



Judge Elisabeth Armitage  
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Dear Judge Armitage

**RE: Evidence given at coronial inquest – assertion relating to conduct of Commissioner of Police**

As you are aware, during the course of giving evidence on Monday 26 February 2024, Mr Zachary Rolfe asserted that the current Commissioner of Police, Mr Michael Murphy, had made racist comments at a public venue.

I became aware of that assertion because I was listening to the live stream of the evidence.

I took the view that the assertion made was serious and that it was in the public interest that I investigate. I took that view primarily because the assertion was directed toward a very senior public official, and that it would not be appropriate for Northern Territory Police to investigate.

My investigators have interviewed Mr Murphy and have obtained information from three other individuals, including the individual nominated by Mr Rolfe.

I have ascertained the following:

- Sometime between 1997 and 2003 Mr Murphy attended a party held at a restaurant in Alice Spring.
- That restaurant has since closed.
- A number of then police officers were in attendance.
- Mr Murphy was intoxicated.
- While Mr Murphy has no recollection of complaining about restaurant service, or saying words to the effect of 'I wonder if this is because of what we did to them in Vietnam', he does not deny that it was said.
- In the event that Mr Murphy did make that comment, he has expressed his embarrassment and remorse.
- At some point, Mr Murphy and other police left the party.
- I cannot determine whether that departure was a consequence of being asked to leave by restaurant staff or a consequence of a decision by one of the police in attendance. Mr Murphy does have a recollection of being asked to leave the restaurant, although cannot recall the reason.
- Another witness, who had previously asserted to Mr Murphy, and to others, that Mr Murphy had been directed to leave the restaurant as a result of the making of a racist comment, has since admitted that he embellished that story and that Mr Murphy had not in fact been asked to leave.

I cannot determine whether Mr Murphy made the comment alleged. Nor can I determine the circumstances leading to Mr Murphy's departure from the restaurant.

I am not satisfied that it is in the public interest to investigate further, given the conflicting versions of events, and the fact that this incident occurred at least 21 years ago, if at all.

I have closed my investigation.

I note you have made certain orders relating to the evidence given by Mr Rolfe that was the catalyst for my inquiry. For that reason, I will not make any public statement, notwithstanding that the allegation was aired during the live stream of proceedings and is an allegation which, as I have come to understand, has

previously been circulated within NT Police. I think the appropriate approach to publication is that it be a matter for the court.

I express no view about other assertions made by Mr Rolfe during the course of his evidence.

Mr Murphy is aware of the content of this letter and my decision to provide it to you.

Yours sincerely



Michael Riches  
Independent Commissioner Against Corruption

1 March 2024