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Crime Inquiry 2014
Submission 062



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Research Director
Legal Affairs & Community Safety Comm.
Parliament House
George Street
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18 July 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Ipswich City Council's Submission on the Prevention and Reduction of Crime in QLD

I refer to previous correspondence concerning the abovelisted matter, addressed to Council's Chief Executive, who has requested that I respond on his behalf. I apologise of the delay in the provision of this advice.

In a letter dated 28 May 2014, the Chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, Mr Ian Berry MP invited Council to make written submissions concerning strategies to prevent and reduce criminal activity in Queensland. Council's submissions concerning same are as follows:

1. Ipswich City Council has enjoyed a twenty year relationship with the Queensland Police Service, pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) providing for the efficient, effective and collaborative working arrangements to address crime prevention and detection via the flagship "Safe City" Program.
2. Commencing in 1994 and championed by then Councillor Paul Pisasale (before he became Mayor), the Safe City Program was designed to engage multiple stakeholders to regularly meet and brainstorm crime prevention and detection strategies, with a view to enhancing community safety across the Ipswich Local Government Area (LGA)
3. The Program commenced from humble beginnings including the installation of four CCTV cameras in the Ipswich CBD Mall. This project was fully funded by Council and its success was instantaneous in respect of its public crime detection, evidence gathering and general deterrence.
4. Over consequent and ensuing years the Safe City CCTV camera network has been extended to cover a range of public areas across the entire LGA from Goodna to Rosewood. The program relies on 247 Pan Tilt Zoom (PTZ) infrared and night vision cameras all of which are wired in and transmit images via

cabling to a 24/7 monitoring facility located in the Ipswich CBD Mall. The relevant cameras and 24/7 monitoring are fully funded by Council.

5. In addition to the aforementioned 247 Safe City cameras, Council has installed and has at its disposal a further 283 cameras which monitor and protect all Council assets and facilities across the LGA, including libraries, art gallery, sporting fields, sporting clubs, community halls, function centres, Council depots and yards etc. This additional camera network provides and further supports evidence for Council and Police in relation to a range of potential offences.
6. Subject to some benchmark analysis conducted by the Queensland Police Service (QPS) during 2007 it was established that Ipswich experienced a 74.9% reduction in crime since the commencement of the safe City Program in 1994. Council does not submit or argue that such dramatic crime reduction figures are solely due to its CCTV camera network. In fact, the Safe City Program involves a range of community safety and crime prevention strategies which are more far reaching than simply the installation and monitoring of CCTV cameras. Having said that, Council does submit that the widespread advertising, publicity and community education surrounding the Safe City CCTV camera network has had a positive impact on general deterrence.
7. In addition to the abovelisted dramatic reduction in crime, the level and/or seriousness of criminal offences occurring during the same period (1994-2007) also reduced. That is, Police statistics reveal that the most serious offences against the person, including: murder; rape; grievous bodily harm; unlawful wounding; and the like, became less commonplace, and in the large part were replaced by offences such as common assault, public nuisance and/or graffiti.
8. It must again be reiterated that the achievement of this turnaround was not solely due to the Safe City Camera Network. As previously indicated, the Safe City Program operates under a written MOU between Council and Police. That document has provided for a close working relationship between Council and the Police Service over the last 20 years. Such an initiative has included the cohabitation of Police Officers in the Ipswich CBD Mall Police Beat Office with Council security and Safe City camera monitoring personnel. Such an arrangement is unique and is not known to have been replicated in any other Australia jurisdiction. The capacity building, engagement, speed of communication and close working relationship resulting from this arrangement has been invaluable.
9. It should be added that in an effort to fully support Police in their role in the community, Council has previously fully funded the Ipswich CBD Police Beat accommodation. In addition to this arrangement, Council has and continues to fund a motor vehicle for the Queensland Police Community Safety and Crime Prevention Liaison Officer, with whom Council has a close working relationship. In addition, Council has funded Police Trail Bikes, Rhino and related Segway

type vehicles at both Ipswich and Springfield as part of its ongoing partnership with the QPS.

10. The Safe City Program reports to and is administered by a sub-committee of Council's Health and Community Safety Committee, namely the Safe City Steering Committee. Regular meetings of this committee are attended by Councillors, Senior Council Managers, Police, Business Traders, and Indigenous and community Group representatives. The sub-committee discusses and actions a range of critical Community Safety issues, including: the need and location for placement of new CCTV infrastructure: the application of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED): graffiti prevention and removal projects; community education programs, eg. self-defence; indigenous relations and related community safety business items.
11. The Safe City Steering Committee presides over an annual budget of \$2.4million allocated by Council from its rate base to Crime Prevention and Community Safety outcomes. The sub-committee reports to the Chair of Council's Health Community Safety Committee, Councillor Andrew Antonioli.
12. These reporting arrangements are overlaid with additional tasks and resources, such as: Councils graffiti taskforce; school zone traffic taskforce; Local Accord with Hoteliers and Liquor licensing traders; and related public safety initiatives.
13. Ipswich City Council has for many years adopted a zero tolerance to graffiti. Council deploys fulltime personnel in the identification; recording of tags, location and removal of graffiti immediately it appears in any public space or on any public infrastructure. Graffiti hotspots are usually then monitored by camera and offenders are swiftly detained by Police and prosecuted. Sanctions by the courts usually involve the contribution by offenders to a term of hours in community service to clean up graffiti in public areas.
14. Council likewise contributes a significant budget to the maintenance and cleanliness of streets, sidewalks, public spaces, parks, gardens, reserves, and related places of recreation. Council's long held zero tolerance to rubbish and/or unacceptable amenity of public spaces across the LGA has been a major factor in building civic pride across the Ipswich community and changing the reputation of Ipswich to that of a modern, family orientated and safe community.
15. 2014 crime statistics recently released by the QPS identify the new and burgeoning growth areas of Springfield, Springfield Lakes, Augustine Heights and Redbank Plains as the new high crime corridor. Police statistics show that the older and more established suburbs close to the Ipswich CBD are experiencing fewer reported offences. In addition the increase in crime in Ipswich's new eastern satellite suburbs involve more serious offences such as house breaking and motor vehicle theft. Council notes and considers it no small coincidence that increased offending is occurring in these new areas

where the Safe City Program, and in particular the CCTV camera network does not yet enjoy full coverage.

16. During June 2014, Ipswich Council hosted Australia's first National CCTV Safe City Conference. This event was attended by 150 Local Government delegates from across Australia. The 3 day Conference canvassed a range of public safety and community initiatives arising out of CCTV infrastructure. One of the guest speakers, a Senior FBI Agent from Boston, US, and who worked on the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings highlighted that the breakthrough in the Boston Marathon bombings investigation was the CCTV footage of the offenders. The early identification and consequent manhunt, detention and arrest of the offenders (1 offender died in a gunfight with Police) was directly attributable to Boston Municipal Government CCTV. In addition, the FBI Agent identified public response, community resilience and a general feeling of public safety and security as being critical outcomes from early detection and arrest.
17. Ipswich City Council continues to promote and market its flagship Safe City Program to other Local Government Authorities across Australia. Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale is a passionate advocate of the Safe City Program, close working relationship between Council and Police, wide coverage CCTV and community safety projects which foster a general feeling in the community of safety and security.
18. Ipswich Council hereby submits to the Legal Affairs & Community Safety Committee that the Ipswich Safe City Program is a gold standard benchmark for all Queensland communities. It identifies funding, colligative working relationships with Police, community education and high tech infrastructure as the cornerstone for crime prevention and detection at the grass roots and community level. These features have not only been instrumental in changing the way that others view Ipswich, but have also been pervasive in promoting civic pride and preparedness by the Ipswich community to stand up to criminals and to report and fight crime.
19. Council's submission has focused largely upon crime prevention and detection strategies, including the Safe City Program which has an established and proven track record over the past 20 years. Notwithstanding that your committee has requested observations and or experiences in respect of the key social and economic contributors to crime, Council believes factors such as poverty, unemployment, a lack of education, and drugs are all well documented as the key socioeconomic drivers for crime. Local Government has limited capacity, jurisdiction and/or responsibility in respect of such elements, and accordingly the Ipswich Council submission has and remains focused on preventative and detection measures.
20. Council would be pleased to receive a delegation from the committee to inspect its CCTV monitoring room facility and/or any other community safety and crime prevention projects currently underway.

In closing, Ipswich City Council remains supportive of the work of your Committee and is ready and able to provide further advice and assistance as required. I trust that this submission is of assistance. Please feel free to contact me should you require further advice or information.

Yours sincerely



Christopher Watters

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SECURITY AND REGULATORY SERVICES