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Veteran faces serious allegations and could be jailed

# Rockhampton cop 'paid for witness statements'

A SENIOR Rockhampton policeman embroiled in a corruption scandal allegedly paid prisoners to help convict more criminals.

Detective Senior Sergeant Graham Richards, one of four detectives facing corruption charges, is suspended with pay during an official investigation.

A News Ltd report claims up to \$10,000 was deposited by the officers into accounts of prisoners so they would provide key witness statements.

The officer-in-charge at Rockhampton's Criminal Investigation Branch has not been charged but could face jail himself if the allegations are proved.

He is a respected and successful veteran. In 2001 he received damning evidence that Natasha Ryan was alive.

He had received an anonymous hand-written letter during the search and in 2003 Ryan was found in her boyfriend Scott Black's Rockhampton home during the trial of

serial killer Leonard John Fraser. He was officer-in-charge at Yeppoon and has been a leading force in the fight against crime.

It is not clear whether the transactions came from the police officer's own money or from a pool of funds.

However, it is understood that the four police believed the suspects they were securing witness statements against were guilty.

Two Brisbane officers have been stood down and another Brisbane-

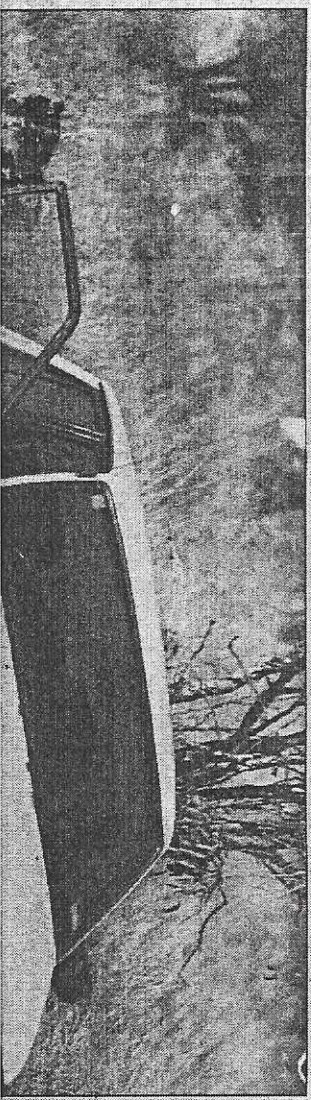
based officer, believed to be from Rockhampton, has been suspended from the investigation by the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

It is alleged the officers deposited cash into accounts held by prisoners at the Capricornia Correctional Centre and the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, near Brisbane, via post office deposits around the state.

Attempts to contact Senior Sergeant Richards yesterday were unsuccessful.



**SUSPENDED:** Detective Senior Sergeant Graham Richards is facing corruption charges. File photo.



## Car owners hit by theft spate

BY RACHEL COLUSTRAIN

A white Mazda sedan disco-