BY:.....

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before this committee. Some 18 months ago I sat before the Legislative Council's Committee on Policing in Cabramatta in this same room. Within 1 hour of giving evidence to that committee my life changed forever. I endured almost constant harassment and pressure from senior Police, numerous attempts to discredit me and destroy my reputation mostly with the support and assistance of a few unethical radio and television journalists.

All I did on that fateful day was tell the truth and tell it how it was for a front line Policeman in Cabramatta. It was not pretty, but it was the truth and it had to be told.

Many things have changed for the better within the NSW Police Force since those hearings. Gone are a number of incompetent senior Police who presided over one of the worst periods in the NSW Police Force's long history.

Since 1995 we have seen a steady decline in the capability of the NSW Police Force to deal with even petty crime. It's ability to deal with serious and organised crime is severely limited thanks to the disastrous Crime Agencies model of centralised criminal investigation which is only now being rectified by new Commissioner Ken Moroney. However it will take some time for the damage to be rectified and for criminal investigation to get back on track.

If I look back on Cabramatta I see that a combination of deception, incompetence and negligence left a community defenceless against drugs and organised crime and allowed hundreds of young Australians to die anonymously in the dark streets of Cabramatta. Yet not one senior police officer has been brought to account over this disgraceful affair, in fact that Region Commander during the period has now been given the task of organising security for Rugby World Cup next year. Other commissioned officers who failed to do their duty at Cabramatta have been promoted to Superintendent rank and now run their own police stations. As I said, no senior policeman was held accountable.

Yet those Police who came forward to tell the truth have suffered a very different fate. Both Detective Sergeant Robert Francis and myself have been invalidated from the Police Force, whilst the careers of Sergeant Vince Fusca and Constable Chris Laird have stalled.

But the punishment for coming forward doesn't end there. Senior Police continue to serve up retribution at every opportunity. They use unethical and dishonest journalists to snipe away at your reputation so that at the end of the day, not only have you lost your career but also your reputation and thereby any chance of securing meaningful employment. They hunt you to the end of your days to send a clear message to other police that might contemplate appearing before Parliamentary Committees and telling it how it really is.

I pay great credit to present Police Minister Michael Costa, who in his first days as the new Police Minister, initiated a review into the Police Internal Witness Scheme in the hope that never again would a Police Officer who came forward to tell the truth, would be punished as I and others have been. It is yet to be tested.

There is a misconception amongst many of the elite in the media and in Politics, that corruption, Police corruption is about Detectives meeting criminals in sleazy clubs and receiving brown paper bags full of money. This is such a stupid and dangerous misconception. Institutional corruption poses an equal threat to the health of a Police Force and indeed the community. We have seen numerous examples of corrupt promotions within the NSW Police during the past 5 years that has gone undetected and equally unpunished. Cabramatta is the perfect example of what can happen to a community when incompetent and undeserving Police can their hands on the wheel and control law and order.

But what is all the more sinister about promotions corruption is that the recipient of a corrupt promotion then becomes indebted to those that promoted him or her and you can guarantee that one day that debt will be called in. Whether to cover up serious misconduct, criminal behaviour or gross incompetence. The only corrupt police that ever get caught are those at the lower end, those that live in the valley as Police often call it.

What Cabramatta showed was that the NSW Police Force was in total chaos. It was run not by a Commissioner, but a series of warlords who presided over various parts of the kingdom. It had become dysfunctional. And that is why we now see the problems in every day law and order that we see in NSW. The

machine has broken down. The only saving grace is the determination of the Police Minister Michael Costa to try and fix it and he too has made powerful enemies within and outside particularly in the media. You would be astounded if you knew the power that some senior police hold over certain sections of the media. These journalists are beholden to senior police to give them exclusive rights to major crime stories. They repay this favour by constantly doing favourable articles on their favourite police in order that these police rise to high office and the nexus between some journalists, certain police and major criminals is even more disturbing. Yet nothing is done about it.

Organised crime, particularly Lebanese based organised crime and similarly asian based crime have taken a foothold in NSW in the past 5 years and spread all over Australia. If you have major drug and gang problems in Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide etc, it has almost certainly emanated from NSW in the past 5 years. This leads me back to institutionalised corruption and the enormous damage done not only to the organisation but to the community generally and if you have certain powerful sections of the media bought off, then there is no fail safe mechanism in place to expose this problem. This is what happened in NSW. There was hardly an anti Ryan story done in the first 4 years of his term.

There are still some journalists to this day that are trying to convince people that Cabramatta didn't happen. There was nothing wrong with the Police in Cabramatta. It was a beat up. Try telling that to the hundreds of grieving parents and relatives whose kids died alone in a strange place far from their loved ones. One radio journalists continues to recite the story of his one visit to Cabramatta some months ago at midday on a saturday, where in the company of two uniformed commissioned police officers he went to lunch and didn't see any murders, drug dealing or any gangs. The way he retells the story it was a wonder he wasn't approached by the Easter bunny. What this dishonest imbecile fails to tell his audience is that later that night 6 people including a young boy were gunned down at a wedding reception in the main street of Cabramatta, just a few hours after his momentous trip.

Unless there is a cleaning out of those that contributed not only to the horror of Cabramatta but the horrors inflicted elsewhere in the past 5 years, we will advance very slowly for at least a generation.

There is still no long term solution to the problems of Cabramatta. There is still no multi agency task force in place to deal with re-emerging problems with

organised crime and gangs in the suburb. Cabramatta is unique and as such needs unique answers. Cabramatta is also the gateway to problems in Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. That is why I am hopeful that with the new ACC a solution to this problem might not be too far away. I know also that Police Minister Michael Costa is still examining the proposal I made about the setting up of a Cabramatta specific task force. I hope for the community of Cabramatta it becomes a realisation.

It is my firm belief that the only way to retake the streets from gangs and the organised criminal networks is to have an effective ACC with special RICO type legislation that is also available to the states and territories as well as the need for Zero Tolerance Policing. We have seen the unthinkable being achieved in New York and Washington to name just two cities. The same can be done here but it requires political commitment. I urge you to study the methods and results of Mayor Giuliani and Police Commissioner William Bratton of New York. Bringing back quality of life to our citizens in both the city and the country is possible but only through courageous political decisions of the type Giuliani and to some extent President Clinton made with his federal funding of additional law enforcement for state and municipal police forces.

It was an investment in the future and it has paid off already. Why can't we do the same.