

Comrie attacks protest course

POLICE have called for assurances RMIT University will not teach S11-style demonstration tactics to students.

Chief Commissioner Neil Comrie said he would take whatever action he could to ensure such a proposal did not get off the ground.

"I would be absolutely appalled and outraged if any learning institution were to commit public funds for supporting the sort of tactics engaged in by the S11 Alliance," he said.

"Assaults, abuse, the missiles that were fired and thrown at the police, are not ways that any law-abiding community would tolerate public protest about any matter."

Mr Comrie said he had been given assurances by RMIT it did not intend to teach S11 tactics, but if it did he would seek urgent talks with the vice-chancellor.

In a statement released yesterday RMIT dismissed reports that leaders of the S11 anti-globalisation protests at September's World Economic Forum would be invited to lecture students on tactics.

But RMIT public affairs manager Paula Benson said the S11 members could be invited to "talk" to students if the S11

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protests were used as a case study for an advocacy and social action elective subject in the School of Social Science.

"The specific course content for the relevant subjects for 2001 has not yet been determined," Ms Benson said.

She said that if the S11 protests were studied, students would evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used by the protesters.

Ms Benson said any involvement by S11 protesters would focus on the "approaches they have employed and not a platform for them to promote their cause".

In the past, she said, students undertaking the unit had examined the responses of rural communities to bank closures and the campaign against voluntary euthanasia.

It is believed S11 organisers have already spoken to students at Monash University's politics department.

Opposition police spokesman Kim Wells said if RMIT was encouraging or teaching people to protest illegally, the State Government should step in to stop it.