

Submission: Inquiry on strategies to prevent and reduce criminal activity in Queensland

As a resident of the Qld regional centre of Toowoomba for approximately 10.5 yrs. I have observed the following:

1. The Drayton Police Station (situated on the outskirts of Toowoomba), Queensland Police officers were unaware for a considerable time that a local hotel situated within 200 metres of the station had cannabis growing in the inside the walls of the nearby hotel.
2. The Drayton Police Station have been informed of suspected criminal activities around suspected "drug labs" via a number of means such as complaints from residents, crime stopper reports and other external sources neighbourhood watch members, yet appear to rarely act on that intelligence.
3. The Drayton Police officers are of the belief that it is ok and normal behaviour for an adult man stripped to the waist in mid-winter to stand outside a neighbour's home making intimidating gestures and threats and because that individual is standing on council land it is therefore a council matter. What comprehension of council laws and bi-laws do Qld Police Officers have?
4. The Drayton Police Officers have spent many hours trying to resolve neighbourhood disputes without little if any achievement. A recent example, only occurring within the past 3 weeks was a complaint regarding a disturbance in a driveway between two adults (raised voices were heard) and resulted in the local Drayton Police spending in excess of 2 hours door knocking to ascertain if there was any foundation to the complaint. It was later mentioned at the neighbourhood watch meeting that no charges were laid.
5. Yet only in the previous 6 months the community was made aware via the media, the "Chronicle" newspaper that an armed and dangerous man was roaming Drayton and surrounding areas committing serious offences and police were seeking the public to assist with his apprehension. My question is why has that person not been captured? And further questions why are the Drayton Police overlooking intelligence which suggests criminal activities are occurring in their precinct and yet they appear to ignore this intelligence?
6. Recently when Drayton Police when asked about the criminal record of a local resident minimised it by saying "it is only something small" my understanding of that is the officer was attempting to minimise the local resident's criminal past. Why would a Queensland Police officer do this?

Recommendations:

Skill mix at local "rural" Queensland Police stations needs improvement

Rotation of police officers around the state to improve knowledge and skill, not one station for life

Periodic testing of police officers knowledge of the law including local government laws and bi-laws

Appointing and instituting a regulator who can assess and resolve complaints about police officer's behaviour confidentially and ensure police officers remain competent, ethical and professional

Closer scrutiny of human and material resource management and utilisation

Ms Lesleigh Murphy

