



# QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## ABC Query

### **Inquiry from Mark Willacy, ABC:**

We have been compiling a story relating to sophisticated sports betting software and racing syndicates based on the Gold Coast. Allegations have been raised that former QPS detective Michael Featherstone has a role in these operations. Mr Featherstone is now the owner of the private investigations firm Phoenix Global, and it has come to our attention that he is under investigation by law enforcement agencies over his activities in these operations. We understand the QPS has had a role in these inquiries through Taskforce Maxima.

We are compiling a story for the ABC's flagship TV current affairs program 7.30 and are hoping the QPS can answer the following questions.

**We understand a search warrant was executed at the premises of Phoenix Global earlier this year after information was received by Taskforce Maxima. Please can you confirm this and provide details.**

This is a matter for the Crime and Corruption Commission.

**What are Mr Featherstone or his associates suspected of?**

This is a matter for the Crime and Corruption Commission.

**Please can you detail the circumstances under which Mr Featherstone's left the QPS in 1997.**

The officer submitted an application to resign/retire from the QPS under the special provisions as determined by the Governor in Counsel in October 1996.

The standard QPS vetting process was completed.

The Commissioner forwarded a submission on behalf of the officer with a recommendation that he resign from the QPS and that 'his resignation be approved under the special arrangements determined by the Governor in Counsel on a date as soon as possible, both suitable to the Service and the officer'.

The ability for an officer to retire under these arrangements still exists today.

**Was Mr Featherstone encouraged to leave the QPS because of matters later brought up at the Carter Inquiry into police involvement in the drug trade?**

The QPS is unable to identify any reference to the Carter Inquiry in the former officer's file.

**Was he given a special dispensation by the Commissioner allowing him to retire and receive a pay-out? Please provide details including the size of the pay-out.**

No. Details of any separation arrangements are a matter for the individual officer.

**Has the QPS received complaints relating to Mr Featherstone and his activities on the Gold Coast in the last five years? Please provide details.**

The QPS is unable to comment.

**People who have approached the ABC say Mr Featherstone and his associates have defrauded them through the sale of sophisticated sports betting software and membership of betting syndicates. What is QPS's knowledge of these scams and Mr Featherstone's alleged involvement in them?**

While the QPS is proactive in warning about online and other scams many complaints are dealt with as unfair trading practices.

**How does the QPS respond to allegations raised by victims of these scams that nothing has been done to investigate these operations despite repeated complaints?**

The QPS has met with victim groups. Further information was requested however not provided.

**A private investigator, Ken Gamble, provided a detailed brief of evidence to the QPS in 2012 relating to allegations of serious organised fraud by a syndicate involving Larry Pickering in which Mr Featherstone was named as a person of interest. Mr Gamble claims the information was ignored. How do you respond to this?**

The QPS has met with victim groups and Mr Gamble. Further information was requested however not provided.

**Serious allegations have been raised with the ABC that Michael Featherstone may have operated with a level of police protection on the Gold Coast. Is the QPS aware of these allegations and, if so, what has been done about it? Please provide details.**

Any allegation alleging police corruption should be made to the Crime and Corruption Commission.

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Media and Public Affairs Branch  
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