

# **BLACKS HARASSED BY REDFERN POLICE**

**SYDNEY:** The Aboriginal Legal Service last week alleged police harassment of its field officers and members throughout NSW.

On May 3, 12 Blacks were arrested at the Empress Hotel, Redfern, including three persons active in the Legal Service Council.

On April 19, eleven Blacks were arrested at the Cricketers' Arms Hotel, Alexandria. They included seven active in the legal service. Among them was law student Paul Coe, ALS vice-president, two field officers and council members.

Over \$500 was collected at a Tribune function that night to raise the high bail set by Redfern police.

On both occasions, the arrests followed ALS Council meetings. Police arrests at both hotels have been very few in recent months. At the Empress, it was the first large-scale police raid for many months.

Last month, Tom Winters, ALS field officer at Brewarrina in north-west NSW, was arrested for "offensive behaviour" inside the police station while pressing a claim for an Aboriginal client.

In Nowra, on the NSW South Coast, Keith Smith, an active ALS field officer was arrested in a local hotel, after the publican refused to serve him and his two daughters.

In Brewarrina, Aboriginal field officer Steve Gordon was also arrested last February.

Gary Williams, ALS research officer, told Tribune the Service wanted to know from NSW Police Minister Waddy whether these

**NSW Police Minister Waddy whether these were isolated police actions, or carried out on orders from above. The widespread**

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nature of the harassment pointed to a co-ordinated attack.

He said the service had sent off telegrams to the Australian and NSW Governments demanding a Royal Commission into the administering of justice to Aborigines.

He did not hold out much hope for NSW

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government action. The Australian Government already had two separate inquiries operating in West Australia and Alice Springs. The need, however, was for a nationwide Royal Commission, because incidents were occurring weekly showing police discrimination against Blacks.

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