



Atkinson in firing line

Deadline looms for state's top cop over Palm Island saga

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POLICE Commissioner Bob Atkinson has been "backed into a corner" over the Palm Island death-in-custody saga.

Mr Atkinson is under pressure to meet a Crime and Misconduct Commission deadline of the end of business today to take disciplinary action against six officers involved in the botched Palm Island investigation.

But a court hearing at 10am this morning could force his removal from the process after two of the officers sought to have Mr Atkinson disqualified from acting on the CMC recommendations.

Mr Atkinson, in court documents obtained by *The Courier-Mail*, revealed he would not bow

to criticism and wrote to the CMC warning he would not "abandon his officers" involved in the probe into Cameron Doomadgee's death in custody.

Police Union boss Ian Leavers said Mr Atkinson was under incredible pressure, with his job on the line after CMC chairman Martin Moynihan refused to approve his reappointment on a three-year contract.

He said the Police Commissioner had "a loaded gun pointed at his head".

"The way the matter unfolded it appears the Commissioner has been unfairly backed into a corner," Mr Leavers said.

Correspondence reveals Mr Atkinson fought a bitter cam-

paign to block the release of the damaging CMC report into the Palm Island affair last month.

Defence barrister Tim Carmody, SC, the former crime commission chief, filed the injunction on behalf of Townsville detectives Ray Kitching and Darren Robinson, with funding from the Queensland Police Union, on the basis of apprehended bias.

"That is why we are taking this injunction and pushing for him to be removed from the disciplinary process.

"It is difficult for any person to consider a matter in an impartial way when they themselves are under threat."

The CMC in a damning

report last month recommended six officers face disciplinary action for misconduct over the alleged whitewash of the high-profile death, suggesting demotions and dismissal.

But in correspondence obtained by *The Courier-Mail*, Mr Atkinson slams the "desktop review" by the CMC and the lack of any "further original investigation" to back up the charges of misconduct.

Premier Anna Bligh said it was "not uncommon" for the CMC to not release disciplinary reports.

additional reporting by
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