

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 4 March 2009, Page 1495

### NCA BOMBING

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON** (16:52): I move:

That the Legislative Council commemorates the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of Sergeant Geoffrey Bowen in the bombing of the NCA headquarters on 2 March 1994 and prays that the person/persons responsible are brought to account for their actions.

This is a simple motion to recognise the tragic passing of Detective Bowen and to remind us all that the perpetrators of this brutal attack have not been called to account. A memorial service was held in Adelaide on Monday to mark 15 years since the National Crime Authority bombing.

The family of Geoffrey Bowen, the police officer killed in the attack, returned to Adelaide for the ceremony in Waymouth Street in the city. Speaking to the ABC, Mr Bowen's widow, Jane Bowen-Sutton, stated that it would have been their wedding anniversary, so it is always a sad time. She stated:

*That grief in the beginning, that's a very dark place to be, and especially with a murder like that, but we've worked through it.*

*I've never allowed that to be an excuse to feel sorry for myself or for my sons to go off the rails, so it's been a challenge but, yeah, I just continue to do this and honour Geoff's memory.*

Both Mr Bowen's sons are now members of the Western Australian police force.

As I continue with this motion, I hope that some members in this place make the connection between drugs, organised crime and the fact that, after 15 years, we have no arrest in this matter, which only solidifies the fact that organised crime is not just a pimple on the backside of our community but an oozing boil that needs to be lanced.

Because of the actions of these urban terrorists, a wife and mother does not celebrate years of happy marriage to her husband and the father of her two sons, but commemorates his death. Because of this most vile attack against the authority of our law enforcement officers, two sons have grown up without their father and, as a result, have grown up without the positive experiences that a father would bring to their lives. It says a lot of Jane Bowen-Sutton that both of her sons have become police officers in Western Australia, and that fact is also testimony to their father.

From all accounts from people who knew Detective Bowen, he was an honest and fine man who conducted his professional work in the most diligent and conscientious manner. One of the shames of his passing is the suggestion by the Coroner and the media that Detective Bowen was targeted for applying these characteristics during the police operation Cerberus, which focused on large scale cannabis cultivation by the Italian mafia.

Although Mr Domenic Perre was initially charged with Detective Bowen's murder, the then director of public prosecutions, Mr Paul Rofe QC, declined to pursue these charges. The Coroner's report (later) again suggested that Mr Perre had been in some way responsible for Detective Bowen's murder.

I am advised that two police investigations into the NCA bombing, the reports of which cannot be made public, have also failed to find new leads. We do not know what information and evidence was considered. What we do know is that, ultimately, no-one has been held responsible.

It is extraordinary that, despite a reward of up to \$1 million, double that offered in 2006, we are no closer to solving this crime, and calls are still being made in the media for the public to come forward with information.

In retracing some of the interesting features of this case, I have come across some information which raises more questions than it answers, and perhaps this may help us understand why we have yet to see a conviction against the killer or killers who perpetrated such a heinous act of terrorism in our city, an act that ultimately changed the perception of safety and security for many from that time on. I have come to believe that it is possible that not all the information available was considered at the Coroner's inquest or, presumably, by other authorities.

Two days after the NCA bombing, on 5 March 1994, *The Advertiser* carried a headline on page 1 which read, 'Police warned of bomb: retaliation for mafia gaoling, says informant'. That informant, we now know, was Mr Tony Grosser, and he was pictured (albeit anonymously) on that front page story.

In this article, Mr Grosser states that he warned police that police stations in Adelaide were targeted for bomb attacks in retaliation for the gaoling of an Italian mafia figure. He is quoted as stating:

*I became involved with (the bomber) who wanted me to sell cannabis for him here...I spoke to him in late May or early June last year and he told me all about weapons and explosives coming in and what they were going to do with them.*

*He said police buildings in SA were going to be targeted but didn't say which ones. The two other men involved told me the same things. They were going to get coppers for locking up ( the crime figure ) .*

The article continues:

*The man said he had first informed the police through the Anti-Corruption Branch on 29 June 1993.*

I am aware that some in this place are still quietly aware of the circumstances surrounding the Tony Grosser case and the evidence he has about those responsible for the NCA bombing.

I have been given copies of documents indicating that Mr Tony Grosser had on many occasions disclosed to police a suspicion that police would be targeted with explosives. It is clear from one letter that police had received this forewarning. A Bureau of Criminal Intelligence (BCI) circular on police letterhead, dated 13 July 1993, states:

*Information sought re: Theft of explosives.*

*Story: The BCI is currently monitoring an alleged threat against a police establishment involving the use of explosives. A copy of any report concerning the theft of explosives is to be forwarded to the chief project manager of BCI as soon as possible.*

A few weeks later, Mr Grosser also made a report to Channel 7's newsroom. In short, I wish to read a letter dated 31 July 1993 written by Mr Chris Gunn, who was in the employ of the Channel 7 nightly news team. Mr Gunn took a call from Tony Grosser, which he documented in a letter that he subsequently sent to Chief Superintendent Geoff Eaton of the Fraud Squad. The letter states:

*Mr Grosser says SA Police have established a special task force to investigate the importation into South Australia of hundreds of kilos of plastic explosive. He says Chief Superintendant Geoff Eaton is in charge of this squad.*

*He claims to have a two ounce sample of this explosive, which he says is A4 grade...a very powerful version. Mr Grosser says Interpol and federal police are also aware he has this sample, which he says proves the shipment has already arrived in South Australia. He told me the shipment had been arranged by Bruno Romero junior and an associate called Cass, who he says has links to the Hells Angels bikie club. Grosser says that he got this sample through his own associate in the Hells Angels. He also told me Cass had become aware the police had been warned about the explosives and he, Grosser, feared for his life as he was now being sought out by Cass and the Hells Angels.*

*He told me the plastic explosive was to be used to 'destroy' police headquarters in revenge for the arrest of Bruno Romero's father (also named Bruno Romero) who was involved in drug dealing. Mr Grosser told me he'd also reported his fears to his lawyer, Mr Nick Vadasz, who had warned him to contact police because such a large amount of plastic explosive would damage more than police headquarters, including his (Vadasz) office, which was nearby. Mr Grosser told me the plastic explosive was of the type normally used in torpedo war heads. Mr Grosser made the call to me from a public telephone because he feared any conversation from his regular phone may be intercepted.*

It is signed by Mr Chris Gunn. A number of other early disclosures by Mr Grosser made their way into police files, providing information that the Italian Mafia was planning a reprisal attack. In fact, in sheer desperation Dr Jean Lennane, Sydney psychiatrist and founding member of Whistleblowers Australia Incorporated, was also contacted by Tony Grosser to disclose that the life of police was being threatened by major players in a South Australian drug cartel. Dr Jean Lennane was willing to give evidence to this effect at the High Court appeal by Mr Grosser, but she was denied the opportunity to do so. Attempts were made to provide this and other evidence of Mr Grosser's early attempts to notify police of the impending bombing at the Coroner's Court, but again this was denied. To this day it is unknown whether the evidence of Mr Grosser has ever truly been tested or even investigated.

I do not intend to say more on this matter, other than to highlight that there may very well be evidence yet to be considered by the police, as we know the evidence of Mr Grosser was not considered by the Coroner's inquest. Perhaps if we revisit these and

other matters the killers may yet be brought to justice, and one of this state's greatest criminal mysteries may finally be solved.

This motion to remember the passing of the late Detective Sergeant Geoffrey Bowen is to remind us that to this day those responsible walk freely, and to pray that 15 years on every effort will be made to bring those responsible to account. Indeed, many lives have been adversely affected by the bombing that took place on 2 March 1994, and I put on the public record my sympathy to Jane Bowen-Sutton and her two sons, and to extend my hope that they will see justice done on the murder of her husband and their father so that he may rest in peace and they can continue their lives knowing that officials in South Australia left no stone unturned to solve this crime and give them closure. May God rest his soul.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. J.M. Gazzola.