

December 13<sup>th</sup> 2006

Press Release

### **Appointments to Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission**

The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission this afternoon announced details of a number of senior appointments. The Commission is due to come into operation next year and will have responsibility for the investigation of complaints against members of the Garda Síochána.

The Commission's Director of Investigations is to be **Mr Paul Buschini**, a former senior police officer from Lancashire. Mr Buschini served as a detective superintendent and has extensive experience in serious crimes investigation. He was formerly attached to the Lancashire Constabulary Professional Standards Department and he has led death-in-custody investigations on behalf of the Independent Police Complaints Commission for England and Wales. More recently, he has served as a police advisor to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Deputy Director of Investigations is to be **Mr Ray Leonard**. Mr Leonard has served as manager of the Competition Authority Cartel Division (criminal enforcement.) He worked on the Ansbacher inquiry while serving in the Revenue Commissioners' Investigation Branch.

Interviewing and selection for senior investigators, investigators and assistant investigators is currently in hand, the Commission has stated. This process is expected to be completed by the end of December.

**Mr Anthony Duggan** is to be the Commission's Director of Administration. He served with Customs and Excise from 1979 to 2000 and with the Revenue Commissioners from 2000 to 2004 holding a range of senior investigative and administrative posts. He was appointed as Chief Executive of the Garda Síochána Complaints Board in 2004, where he has been overseeing preparations for the transfer of authority to the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission. The Board continues to receive complaints until the Commission becomes operational next year.

**Mr Michael O'Neill** is to be Head of Legal Affairs for the Commission. He was called to the Bar in 1995. He was appointed as the Health and Safety Authority's first ever in-house Legal Advisor in 2001 and has played a key role in the development of its enforcement function, including the management of over 70 prosecutions on indictment. He was an assistant to the Irish Judge at the European Court of Justice from 1998 to 2000.

He has also held a number of academic positions including Jean Monnet Lecturer at NUI, Galway, Visiting Professor at HEC Paris and Visiting Fellow at the University of Edinburgh.

The Head of Communications and Research is to be **Mr Kieran FitzGerald**. Mr FitzGerald has been a producer, reporter and researcher with RTÉ and he has worked on programmes that included *The Late Late Show*, *Prime Time* and *Liveline*.

He was News and Current Affairs Journalist of the Year in 1999 and he is a former chair of the Dublin Broadcasting Branch of the National Union of Journalists. Since 2002 he has been engaged as a lobbyist and consultant specialising in environmental and media issues.

The Commission has retained a former detective chief superintendent, **Mr John O'Brien**, as a senior Garda consultant. Mr O'Brien retired earlier this month. He served in a number of senior command and operational posts in the Garda, including head of the Technical Bureau. From 1999 until his retirement he headed the International Liaison and Protection section at Garda Headquarters. In this capacity, he led the Garda's Europol National Unit and the National Central Bureau of Interpol.

#### **Notes:**

The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission has been established under the terms of the Garda Síochána Act 2005.

Its first objective, under the Act, is to establish a system for the investigation of complaints against gardaí which is efficient, effective and fair to all concerned.

The chairman of the three-person Commission is **Mr Justice Kevin Haugh** of the High Court. The other Commissioners are **Ms Carmel Foley**, former Director of Consumer Affairs and **Mr Conor Brady**, former editor of *the Irish Times*.

The Commissioners were appointed by the President in February 2006, following nomination by the Government and recommendations by both Houses of the Oireachtas.

The structure and organisation of the Commission is being modelled on the recommendations of the report of the advisory committee on policing, chaired by Senator Maurice Hayes.

Advertisements for investigations staff and for case officers were placed in Irish and international media and attracted applications from many countries, including UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and Hong Kong.

A contract for training of staff has been agreed, after a tendering process, with the University of Portsmouth which also operates training programmes for the office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and the Independent Police Complaints Commission for England and Wales. Initial training is expected to start in February and will be completed in April.

A headquarters premises for the Commission and its staff has been identified in central Dublin and contracts for this are currently being finalised. The Commission will also have offices at Roscrea and Longford.

It is expected that the Commission will be at operational capacity next year.