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## **Redfern Legal Centre says strip search intimidation claim must be investigated**

Redfern Legal Centre (RLC) is calling on the Deputy State Coroner Harriet Graham to refer any police officer that may have used a strip search as a form of intimidation or threat to the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC) for investigation, and to the Department of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to assess whether a criminal prosecution, such as an assault charge, may apply.

The call comes after a young woman's testimony heard today at the inquest into the six recent drug-related deaths at festivals in New South Wales over the summer of 2017–2018.

The coroner today heard evidence from a young woman whose identity has been suppressed, who was subjected to a strip search.

The young woman attended the Knockout Cizcuz festival in 2017. Following a positive indication from a drug detection dog, the woman was led into a room, subjected to strip search and asked to squat and cough.

She told the coroner that the police officer said, "If you don't tell me where the drugs are, I'm going to make this nice and slow".

Samantha Lee, Head of Police Accountability Practice at Redfern Legal Centre states, "The idea that a police officer may have used a strip search as a scare tactic is quite simply abhorrent. Any police officer thought to have used a strip search as a threat or form of intimidation should be immediately referred for disciplinary action.

"If it is found that a police officer had no reasonable grounds to conduct a strip search, and used the search to threaten, intimidate and cause fear in the person subjected to the search, the officer should be referred to the DPP for the consideration of possible criminal charges," Ms Lee said.

RLC has launched a campaign to change NSW strip-search laws: [www.safeandsound.org.au](http://www.safeandsound.org.au)

**RLC police powers solicitor, Samantha Lee is available for interview:** contact Finn O'Keefe, RLC Communications Manager: 02 9698 7277 | 0424 548 019 | [finn@rlc.org.au](mailto:finn@rlc.org.au)