

BROKEN HILL COMMUNITY SAFETY PRECINCT COMMITTEE

Minutes for meeting held 10.00am Tuesday 4th August, 2009

Meeting commenced: 10.20am

ATTENDANCE:

Superintendent Ian DICKSON	Barrier Police – Commander
Inspector Emma DONNELLY	Barrier Police – Duty Officer
Senior Constable Janelle LYNCH	Police – Crime Prevention officer
Senior Constable James WHEATLEY	Police – Youth Liaison Officer
Constable Jo PHILLIPS	Police - PCYC
Pim SCHAAIJ	Volunteer in Police
John WILLIAMS	State Member – MP for Murray-Darling
Des BILSKE	Broken Hill City Council – Govt and Communities
Judy PARR	Broken Hill City Council
Fiona ELLIS	Broken Hill City Council – Manager Community Development
Karren HOWE	Chairperson – Barrier Liquor Accord Manager – Barrier Social Democratic Club
David LEE	Broken Hill City Council – Youth Services
Kerrie STANDLEY	Attorney General’s Department
Gavin BLOWS	Dept of Education and Training
Michael BRUGGY	Manager – HACC

APOLOGIES:

Inspector Michael STOLTENBERG	Crime Manager – Barrier Police
S/Cst Amanda McMILLIAN	Student Liaison Officer- NSWPF
The Hon Sussan LEY	Federal Member- MP for Farrer
Robin EDGECOMBE	President –Business Broken Hill
John HARRIS	NSW Dept of Aboriginal Affairs

BUSINESS:

Supt. DICKSON welcomes all members to the meeting. Supt DICKSON indicates that he will also be presenting the crime results for the LAC over the past 12 months which show that crime has dropped from the previous year.

Supt. DICKSON presents power point presentation of crime stats for Broken Hill for the period April – June 2009. Also examines reactive crime within the entire Local Area Command.

Assaults

Examines recorded assaults within Broken Hill which indicate Domestic Violence related are the highest.

BES

Break and Enters recorded in Broken Hill for this quarter were high. This was reported in the papers and media and that there was a problem in Broken Hill with BES. Supt DICKSON indicates that it was a strategy utilised by the police to inform the community that there were numerous houses being broken into around town in order to encourage the community to report crime as soon as it occurred and to be more vigilant. A message was also sent to the community to be more aware of personal security by locking homes etc.

BRUGGY – Indicates that the elderly people which the HACC deal with are scared and not sleeping due to the perceived rise in crime, particularly Break and Enter.

DICKSON – indicates that crime in Broken Hill is actually down – statistics are lower than the previous year.

ELLIS – indicates that the community hears the panic side of things when the crime is happening but they don't hear the resolution. Perhaps it would be a good idea to let the community know through the media about the good work that the police have done to reduce the fear level.

DICKSON – Agrees with comment by ELLIS that the community should be made aware of reducing crime and recent arrests.

WILLIAMS – Is the recorded incidents of Malicious Damage and BES related?

DICKSON – Yes. Sometimes where damage occasioned to a building cannot be categorised as Attempted BES due to insufficient evidence it will be recorded as Malicious Damage.

General discussion about the way crime is recorded by police to accurately reflect what crime is happening. Mr DICKSON indicates that Compass housing require a police report to be made in order for the occupants to make a claim.

Stealing

DICKSON – explains that Stealing from Motor Vehicle offences and BES are often the same offenders.

Visitor Related Stealing

ELLIS – comments that there are now a large number of cottages included in the accommodations for Broken Hill, a fact which is reflected by the higher number of stealings from detached houses category. Also talks about the high number of stealings being recorded at Broken Hill Caravan Park several years ago was addressed as a joint venture by BHCC and Broken Hill Police. By working together to clear underbrush etc saw the number of stealing incidents drop.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Supt DICKSON gives a power point presentation about the crime statistics for Barrier Local Area Command for the past 12 month period and how these figures compare to the previous year.

General discussion between DICKSON, WILLIAMS and BRUGGY about the reporting of stolen cars in Barrier LAC. WILLIAMS indicates that older model cars are mostly stolen and DICKSON states that stolen cars are not always recovered due to being disposed of interstate or burnt out/dumped.

Non DV Assault

DICKSON – reports 22 fewer non domestic related assaults were reported this past year than the previous year. Much of this can be attributed to the good work done by the Liquor Accord.

HOWE – reports that last Xmas period licensed premises in Broken Hill experienced 5 weekends of Xmas parties making them busier in November and December.

Assistance/support from the police was great and this year the licensed premises will again be requesting the support of the police to assist in both November and December.

Robbery

DICKSON – reports no robberies reported since March 09. Not a significant crime category in Broken Hill

Further discussion about recent spike in BES in Broken Hill and the good arrests that followed.

HOWE – Were the same people being released who had done the offences previously?

DICKSON – indicates that one offender arrested was a career criminal and the others were juveniles.

General discussion about getting the message back to the community about the community remaining vigilant despite the recent good arrests made of Break and Enter offenders.

ELLIS – suggests it is in the interest of the police to get this message out to the community to maintain confidence and reduce fear. Perhaps this message could be conveyed via the appointed Police Media officer.

DICKSON – indicates this role would be filled by the Crime Manager - Inspector Michael STOLTENBERG.

WILLIAMS – makes comments that Wentworth experiences cross border crime, where offenders travel from Victoria and return to Victoria after committing offences.

DICKSON – indicates that the number of assaults reported in the past 12 months that were linked to alcohol have increased since the previous year.

WILLIAMS – Does this total only reflect alcohol related or does it include drug related too?

Discussion from the committee

PHILLIPS – is it easy to detect alcohol consumption but not always drug consumption. Also, people are happy to admit to drinking alcohol but will rarely admit to taking drugs.

WILLIAMS – comments about the increased strength of people under the influence of drugs and how this is seeing assaults resulting in more severe injuries.

DICKSON – discusses St Pats races and recent media about full strength beer being served again this year. He indicates that it may be a breakdown of 70% light beer and 30% full strength, but this is still to be worked out. States that the event has the potential to result in anti social behaviour/alcohol related crime, however the event is managed well by organisers and police to reduce this.

HOWE – asks for statistics for alcohol related assaults on licensed premises for the periods 2008 – 2009 and 2007 -2008.

DICKSON – discusses domestic assaults and the aim for police is to increase reporting of this offence to police. Police want to see community encouraged to report DV, but it is often fear of reprisal that deters reporting.

ELLIS – suggests statistics about BES on businesses could be forwarded to the Chamber of Commerce.

Question from the committee about the use of CCTV by businesses.

DICKSON – comments that the use of CCTV is not heavily utilised in Broken Hill but its used around other parts of the state has proved beneficial.

DICKSON – comments that there is a view by the community that crime is out of control

WILLIAMS – States that it is within his role as local member to keep the morale of the community up and positive and that he would be more than happy to get the message out about the crime trend going down.

BILSKE – Do you look at the crime trend over a five year period?

DICKSON – Yes.

Drug Detection

DICKSON – The people committing the BES offences are often also addicted to illicit drugs.

BILSKE – Are drugs related offences recorded separate to alcohol related offences?

DICKSON – Yes. Drugs recorded when person admits to use.

Fraud

This crime category recognised state wide as an increasing category

Stealing

Rising crime category is stealings from yards/driveways etc. Crime of opportunity taking property not secured. Comes back to improving the community's awareness about property security. This is a problem reported across the whole city; not just specific hot spots.

Discussion about Move on Power and Fail to Quit.

DICKSON – Move on directions are issued where appropriate, however there is no offence connected to being moved on. Failing to Quit a Licensed Premises is an offence.

Injury/Fatal MVAs

Significant decrease shown in this category. Mr DICKSON discusses recent fatal reported and associated factors. Mr DICKSON states that he is supportive of police

issuing drivers tickets and penalising them, as heavy policing has shown that it impacts favourably on this category.

Crime Prevention initiatives in Broken Hill

Discussion by the group about improving the Broken Hill community about securing property. Promoting “Lock it or lose it”.

SCHAAIJ – suggests conducting Footpath audits again. This initiative was run by the Volunteers in Police several years ago with favourable results. This initiative involves the VIPs making observations about houses within a “Hot spot” and passing on information to the occupants about their level of security by way of letter in letterbox. This initiative was supported by Supt DICKSON who indicated he wished this initiative to commence.

Further discussion about improving community awareness. Educating the children at school about “Put it away after you play”. This initiative to be run by School Liaison Officer and/ Youth Liaison Officer.

Crime Prevention Brochure

Discussion by PARR, ELLIS, WILLIAMS, BILSKIE

Discussion about the development and promotion of a Crime Prevention brochure within Broken Hill. Getting the message out to the community about securing property and conveying the message to the community that crime is coming down but opportunistic crime (stealing from yards etc) is on the rise.

ELLIS – This could be a joint funded initiative, with possible assistance from Robin EDGECUMBE’s business - to design and produce the flyer.

WILLIAMS – this flyer could then be distributed through John WILLIAMS’ office with the quarterly newsletter.

Fridge Magnet

Discussion from the committee about the development and distribution of a fridge magnet in Broken Hill.

BILSKIE suggests applying for a grant to fund this project under the Community Assistance Policy.

LYNCH – Talks about Missing Persons week which is for the week of 2nd Aug – 8th Aug and the Safely Home Program – joint venture between NSW Police and Alheimers Australia. Applications forms and information about this program to be distributed throughout Broken Hill.

PARR – speaks about a Dementia Advisory Service which has been introduced to the city. Also indicated that she would like to get some Application forms to distribute through the HACC.

ELLIS – suggests that Missing Persons week could also be promoted through the Visitor’s Centre.

DICKSON – Indicates there is no formal Neighbourhood Watch in Broken Hill at this time.

Some discussion from the committee about this topic.

PARR – suggests an information session is held to gauge community interest about NHW.

PARR – Introduces David LEE from Youth Services – BHCC to group.
ELLIS – Talks about Transport Group focussed on assisting victims of domestic violence, particularly in townships like Wilcannia where the need to safely evacuate the victim/s from the town anonymously is important. Seeking to obtain a grant to fund an anonymous vehicle. Suggests that it would be beneficial if a Domestic Violence officer with the police could attend a Working Group meeting at some point to talk about the needs of DV victims.

DICKSON – agrees as the only means of conveying women and children to safety at this time is by police vehicle. Requires victims to sit in prisoner pods and police vehicles do not have child restraints which is inappropriate.

BILSKE – asks about adequate housing for victims.

DICKSON – indicates that Wilcannia has the Safe House, however there is not really any adequate housing in other outlying townships.

General discussion about the lack of accommodation available in Broken Hill for men. LEE suggests Compass housing are the people to talk to.

KEY ACTIONS GENERATED

- Media release by police about reduced crime but the maintaining of vigilance.
- VIPs to conduct “Footpath Audits” throughout city to gauge security of properties and convey this information back to the occupant by way of mail box drop.
- Development of a Crime Prevention Brochure for Broken Hill – seek assistance from Robin EDGE CUMBE.
- Development of a Fridge Magnet for the city displaying emergency numbers.

Meeting closed: 12.20pm

Next meeting: Tuesday 10th November, 2009. Time and venue to be confirmed.

AGENDA ISSUES FOR NEXT MEETING

- DV Transport service to evacuate victims
- Explanation of DVEK