

ROTARY CLUB OF WENTWORTH INC.

ABN: 52 301 148 662
NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA
Meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesdays, Wentworth Crown Hotel

President: Sandra Arnold

Hon. Secretary: Noel Randle
P.O. Box 130,
Wentworth, 2648

Minutes

Town Crisis Meeting

Wentworth Services Sporting Club Wednesday 10th March 2010

Attendance: As per register: Copy attached.

Opening Address: Rotary Club President: Sandra Arnold Copy attached.

Apologies: John Williams - MP, Susan Ley - MP, Ray Marshall, Marshall Security

Police Address: Superintendent Ian Dickson – Barrier Local Area Command.

Supt Dickson presented a slide show of the crime statistics for the Wentworth Safety Committee Precinct.

There are particular issues in some areas, there is a need to react to them by deployment of staff and changing policing policy.

- 357 crimes reported from October 09 to February 10.
- Spike in Break and Enters in January and February.
- 30 Break and Enters in the Southern Area.
- Dareton and Wentworth are “Hot Spots” there has been a steady increase over the 5 month period.

- In 2009 729 charges laid, 225 people charged, less than 1 person charged per day.
- Not appropriate for Supt Dickson to criticise the Magistrate, of the 225 people charged 113 were sentenced to Gaol terms. The percentage sent to gaol is less in other parts of the state.
- Police are investigating other factors related to the reported crime, alcohol related, drug related, domestic violence & personal violence.
- Eg offender drinking or victim drinking, standout related factor is alcohol.
- Domestic Violence is greater than Street/Other Violence.
- Assaults are mostly associated with Domestic Violence.
- Break ins are mainly Businesses compared to Residences, this is above the State average.
- Recreation Businesses with Licensed Premises are hit often. Eg Golf Clubs
- Malicious Damage is greater in residential break ins.
- Links between Stolen Vehicle crimes and Break and Enters.

Police Observations:

24 hour policing is on the agenda, but to achieve that there needs to be increasing trends over a 12 –18 month period. This is not sustainable under the current trends. The current increase in crime rate is a spike on the norm.

The model for manning Dareton Police Station is

- 26 general duty police.
- 3 shifts

the policing response for combating spikes in crime is to continue to

- identify offenders
- change deployment of police
- target offenders
- bring in resources from other areas

There has been a similar trend in Mildura for the same period, there has been a sharing of intelligence between Mildura and Dareton Police and it has been an intelligence based decision to target offenders in Mildura and Dareton police districts.

Supt Dickson stressed the need for the community to assist with information, and gave the example of a known offender being targeted within hours of moving back into Dareton. This information was supplied from the community.

Questions:

Un-named lady Wentworth: Have Police investigated crimes where offenders are gaining access to property via either the Murray or Darling Rivers?

A. Police would look into this and may have to call in extra resources to patrol the rivers.

Les Hartley Curlwaa: What is the age of offenders, is it in the 10 –14 year old bracket?

A. The age and demographic of the majority of break and enters is under 18. The response under the Young Offenders Act to ensure that young offenders are given the benefit of the doubt.

1. Caution, you will go to jail if you continue with this type of behaviour.
2. Youth Conferencing
3. Cautionary Conference
4. Recidivist, no benefit for the offender. Juvenile Justice will serve time.

Other areas have Youth programs, believe Wentworth Shire is investigating funding for these type of programs and a full time Youth Officer.
Shire of Wentworth Mayor confirmed this.

Peter Whifield Trentham Cliffs: We should have harsher laws similar to those in the Middle East where they have a zero tolerance to crime, your job would be a lot easier.

- A. We don't have these policies, we have to police within the law. I will give you an example of a policeman who kicked an offender in the backside. He was charged with assault and lost his job.

Un-named Man Curlwaa: You have 27 police on the ground, how can we get immediate response, you have to bring in 3 cars from Mildura, how can we get all night patrols? There are not enough police, there should be a Youth Curfew.

- A. It is not within the Law to have a blanket curfew, however there are bail curfews, we can target offenders and when charged we can have a curfew placed on them as part of their bail conditions. This then gives us the right to regularly check on them for bail compliance.

Simon Stockman Wentworth: Shouldn't we be looking at prevention as a means of reducing the crime rate, the Community should be looking at a Youth Drop In Centre to get these kids off the street.

- A. Shire of Wentworth Mayor confirmed this was what the Shire is investigating.

Cr Bill Wheeldon Wentworth: When you phone late at night you get a call centre at Wagga or the Central Coast, how do they know what is going on and the urgency of the crime? A resident called in a report of offenders climbing over the fence to get into Country Energy's yard and was told there were no police available to attend.

- A. Inspector Kylie Smith Dareton. There are 5 Lock Up Keepers in the district who can be called out 24 hours per day, other staff can also be called in if

Roger Wattison Wentworth: I have been a victim and called in report after report after report with no action taken.

Keith Forster Wentworth: Our business has had 7 break-ins, including 4 vehicle thefts of which 2 vehicles were completely destroyed. In one case it took forensics 13 days to respond. We had a break-in on 24th February and we are still waiting on forensics to arrive. It is detrimental to our business to have areas, equipment taped off and isolated for such a long period of time. In Mildura there is not such a delay, can you work in with the Forensic dept in Mildura.

- A. Forensics are based in Broken Hill and have such a large area to cover, because policing has changed more and more emphasis is being placed on forensics, priorities are given to each case and unfortunately not every case will be followed up. However I know a Forensic Officer will be in Wentworth tomorrow, please come and talk to me after the meeting.

Keith Moore Wentworth: Have you looked in to the Koori Court system that is in use in Victoria? There is an improvement of 40 – 50% in the re-offenders rate.

- A. I am in favour of this type of system. There is a Circle Sentencing system in NSW where the offenders meet with a group of Elders. 2 weeks ago I sent a letter away requesting Circle Sentencing. However I have recently received a study on the Koori Court in Victoria that shows that that system is only as effective as the normal court system. If you give me your details after the meeting I will have a copy of the study sent to you.

necessary for an immediate response, this is decided by a referral system to a senior officer. If the crime is minor the advise is to come the next day, no urgent response is required.

Un-named man Wentworth: Crime is not the only problem in Wentworth, what about the continual breaking of Traffic Laws within the town Boundary particularly speeding by cars and trucks as they come in past the residences on the Broken Hill side of town.

- A. Inspector Kylie Smith Dareton. This needs to be reported there are 3 highway patrol vehicles in Dareton that can be tasked to cover these types of offence.

Un-named Lady Wentworth: I have called Police at least 50 times and have been supported by Police every time.

- A. Supt Dickson explained the despatching of Police and the Police Switch Phone will be relocated to Broken Hill in the coming 12 months.

Un-named Lady Wentworth: Tuesday 2nd called 000 at 3:14am reporting loud noises like domestic violence in the street the call was logged at 3:28am. Noise continued until 5:30am. No one despatched.

- A. The assessment may have been made not to call out an officer. **The lady was asked how many times did she call.** Response was once, husband said not to bother any further they had reported it. Meeting was advised that if the problem remains to continue to call Police, the problem will then be reassessed.

Barry Wentworth: Offenders appear to know the times of shifts starting and finishing and crimes occur when police not on duty.

- A. There appears to be no obvious pattern that crimes are being committed when police are not on duty. If Police intelligence and statistics show that there is a problem time of the day/night police will be deployed to cover this time slot.

Jenny Sinclair: The crime rate is increasing, why is it, offenders are getting younger, are punishments too light.

- A. The reasons for increasing crime rates are either offenders come in from outside, or offenders have just been released from custody. Lack of employment opportunities and the failure to keep some young people in the Education system also impact on the number of repeat offenders and the crime rate.

Un-named man Wentworth: Questions have not been answered, Council and Police can not do anything. It is up to Wentworth residents to do something.

- A. Supt Dickson reiterated the gathering of intelligence with the help of the community, identifying and targeting offenders, advised the meeting of bringing in the last week, outside police in plain clothes and increasing the deployment of police in the district to combat the crime rate.

Shire of Wentworth Address: Mayor Marg Thomson

The subject of the increasing crime rate was raised at a Local Government Meeting attended by 13 councils at Bourke.

The Council is looking at various agencies and family organisations ~ ~ ~
attendance and search for funding options looking at creating employment opportunities.

The Council will through the media continue to bludgeon both State and Federal Govts to attract more funding.

Mayor Thomson then asked for a show of hands from the meeting to endorse the council continue on in this manner.

The Meeting overwhelmingly endorsed Mayor Thomson.

Mr Sculver Wentworth: Has the council considered an incentive to residents and businesses to have alarms installed.

A. Mayor Thomson . council could consider this as part of its strategy.
Supt Dickson . Police have specialist officers that can come in and advise businesses in particular how to improve their security.

Meg Wentworth: The Sisters of Charity at Dareton are to be commended for their work in keeping young children of Dareton, safe and off the street.

Meeting Closed.

Questions raised after the Meeting.

Florence Davidson Mallee Family Care Dareton: There is no funding available for supervising community based service sentences in Wentworth. Nearest one is Broken Hill.

Is there a Koori Rehabilitation settlement for young offenders on one of the stations (Moorna?) in the Wentworth District .