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The voices of young people silenced after strip search inquiry cut short

Redfern Legal Centre is concerned that the voices of young people have been silenced, following the announcement that the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC) public inquiry into strip searches on minors by New South Wales police has been cut short.

The announcement follows the removal of Chief Commissioner of the LECC, Michael Adams, QC, before the end of his term, just weeks before further hearings investigating the psychological impact of strip searches on minors were due to be heard.

A series of public hearings conducted by the LECC since October 2019 has revealed allegations involving strip searches on minors, including allegations that children as young as 10 years old had been strip searched, with nothing found.

Samantha Lee, Police Accountability solicitor at Redfern Legal Centre states, "It is highly concerning that the LECC's investigation into potentially unlawful police strip searches has been cut short."

"The LECC hearings have provided a powerful outlet for the voices of young people to be heard, uncovering shocking allegations of potential police misconduct. These are allegations that would otherwise have remained confidential and hidden."

"It has taken enormous courage for these young people to come forward and speak out about potentially illegal police conduct. These brave young people's voices should not be silenced."

"It is vital that New South Wales has a well-funded, highly resourced and independent police watchdog, one which can act with integrity and independence," Ms Lee continued. "The recent removal of two LECC Commissioners and the cutting short of the strip search inquiry will not instil public confidence in such processes."

Redfern Legal Centre will continue to work with young people to give voice to their experiences of undergoing strip searches.

This year, RLC will be continuing its campaign calling for changes to strip search laws in NSW. Further information is available at www.safeandsound.org.au

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