



25 February 2004 Contact: Sebastian Ziccone –

POLICE MINISTER'S 'POLICE FILES' SAGA DEEPENS

The Victorian 'police files' saga has deepened with the Victoria police failing to release a response to a freedom of information request involving Police Minister, Andre Haermeyer.

President of the Combined Firearms Council of Victoria, Sebastian Ziccone, said that a request submitted last September seeking access to documents relating to who may have accessed any records held by the police of the Council's executive members, still has not been responded to.

As reported in *The Age* in November, Mr Ziccone was the subject of claims made in parliament that Minister Haermeyer met with him in a Melbourne hotel to 'discuss' his FOI application.

The Minister denied any wrongdoing amidst accusations by Opposition leader, Robert Doyle, that it was inappropriate for the Minister to question Mr Ziccone on his application, and that he was even aware of its existence.

"The police have missed three deadlines to respond to the FOI request and I understand they have used an auditor to go through the response," Mr Ziccone said.

"It has been over 100 working days since we put our request in and we are becoming increasingly concerned about what information is being withheld."

Mr Ziccone said he would have been a political target as he had several articles and opinion pieces published in 2002 and 2003, including one in the *Herald Sun* in which he attacked the Government over its lack of sensible firearms policy processes.

"It is five months since we put our request in and still haven't received a reply."

Last year the CFCV also put in freedom of information requests to the Departments of Sustainability and Environment and Primary Industries about the 2003 duck season. Mr Ziccone said that useless media information came from one and nothing from the other.

Mr Ziccone said he has complained about the absence of a response to the Ombudsman, and about an alleged conflict of interest involving a director in the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

For more information: Sebastian Ziccone, President CFCV,
www.cfcv.org.au ENDS