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Judge's finding in Rayney trial must trigger independent investigation into WA Police, Civil Liberties Australia says

The finding in the Lloyd Rayney murder trial of “unacceptable” and “reprehensible” conduct by investigating officers is a clear message to the State Government that an independent investigation into the WA Police is overdue, says Civil Liberties Australia.

Retired Chief Justice Brian Martin was brought to WA specially for the trial, and sat without a jury. He delivered his verdict this morning, saying that gaps in the State's evidence were obvious and that, while he was satisfied the death of Corryn Rayney had been adequately investigated, conduct by the WA Police officers investigating the case had been “unacceptable” and “reprehensible”.

“A jurist of the eminence of Justice Martin does not use those terms without being wholly aware of their meaning and the ramifications of his uttering them,” said CLA's WA State Director Rex Widerstrom.

“The Premier usually accepts everything said by the Police Commissioner but this is one time he must show independence.

“The question is whether the problem is indeed at the top of the police force, or whether lower ranks are resisting the Commissioner's efforts to introduce ethical practices and transparency.

“The West Australian public need to be confident that its police service acts fairly and lawfully. Clearly it is not doing so, as Mr Rayney's case proves.

“This high profile case is only example of many instances of which CLA is aware in which police conduct has fallen short of the standards the people expect.

“The Premier now has no option but to restore public confidence in the WA Police by convening a Royal Commission to investigate all aspects of Police conduct and then to implement its recommendations. He should also implement the recommendations ignored from Kennedy Royal Commission, delivered in 2004 , and establish an Independent Police Conduct Authority.”

ENDS

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