

# Media Release



Federation of  
Community Legal Centres  
VICTORIA

30 June 2011

## **New report highlights need for independent investigation of police related deaths**

Victorian community legal centres responded to today's release of an Office of Police Integrity Report on investigating police related deaths by calling on the Victorian Government to establish an independent investigation system.

'While we welcome some of the OPI's recommendations, the report does not go far enough,' said Hugh de Kretser, Executive Officer of the Victorian Federation of Community Legal Centres. 'We are disappointed that the OPI's report focuses on making modest improvements to the existing system rather than establishing an effective independent system. There are on average over 16 police related deaths every year in Victoria, yet there is no independent agency to investigate those deaths.'

'Victoria Police is currently responsible for investigating police deaths such as police shootings, police pursuits and other deaths in police custody. Victoria Police prepare the brief of evidence for the Coroner and the Victoria Police Ethical Standards Department examines the police officers' conduct. This system involves unacceptable conflict of interest and lack of independence which undermines public confidence and falls short of the standard required by human rights law' said Mr de Kretser.

The Federation together with the Human Rights Law Centre, Darebin Community Legal Centre and Flemington Kensington Community Legal Centre conducted analysis which highlights that establishing an independent investigation system in Victoria is achievable and would be transparent, fair and in the best interests of the public and police.

'Victoria needs a system which involves an independent and unbiased assessment to work out why a person has died and how we might prevent future police related deaths. Jurisdictions around the world such as Northern Ireland, England and Wales, Ontario and New Zealand have moved to an independent investigation system. The Victorian Government should strengthen and modernise our system by resourcing an independent agency to investigate police-related deaths in Victoria'.

Copies of the community legal centre report highlighting the need for an independent investigation system are available at [www.communitylaw.org.au](http://www.communitylaw.org.au).

### **Further information:**

Hugh de Kretser 0403 965 340