

MEDIA RELEASE

WAC demands justice for victims of sexual harassment

Wollongong Against Corruption is protesting the appalling treatment of Vicki Curran and other victims of sexual abuse in Wollongong Council. A protest will be held outside of the Council building at noon on 12 June.

“Wollongong Council was sacked because of systemic corruption”, according to WAC spokesperson Karen Cummings, “but there has been a deathly silence in relation to the appalling culture of sexual harassment that existed in Wollongong Council.”

WAC is seeking a Council apology to Vicki Curran and other victims of sexual harassment in Wollongong Council.

This is an opportunity for the Administrators to demonstrate their commitment to work with the community to clean up corruption and to rid the city of an abusive culture that exploits and bullies people in powerless situations.

A packed public meeting in Wollongong in March unanimously passed the following resolution:

This public meeting supports the formation of a delegation to the Administrators and General Manager of Wollongong City Council including representatives of Wollongong Against Corruption, trade unions and victim support organisations.

This delegation would propose:

- (i) Council accept liability for the psychological damage experienced by Vicki Curran.*
- (ii) the establishment of a Task Force with representatives of the Administrators, Management, WAC, trade unions and women’s organisations to investigate and make recommendations into the systemic sexual culture in Wollongong City Council.*

In responding to a letter from WAC seeking to discuss these matters with the Administrators, General Manager David Farmer, in a letter signed 22 April, refused to organise the meeting and discuss these matters because they dealt with “essentially the personal affairs of a former staff member.”

“We are outraged by this response” said Karen Cummings. “This is not a personal issue for a victim. It is a city wide issue. The former Council disgraced us all. An environment that damaged many lives was allowed to flourish”.

“In the time that they are here the Administrators are responsible to the residents of Wollongong. The community wants justice for the victims of sexual abuse, and the community wants a role in ensuring that this appalling culture can never occur again”

Contact: Karen Cummings 0407 206 267