

# BELFAST TELEGRAPH

## BELFAST TELEGRAPH SPORT



ADVERTISEMENT

**Belfast Telegraph - IPR Website of the Year**

[Search Site](#)

[Advanced Search](#)

- [Loadzajobs.co.uk](#)
- [Propertynews.com](#)
- [Belfast Telegraph TV](#)
- [Family Notices](#)
- Belfast Telegraph**
  - [Home](#)
  - **News**
    - **Local & National**
    - [World news](#)
    - [Politics](#)
    - [Education](#)
    - [Letters](#)
    - [Opinion](#)
    - [Technology](#)
    - [Election 2007](#)
  - [Breaking News](#)
  - [Northwest Edition](#)
  - [Business](#)
  - [Business Telegraph](#)
  - [Sport](#)
  - [Health](#)
  - [Features](#)
  - [Columnists](#)
  - [Entertainment](#)
  - [Homefinder](#)
  - [Weather](#)
  - [Archive](#)
  - [Calendar 2007](#)
  - [Telegraph Travel](#)
- Inside Belfast**
  - [Jobs](#)
  - [Training](#)
  - [Dating](#)
  - [Gaming](#)
  - [Reader Offers](#)
  - [Diners' Club](#)
- Services**
  - [RSS](#)
  - [Media Kit](#)
- Other Titles**
  - [Sunday Life](#)
  - [Ireland's Saturday Night](#)

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Local & National](#)

## Local & National

### Inquiries a drain on policing: PSNI chief

Monday, May 28, 2007

By Chris Thornton

The senior PSNI officer tasked with dealing with collusion inquiries today warned that handling the past is a "drag anchor on policing".

Assistant Chief Constable Alistair Finlay made the comments as it emerged that collusion probes have already cost the PSNI almost £4m - putting the known price tag of the investigations beyond £25m before full hearings have started.

With the Billy Wright Inquiry due later this week to become the first of the inquiries to begin full hearings, Mr Finlay revealed that police preparation will cost £2m this year.

He said the force also spent £1.6m last year dealing with the three collusion inquiries that have opened, as well as two probes under way in the Republic.

In an interview with the Belfast Telegraph, Mr Finlay - who was hired last year specifically to deal with inquiries because the work was "eclipsing" another senior officer's work on current crime - said that "dealing with the past is a drag anchor" on policing.

He also admitted he expects the police and other agencies to be criticised by the inquiries for the loss of records.

He said the PSNI has handed the first inquiry a substantial body of material about Wright's murder in the Maze Prison in 1997, but has been unable to find all the records requested.

Mr Finlay acknowledged that some retiring officers took records with them, but says he is not aware of anyone deliberately destroying material to keep it out of the hands of the inquiries.

The ACC said the PSNI is committed to helping the inquiries, but has concerns that "covert methodology" could be exposed by the investigations.

He also questioned whether the inquiries provide "best value".

"We've got a lot of money looking at the past. Is that the best way of utilising it?" he asked.






"These are tragic events and it's understandable why families and associates must have questions arise in their minds either confirmed, denied or dispelled.

"But there are very real dangers that through the portrayal of those events, it adversely affects the relations that we're building in policing today."

The Wright Inquiry is the first of three separate collusion allegations being investigated. Inquiries into the deaths of solicitor Rosemary Nelson and Portadown man Robert Hamill are currently in the preparation stages. A fourth inquiry recommended by Canadian judge Peter Cory is due to examine the murder of solicitor Patrick Finucane, but it has not been established.

The Wright Inquiry, which begins hearings in Banbridge on Wednesday, has been the least expensive of the probes so far.

By last December, it had cost the Government £3.9m. The Hamill Inquiry was put at £7.5m at the same time, and in March the Government said the Rosemary Nelson Inquiry had cost £11.6m. The £3.6m spent by the PSNI is accounted separately.

-  Email Article
-  Print Version
-  Search
-  +Most Emailed
-  +Most Read

#### Don't miss . . .

**Is time running out for Jack Bauer?**



'24' chief writes on how long the show has left

**Colombian link to SF campaign?**



Did guerrillas FARC out \$2m for electoral crusade?

**Fizzy fears**



Some soft drinks may seriously harm your health

**Breakthrough in cancer screening**



Discovery of breast cancer genes will identify sufferers

#### ADVERTISEMENTS

#### ADVERTISEMENTS

#### More articles in Local & National

- [She should never get out of prison](#)
- [Tell us the truth](#)
- [Why threatened Belfast schools should find their own solutions](#)
- [Diana funeral organist performs in Belfast](#)

• Assembly asked to confirm £8bn budget

**NEW**



**tv**

**BELFAST TELEGRAPH**

**LoadzaJobs.co.uk**  
Your search ends here

**BELFAST TELEGRAPH**



**Letters...**

[Click here to read your views](#)

ADVERTISEMENTS

Video

Homefinder



Helen Carson looks at Ulster's hottest properties

May Fair



Gary Grattan reports on Ballyclare's May Fair

Special Olympics gig



Maureen Coleman's charity show in Belfast