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**Crime Inquiry 2014
Submission 084**



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Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
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Dear Sir/Madam

INQUIRY ON STRATEGIES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN QUEENSLAND

Thank you for the opportunity and extension of time for Logan City Council to comment on strategies that prevent and reduce criminal activity within Queensland.

Please find enclosed Logan City Council's submission to this inquiry which address the terms of reference outlined by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

Should you require any further information please contact Jennifer Fredericks - Logan City Council Community Safety Planner on (07) 3412 4617 or jenniferfredericks@logan.qld.gov.au.

Yours faithfully

Jane Frawley
Community Services Manager
(on behalf of Chris Rose, Chief Executive Officer)

Response from Logan City Council

Ministerial statement: On May 22 2014, the Legislative Assembly referred an Inquiry on strategies to prevent and reduce criminal activity in Queensland to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for consideration.

Key social and economic contributors to crime

There is much research to support a strong correlation between identified criminogenic risk factors and the propensity of an individual to engage in criminal activity, both in adolescence and adulthood.

The socio-economic status of a city can have far-reaching impacts on behavioural and lifestyle choices made by residents. The SEIFA Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage provides an indication of the level of disadvantage of a specified location. Logan City has a higher level of disadvantage than most of surrounding cities (see Table 1).

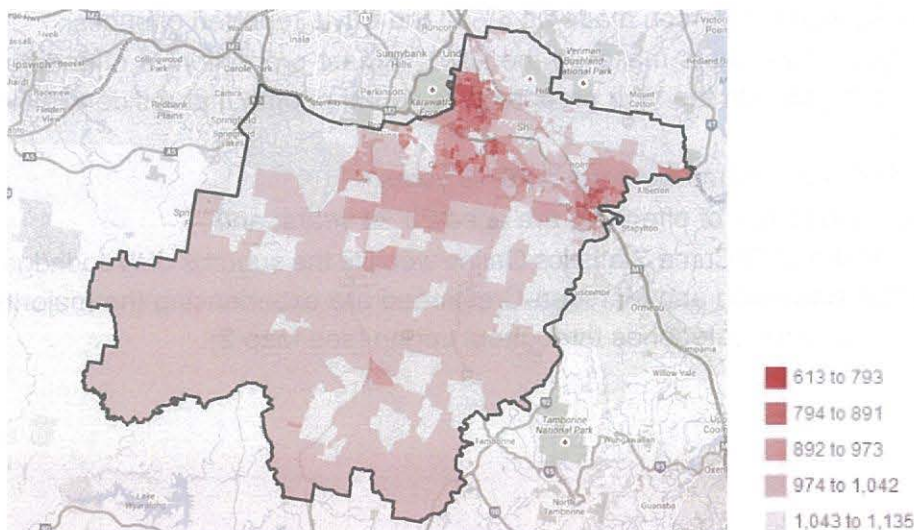
Table 1: SEIFA Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage for cities and regions in South East Queensland

Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage	
Local Government Areas in Queensland	
Local Government Area	2011 index
Lockyer Valley (R)	947.9
Ipswich (C)	966.3
Logan (C)	970.9
Scenic Rim (R)	989.2
Moreton Bay (R)	1004.1
Gold Coast (C)	1014.2
Redland (C)	1029.4
Brisbane (C)	1047.7

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011. Compiled and presented by profile.id by .id the population experts. <http://www.id.com.au>

When areas of high social disadvantage are closely grouped this can pose challenges for creating a homogenous community. The below map (Map 1) shows concentrations of areas experiencing moderate to extreme socio-economic disadvantage in Logan City. Areas which experience high levels of social disadvantage can also experience a higher crime rate than areas that are not as socio-economically disadvantaged.

Map 1: Thematic map of SEIFA Index of Relative Social Disadvantage



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id, the population experts.

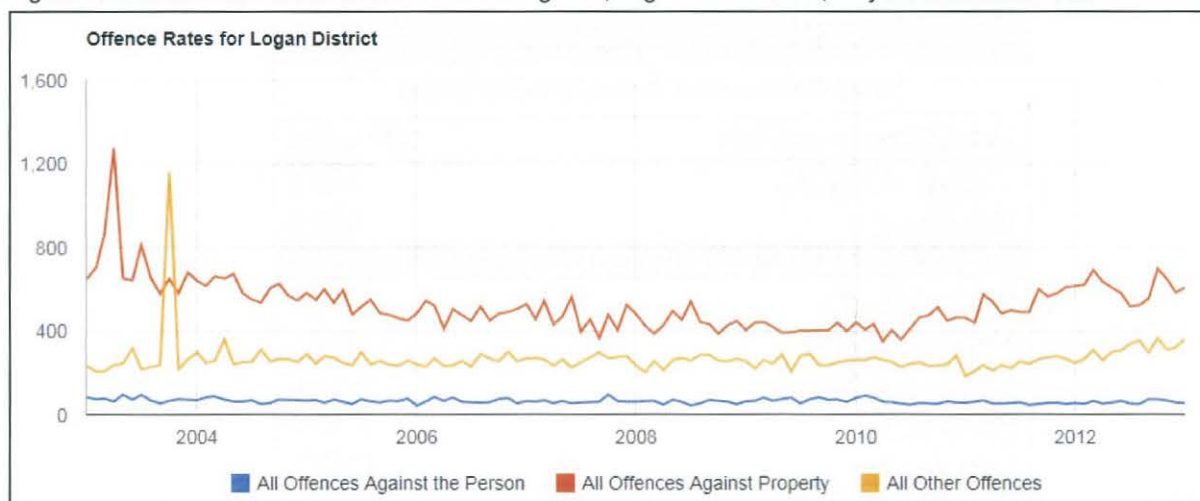
Observed trends and type of criminal activity occurring in your particular region

While Queensland Police Service (QPS) is the principal stakeholder for collection of crime statistics across Queensland, Council utilises these statistics to gain a better understanding of the changing patterns of crime in Logan City across time and geographic location.

Through the Safe City Advisory Committee which commenced in 2005, key representatives from QPS and Council have come together quarterly to formally discuss crime trends and patterns across Logan City. This committee has been instrumental in setting the agenda for crime prevention and community safety initiatives to address a broad spectrum of community safety related issues across the city.

Overall crime statistics for Logan City remain generally consistent with figures from across Queensland, although specific crime categories are higher than the state average across a ten (10) year comparison (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Offence Rates across the 3 offence categories, Logan QPS District, 10 year trend 2003 - 2013

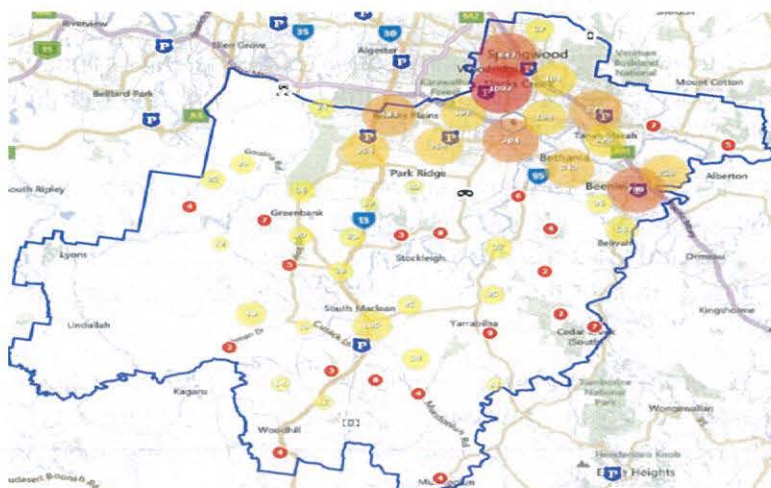


Source: Queensland Police Service Statistics (accessed 23 January 2014)

QPS statistics demonstrate that the three (3) primary crime categories for Logan City, being Unlawful Entry - Residential, Unlawful Use of Motor Vehicle and Serious Assault, have a high offence rate across much of south-east Queensland. QPS statistics indicate that in 2012 - 2013:

- The highest in volume of offences, accounting for 59.8% of all reported offences in the Logan region, were Offences Against Property;
- Offences Against the Person made up 6% of the City's reported offences;
- People aged 16-24 years make up the City's largest proportion of offenders and victims of crime. This aligns with the high proportion of young people that reside within the Logan City Council area;
- 40% of all offence victims were aged 10-19 years;
- The largest proportion of offenders are aged 20-24 years; and
- According to the QPS Crime Statistics Online website the suburbs of Woodridge-Slacks Creek-Springwood, Beenleigh and Marsden-Crestmead are experiencing the majority of crime over the three (3) offence categories throughout Logan (see Map 2).

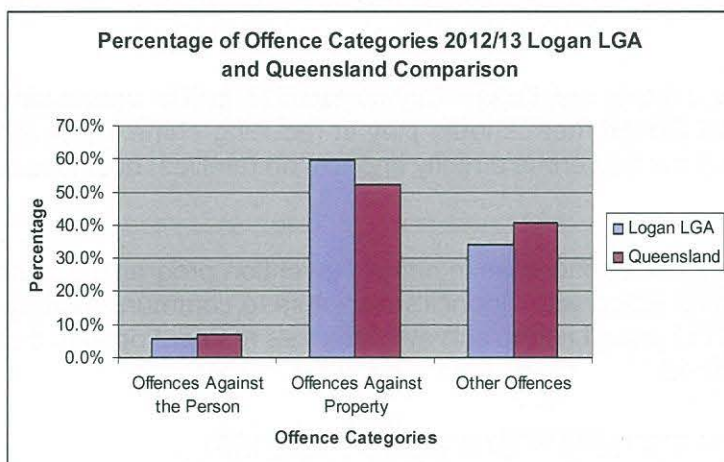
Map 2: Crime concentration for Logan Police District 2012 - 2013



Source: Queensland Police Service Statistics (accessed 23 January 2014)

When compared to the Queensland average, Logan City was higher in reported offences against property, while having a lower incidence of Offences Against the Person and Other Offences (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Offence category comparisons between Logan City and Queensland



Source: Queensland Police Service Statistics (accessed 23 January 2014)

The Logan Safety Camera Program has also been a valuable source of information relating to trends of criminal behaviour being identified in areas of Logan City that have Council-run Closed Circuit Television. Operating since 2001, this program has allowed Council to gather a wealth of information about crime and criminal activity in a number of defined areas of Logan City.

In over a decade of operation, the Logan Safety Camera Program has identified in excess of 6000 incidents. The majority of incidents identified by the Logan Safety Camera Program relate to lower order offences such as public drinking and intoxication and disorderly conduct. While these offences may not be considered to pose a grave threat to community safety, if left unchecked, these offences may escalate into more serious offences such as assault, robbery and wilful damage. Early detection and provision of evidence can lead to an enhanced police response to such issues.

Council receives complaints from residents relating to community safety concerns. Of these, most relate to safety concerns in the public realm including parks and laneways. Groups of young people congregating in parks after dark is a common complaint. Use of Local Laws to introduce curfews on parks that have ongoing issues with groups congregating after nightfall has been an effective intervention and since the introduction of Police Move On Powers complaints of this nature have reduced even further.

Impact of criminal activity on community, directly or indirectly, including social and economic impacts to families, businesses and the community

Safety is a precondition of health and wellbeing. Community safety influences all aspects of daily life; where people live, work, play and socialise. Factors including crime are strongly interrelated with other demographic factors such as education and employment.

It is important to note that community safety has many different definitions, in some cases meaning freedom from crime and violence while other definitions include freedom from fear of crime and violence not just from the act of crime and violence. Conventional definitions and categories of crime prevention are tied to the institution that deliver them (e.g. police, courts, prisons) and, as such, they are embedded in individual countries' ways of working.

Of the many functions that local government performs in modern societies such as Australia, crime prevention has arguably become a key activity in many cases. Local government provides an excellent platform for affecting change and is a suitable mechanism for fostering and maintaining partnerships with key agencies, both in government and in the community.

Logan City Council undertakes an annual resident survey to track importance and satisfaction that residents attribute to a range of council services and facilities. Results from the 2013 survey indicated that the provision of safety programming is of high importance to residents, as follows:

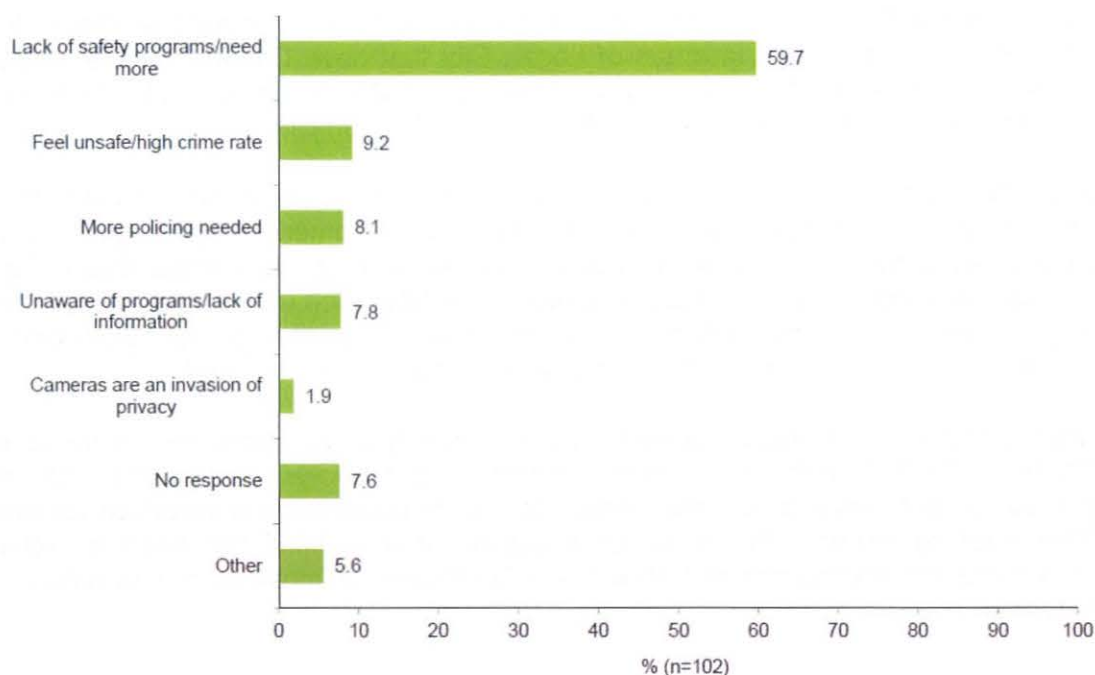
- Overall, in terms of importance, 'community safety programs' ranked 8th out of the 46 council services/facilities surveyed.
- Overall, in terms of satisfaction, 'community safety programs' was ranked 34th out of the 46 council services/facilities surveyed.

Results from these annual surveys provide a basis for Logan City Council to better understand community expectations of the role that Local Government should play in reducing crime. The high importance and low satisfaction rankings evidence that crime directly impacts on families, businesses and the community in Logan City.

Many residents commented that they believed that an increase in crime prevention programs across the city would correlate with an increase in satisfaction with Council's response to community safety. The below graph (Figure 3) taken from the 2013 Logan Listens survey evidences resident opinion that there is a lack of safety programs being delivered.

Figure 3: Resident reasons for low satisfaction with community safety programs in Logan City

Reasons for low satisfaction with community safety programs



Out of the 85 respondents who provided comment on this question:

- 34 comments related directly to provision of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) across the city;
- 24 comments related directly to safety (excluding CCTV);
- 11 comments related to crime related issues that are addressed by Queensland Police Service, including hooning, drugs and property crime; and
- 27 comments were unspecific as to whether they relate to safety programs or CCTV (e.g. need more, not enough in the area).

From these results it can be deduced that although only a small number (9.2%) of respondents felt unsafe, over half (59.7%) of respondents thought there was a lack of safety programs across the city.

As this same situation may be true across many local government areas in Queensland, it poses a number of questions that can be investigated more closely, such as:

- What is the community's current level of knowledge relating to community safety and crime prevention measures and programs currently in place?
- Is increasing programming guaranteed to result in a higher satisfaction level from residents?
- Would an increase in marketing and communication of existing programs and initiatives increase satisfaction without local governments having to increase resourcing to provide additional crime prevention initiatives?
- If programming is increased, what sort of programs would increase resident satisfaction?

In 2001, in response to concerns relating to safety raised by seniors, Council delivered the Safety for Seniors Project. This project saw in excess of 500 senior residents participate in interactive sessions aimed at educating seniors about the myths and facts of victimisation of seniors, protective behaviours and the benefits of being engaged in their community. Through these seminars it was identified that seniors who are actively involved in their community through groups or networks had less fear of crime. Those seniors who were not engaged in their community had heightened fear of crime and victimisation. From discussions at these sessions it became evident that many seniors who were not engaged in their community were isolated out of fear that by leaving their house they would become a victim of crime. This fear contributed to poor health outcomes including depression. Once seniors were encouraged to come to a Safety for Seniors session they became more aware of misconceptions of victimisation of elderly people and learnt valuable strategies for enhancing personal safety when they did leave their house.

This seemingly simple project provided invaluable insights into the psyche of seniors and how the fear of crime can negatively affect many elements of their life including health, economic and enjoyment. Without targeted strategies to educate residents, visitors and business owners of strategies to keep person and property safe, perceptions of crime and unsafety will continue to be perpetuated.

At present Council has not undertaken any formal evaluation of the impact that crime has on attracting new business and retaining existing businesses to Logan City. Anecdotal evidence suggests that businesses certainly feel the effects of crime in the city, especially acts of wilful damage such as vandalism and graffiti, which costs business owners to rectify. In 2012 Griffith University held a 'Crime in Logan' forum to engage the business community in understanding causes of crime, effects of crime and responses to crime. In excess of 100 members of the Logan business community attended the forum and feedback received suggested it was well received. A presentation on Youth Justice Conferencing provided the business community with little-known information on the referral and conferencing process.

Crime committed anywhere has the power to isolate whole communities, creating a sense of entrenched victimisation and disempowering those who live, work and recreate in such areas. A number of high profile crime related events in Logan City have evidenced this. A single criminal act by an individual or group can create untold damage to fragile relations in the community, taking months, if not years to repair.

The murder of an indigenous man in 2008, street, violence between two cultures in 2012 and the murder of a pregnant woman in 2013 are examples of a single act that can have long-lasting impacts on a whole city. It is only as a result sustained work with different communities that the damage done

through acts of crime and violence are repaired and communities can heal and positively move forward.

Perhaps the only positive outcome from such acts is a sense of community outrage that reinforces societal norms and a sense of community togetherness, where new connections are forged that last well after the events of such crimes are forgotten.

Interactions with Queensland Police Service

Local government can be a catalyst for change and a vehicle for the establishment of partnership with other key agencies. Through its role in local planning, environmental management, economic development, urban design and community service provision, local government is close to the community and influences many of the things that matter to determining how people live.

Council has a strong and integrated partnership with the Queensland Police Service, working closely together on a range of initiatives and programs to prevent crime and enhance community safety.

The success of the partnership between Logan City Council and Logan District Queensland Police Service has led to sharing of resources and intelligence to enable enhanced community safety outcomes across a broad range of areas.

Logan City Council and Logan District QPS have aligned their key priorities by identifying key issues for the partnership. These shared priorities offer a 'road map' guiding the direction of community safety initiatives across the city, ensuring a collaborative approach to achieving positive outcomes for the community.

Through the Safe City Advisory Committee, Council and Police oversee over 30 crime prevention initiatives across Logan City, targeting a broad range of community safety considerations including:

- Wilful damage (graffiti vandalism);
- Volatile Substance Misuse (chroming);
- Drug offences;
- Traffic offences such as hooning;
- Armed robbery of commercial premises;
- Vehicle security and theft;
- Personal safety;
- Neurodiversity; and
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.

Logan City Council and Queensland Police Service have a Memorandum of Understanding relating specifically to the Logan Safety Camera Program. This level of formality has ensured that high levels of collaboration and information sharing have continued over the 13 years that the program has been operational. Many excellent community safety and crime prevention outcomes have been achieved through Logan Safety Camera Program and interactions between the two (2) agencies has been overwhelmingly positive.

In the wake of critical incidents such as the largest death toll in Queensland for a residential house fire or the murder of a pregnant young female, Council and QPS have worked closely from the outset to provide a united message and a coordinate response to the media and the community. This assisted in the community recovery process and delivered actions and outcomes that Council alone could not achieve.

It is widely acknowledged that many crime and safety issues can be addressed effectively by creating and sustaining interactive partnerships with groups, organisations and other government agencies. By working together, council and police create a multi-tiered legitimacy for community safety and crime prevention across the city.

Council strongly supports an ongoing partnership, both through formal committees and the MOU and informal avenues, with QPS in order to identify and address crime and disorder across Logan City.

As a result of an incident of street violence between residents of two (2) different cultures Logan City Council hosted the Logan: City of Choice Summit, bringing together thousands of residents,

representatives from all three (3) tiers of government as well as strong representation from the not-for-profit sector.

Through the Logan: City of Choice Summit five (5) key themes for creating a harmonious and productive city were identified, being:

- Education;
- Employment;
- Housing;
- Safety; and
- Social Infrastructure.

These themes, as well as transport and cultural diversity, were identified as instrumental in improving connectivity, social cohesion and place-based decision making. *The Logan: City of Choice Two Year Action Plan 2013 -2015* has provided a structured framework for addressing the most crucial needs in Logan City to create not only a liveable city, but a city where people chose to live.

It would have been simple to look at the catalyst event for the summit as just an isolated act of violence and nothing more. One simplistic option would have been to address this issue as a law enforcement issues and disregard some of the fundamental underlying causes of such eruptions of public violence and disharmony. Logan City, however, decided to harness the wealth of resources and ideas present in the city to create lasting change and address the systems underlying causes of such events.

Queensland Police have been a key stakeholder in the Logan: City of Choice Initiative from the outset. Without the support of the city's peak crime prevention and enforcement agency, some of the action items may not be achievable. The positive connection between Council and Police has created pathway for other agencies, both government and non-government, to connect and work together towards one defined goal. Initiatives that have arisen from the Logan: City of Choice Initiative, such as the Weeks of Action, have assisted in creating positive interactions between community, council and police.

The Logan Safety Camera Program has been a resounding success in enhancing perceptions and realities of safety in Logan City. While Council owns, maintains and runs the program, QPS have been key stakeholders in the program since its inception in 2001. The support that QPS has provided to this program has resulted in addressing a wide variety of chronic and transient crime issues across Logan City, including volatile substance misuse and public intoxication, as well as providing a timely response resulting in the de-escalation of potentially volatile situations and the prompt apprehension of offenders.

Logan District QPS regularly request deployment of Council's mobile safety camera devices for a range of crime prevention and community safety reasons, including hooning, beat activity, and in response to critical incidents. This partnership has allowed QPS to process offenders of transient crime while allowing Council to provide a timely and effective response to crime and safety concerns across the whole of Logan City, not just areas with permanent safety cameras.