



S S R O C

southern sydney regional
organisation of councils

astbury cc,
centenary,
hurstville
langrads
marwickville
northmead
northside
northwest
northwest shire
northwest
northwest

2 August 2002

The Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

RECEIVED
5 AUG 2002

To Whom It May Concern:

BY: *G. E. Gould*

Re: Inquiry into Crime in the Community: victims, offenders, and fear of crime

The Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the House of Representatives' Inquiry into Crime in the Community: victims, offenders, and fear of crime.

I would like to draw the Committee's attention to the following:

- SSROC would be happy to appear before the Committee at a public hearing.
- We would be happy to provide any additional information to support the points raised in our submission
- Member councils of SSROC may also be making individual submissions to the Inquiry.

You can contact me on 02 9330 6455 if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Melissa Gibbs
Executive Director

Suite 4C, Hurstville House
34 MacMahon Street
Hurstville

PO Box 536
Hurstville NSW 1481

Ph: 02 9330 6455
Fx: 02 9330 6456
Email: ssroc@ssroc.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.ssroc.nsw.gov.au

1. INTRODUCTION

SSROC is a voluntary association of the 11 local councils of the Southern Sydney region established in 1986. Its aim is to achieve sustainable solutions to the challenges facing the southern Sydney region through the sharing of resources, cooperation in policy development and regional advocacy.

Councils represented are:

- Botany Bay City
- Canterbury City
- Hurstville City
- Kogarah
- Marrickville
- Randwick City
- Rockdale City
- South Sydney City
- Sutherland Shire
- Waverley
- Woollahra

Together these eleven councils represent more than one million people.

1.2 Composition and Role of SSROC

Two voting delegates (usually the Mayor and Deputy Mayor) represent member Councils on the SSROC board.

SSROC has a committee structure to facilitate elected councillor input to the regional program. Three Standing Committees make recommendation to the quarterly board meetings. These committees cover:

- Administration and Community Development
- Planning and Environmental Issues
- Transportation Policy

SSROC's day-to-day work is undertaken by a three-person secretariat, which at times is supported by project staff engaged using grant funding or additional council contributions.

Professional groupings of council officers work with the secretariat to develop and implement SSROC policies and programs. These groups cover the broad spectrum of council activities, and include: community services, environmental management, asset management, public works, supply management, road safety, transport planning, land use planning, and general management.

SSROC's work program is structured to respond to priorities identified and agreed by the members. It includes regional initiatives that contribute to SSROC's aim of improving the social, environmental, economic and other quality of life opportunities in the region. Program outcomes include regional agreements, policies, guidelines etc. Activities are funded by member council contributions and grant funding.

2. RESPONDING TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

In relation to the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry, SSROC's submission addresses:

- *point (e) strategies to support victims and reduce crime*, with emphasis placed on strategies used by councils in the SSROC region to reduce crime, and;
- *point (h) community safety and policing*, with emphasis here again placed on community safety initiatives in the SSROC region.

3. CHANGING ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Local Government Acts of the early 20th Century reflected a 'minimalist' view of local government, generally limiting its role to a narrow 'roads, rates and rubbish' framework. The picture began to change after the Second World War with the general expansion of government activity through the fifties, sixties and seventies. Central governments saw local Councils as a handy means to implement diverse policies, and required or encouraged them to do more through legislation.

With the advent of statutory, strategic planning and development control as a principal, Local Government function became heightened through community awareness of the significance of local government decisions, particularly during a period of increasing concern about environmental and social issues.

As an important democratic institution with a very broad role in representing and meeting the needs of its constituents, the community now expects local government to be the means by which local priorities and concerns are addressed, even if the issues involved are not fully or even partly the responsibility of councils. It is now widely agreed that as people have become wary or worried about the impacts on their lives of globalisation and the like, they have focussed more on the need for supportive, secure local communities. Central governments often appear remote and disconnected, and local government has increasingly been regarded as the vehicle by which communities can address their concerns - whether they be about jobs, quality of the environment, loss of local services or crime.

Thus councils have been drawn ever deeper into economic development, pollution control, environmental repair, social support, community safety, telecommunications and other areas previously handled more or less exclusively by the Commonwealth and States. Additionally, local government is expected to be

the principal advocate for local communities, representing their views to other spheres of government.

Community safety and the fear of crime are key issues for all spheres of government and the community at large. As the sphere of government closest to the people, and with its role as a planner and manager of the public domain, local government has etched out a role for itself in seeking to establish safe, secure communities – ensuring both the physical safety and general well-being of constituents.

3. SSROC'S ROLE IN COMMUNITY SAFETY

3.1 Community Safety Forum

As part of its regional development function, SSROC clearly has a role to assist member councils to promote safer communities. In order to more fully clarify SSROC's role and that of local government in community safety, SSROC convened a community safety forum in March 2001 for Mayors, councillors and senior council staff.

The forum:

- explored some of the broad policy principles associated with community safety
- discussed local government's role in community safety; and
- considered some of the emerging trends and best practice examples of local government action.

Communique

Following considering of the issues, the forum issued a communique which sets out SSROC's role in community safety.

COMMUNIQUE

The Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) will encourage its 12 member Councils to make their communities safer by:

- Adopting a whole of Council approach to community safety which involves Councillors, the General Manager and senior staff.
- Incorporating community safety strategies into strategic planning processes, including the Management Plan.
- Providing a budget for new community safety initiatives.
- Creating crime resistant communities by providing social supports, creating social bonds and encouraging participation in community life.
- Including Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles in development application and Council planning processes.
- Reviewing existing policies, procedures and services to ensure community safety strategies are implemented and integrated across the range of Council functions.
- Working with other Councils on community safety initiatives (e.g. employing a community safety worker) to coordinate initiatives.
- Working in partnership with the community on community safety initiatives.
- Developing a local community safety / crime prevention plan which includes both social and environmental strategies.
- Striving to repair damage caused to Council property by vandalism and graffiti within 24 – 48 hours.
- Lobbying other levels of Government for appropriate resources and programs to address safety in the community.

3.2 Profile of Council Activities

As part of the planning for the Community Safety Forum, SSROC invited member councils to list their current community safety initiatives. Councils were also invited to comment on how SSROC could complement their programs. This provided the region with a snapshot of the range of community safety programs initiated by local government in the southern Sydney region at the time.

Subsequently, member councils have updated this profile to ensure the Committee has an accurate picture of council initiatives. The profile demonstrates that councils are involved in a range of safety initiatives, from initiatives targeting particular groups (women, young people, the gay and lesbian community, the elderly) right through to the conduct of safety audits and establishing statutory planning documents to create safer public spaces. The profile is at attachment 1.

4. CONCLUSION

Local government clearly has an important role in creating safer communities through its community development, land use planning, civic leadership and advocacy functions. Local Government's involvement has evolved over the years in the main without the allocation of adequate funding and resources. This is a situation that the Committee should consider addressing in its deliberations.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Profile of council community safety initiatives in southern Sydney
2. SSROC Annual Report

BOTANY BAY CITY COUNCIL

Council's Community Safety Initiatives

- Report to Council on *safety of women*.
- Member *Botany Community Safety Committee*.
- Participated in NSW Police Service *Community Care Register for Older People Pilot Program*.
- Member of the *Eastern Suburbs Domestic Violence Committee*.
- Purchased *video and kit* – Safe Women Project “Plan it Safe – a guide for making public places safer for women”.
- *Improved street lighting* on Botany Road through commercial strip at Mascot and Botany.
- *Donated 40 portable personal alarms* to elderly isolated people (clients of the Home and Community Care program).
- *Donated 40 smoke alarms* to elderly isolated people (clients of HACC program).
- *Subsidises the cost of smoke alarms and personal alarms* to older isolated residents.
- Held a *safety seminar for older men and women* in areas of personal safety and safety within the home ie. home security, opening the door to strangers and safety when carrying hand bag or using automatic teller machines etc.

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

Council's Community Safety Initiatives

- *Community Safety Plan* incorporated with Council's Social Plan, with a comprehensive Community Safety Policy & Action Plans integrated in our Management Plan. Successfully implemented 90% of strategies in the 1999/2000 Action Plan.
- Program coordinated by Council's *Community Protection Committee* with police and community representatives. The Committee operates as a Council advisory committee.
- Recently produced a *Development Control Plan* incorporating Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles. This is managed through a formal Police-Council Protocol on the involvement of Police Local Area Commands in assessing relevant Development applications.
- Established a protocol on dealing with *noise abatement* complaints.
- Instigated a *Youth Crime Prevention Program* for Canterbury-Bankstown, includes appointment a Youth Crime Prevention Officer and development of a comprehensive Action Plan for the next two years. Attracted Casino funding for youth violence prevention project. With funding from NSW Government conducted Community Guides Project.
- Conduct *youth holiday and after school activities* following significantly increased Council funding for staff and program resources. Implementing Graffiti Solutions project.
- Undertaken three comprehensive *safety audits* in Belmore, Campsie and Punchbowl. Provided \$25,000 to implement audit recommendations. Initiated a program to conduct three more in 2000/2001, with a further \$25,000 allocated for implementation.
- Conducted *consultations* with youth, seniors and local women's support and domestic violence agencies – each resulting in action plans implemented with the community.
- Funded the provision of specific *police equipment* and resources including video editing to rapidly apprehend offenders and transport assistance for community safety programs.
- Developed *community information programs* including safety expos, safety seminars for business and seniors and information brochures on crime issues in community languages. Provided access to associated community safety sites off Council's Home Page. Developed resources for DV Officers and community information networks.
- Successful advocacy for improved police powers to deal with *street offences* through effective use of "No Loitering" signs, including police and Council guidelines on their use. Joint publicity and regular liaison about police operations.
- Undertaken *car park audits*. Worked with major shopping centres, successfully attracting private funding to improve lighting and other security features in multi-storey car parks.

HURSTVILLE CITY COUNCIL

Council's Community Safety Initiatives

- Adoption and implementation of *Development Control Plan* incorporating Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, to be managed through the involvement of Police Local Area Commands in assessing relevant development applications.
- *Community Safety Audits* conducted in Hurstville CBD and other locations with Hurstville Police, residents, Neighbourhood Watch, etc. Audit identified safety concerns, "hot spots", and possible strategies. Further work is required to develop priority strategies.
- Establishment of *Hurstville Community Safety Committee* to address community safety concerns. Community safety action plan under development to address safety concerns.
- Inclusion of community safety and design principles in the *Hurstville Town Centre DCP* and inclusion as part of the social assessment process for DAs.
- Joint *pilot Graffiti Solutions* project with Rockdale Council funded by Premier's Office. Hurstville's project involved establishing a legal wall and the assessment of the economic and social impacts of the wall. This was compared with the strategies undertaken by Rockdale. A final evaluation report was submitted to Premier's. The project resulted in graffiti vandalism management strategies for identified parks in Hurstville, with strategies jointly developed by local committees comprising residents living adjacent to the parks, councillors, Police, Council community youth worker and Parks Manager. Resources allocated to implement strategies to improve safety and amenity of parks and to reduce vandalism.
- Ongoing community murals and *Beat Graffiti project*.
- Investigations of use and effectiveness of *graffiti blaster to remove graffiti*.
- *Consultations held with young people* in relation to access to and use of public space.
- Conduct of staff and councillor *training on youth justice conferencing*.
- Consultations with seniors groups, Chinese community and community organisations if regard to crime issues.

KOGARAH COUNCIL

Council's Community Safety Initiatives

- Initiating community safety audits in the Kogarah Town Centre in co-operation with the Kogarah Local Area Command Community Safety Committee.
- Community Safety Strategy developed and in the process of being implemented.
- Development of Safer by Design DCP. Officers from St George Local Area Command involved in assessment of relevant Development Applications.
- Council is in the process of implementing a number of strategies to reduce graffiti, for example, rapid removal of graffiti, community art projects.
- Provision of community grants to groups working with domestic violence and youth development programs.

MARRICKVILLE COUNCIL

Council's Community Safety Initiatives

- Community Safety Officer position established and currently drafting the Community Safety Plan
- establishment of Safety in Marrickville Committee which includes senior representatives from the Departments of Housing, Health, Education and the Police.
- establishment of the Marrickville Youth and Safety Working Group, a sub-committee of the Safety in Marrickville Committee who are developing a strategic plan as part of the development of Council's Community Safety Plan
- establishment of the Marrickville Drug Working Group, another sub-committee of the Safety in Marrickville Committee also developing a plan as part of Council's Community Safety Plan
- preparation of a new draft Development Control Plan (D.C.P.) no. 38 and the amendment of existing D.C.P.s to incorporate CPTED principles
- developing a protocol between Council and the Police for referral of certain types of development relevant to community safety
- safety audits conducted in Petersham, Newtown, Dulwich Hill, Enmore and Marrickville
- implementing the "Belonging" initiative, a series of events and activities which aim to explore social capital in the area
- implementation of early intervention / developmental approaches to community safety such as the Stronger Families Program which includes support and education for fathers, young parents and sole parents and the Transition to Schools Program which aims to provide linkages to "feeder" schools targeting children who have no pre-school or childcare experience

RANDWICK CITY COUNCIL

Council's Community Safety Initiatives

- Member of the *Eastern Suburbs Liquor Accord*.
- *Donated a Community Bus* to the Accord and from Thursday to Sunday pm (after midnight) free transport is available to people with circular route drop off points.
- Established a *Hotline for community safety issues* to be reported. People are advised to contact the police as well.
- Member of the *Interdepartmental liaison committee* which is attended by all the key agencies to consider community safety issues in the southern area of the LGA.
- Member of the *Eastern Suburbs Domestic Violence Committee*.
- Declaration of *Alcohol Free Zones* in areas where there have been problems connected with consumption of alcohol.
- Employment of a *Falls Prevention Officer* for 12 months (Jan-Dec 1999).
- Project conducted *home safety audits, training and identification of street safety issues*.
- Review of lighting in parks & reserves adjacent to late night trading premises (this followed the attacks on women in Coogee).
- *New Years Eve*. Each year we assist the Police, and work on a local committee to ensure NYE at Coogee & Maroubra is a safe event for everyone.
- Recently adopted a *no glass (to go with no alcohol) policy* for our beaches.

Council's Community Safety Initiatives

- *Community Safety and Crime Prevention Committee* formed in February 2001 to investigate crime and safety issues and report back to Council with suggested strategies.
- *Protocol* signed with police regarding advice on crime prevention through environmental design on specific development applications.
- Representation on Police-sponsored *community safety committee* and involvement in a program of *safety audits*.
- Appointment of a *community development officer* with focus on youth.
- Support for local community-based groups and organisations dealing with crime and safety issues.
- *Joint graffiti solutions project* with Hurstville. The Rockdale component documented the extent of graffiti according to the type of land use and the elements of successful graffiti prevention strategies.
- *Successful lobbying* of State Government to pass legislation to give Police the power to deal with car hoons.
- Implementing *safety by design principles* in some Council car parks.
- Declaration of *Alcohol Free Zones* in areas where there have been problems with offensive behaviour arising from the consumption of alcohol.
- Sponsorship of *community safety vehicle* for local Police.
- *Community Safety Forum* held in April 2000.
- Project to investigate and address the *safety concerns of older people and women* Under consideration.
- Safety by design DCP.

Council's Community Safety Initiatives

- *Woolloomooloo Crime Prevention and Safety Initiative.*
- *Kings Cross Place Management Project (with Premier's Office).*
- *Various safety audits in problem areas.*
- *Support for local community-based groups and organisations dealing with crime and safety issues.*
- *Advocacy/lobbying on policing issues.*
- *Employ a Sex Industry Liaison Officer.*

SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

Council's Community Safety Initiatives

- *Crime Prevention Plan* developed (by Lisa Simone).
- Just employed a *Crime Prevention Community Development Worker* (Jenny Mansfield).
- *Crime Prevention Committee* for 8 years.
- *Beach Property Minding service* established North Cronulla, 2000-2001 second year of operation.
- Undertaken approximately 8 *safety audits*, still in process of implementing recommendations, including significant funding to address issues in Engadine and Menai. Substantial funding to address safety concerns in land-locked recreation reserve.
- Sponsored *crime prevention car* for policy community safety officer.
- Employment of *Community Law Enforcement Officers*, which has led to significant sensitive contact with local young people at youth entertainment events and at skate ramps, effectively managing public areas.
- *Community Safety Forum* held on Cronulla, August 2000.
- *Youth events at Cronulla* in response to recent community concerns about safety in the area.
- Assisted in the development and ongoing administration of the *Sutherland Shire Liquor Accord*.
- Provides comments and advice regarding *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* Issues on D.A.s
- Commenced program of ensuring review of DCPs include Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- Funding and support to the Summer Survival project, to train peer educators in general safety issues, in addition to safe sex.
- One Life One Chance Bus - to assist younger patrons of licensed premises to get home safely. Bus route has been extended to most parts of the Shire.
- Development of Protocol between the NSW Police Service and Council on the assessment of DA's which may have an impact on Community Safety.

- Creation of two Outreach Youth Worker positions which visit public spaces in Friday and Saturday nights to liaise with youth who may be involved in underage drinking or use of illicit drugs.
- Held a Women's Festival alongside Stop Domestic Violence Day and Purple Ribbon Month is an annual event to raise awareness of Child protection issues
- Council sponsors Domestic Violence workers at the local court and has recently gained funding after a one year pilot project for a Child Support Worker to work with children from relationships with domestic violence.
- Commenced an evaluation and research project for CCTV cameras in Cronulla including baseline research and literature search. Report will be followed up one year after installation of CCTV system to assess impact on both actual and perceived crime rates.
- Baseline research and background data for a proposed CCTV system at Menai - includes impact of lighting on fear of crime as a key component.
- Formed the Greater Menai Anti-Graffiti Working party to develop and pilot graffiti prevention strategies and policies which can be extended throughout the shire.
- Hold monthly Safety and Security meetings with businesses and licensed premises in the Cronulla area to examine safety issues particular to that area (high tourist area).

WAVERLEY COUNCIL

Council's Community Safety Initiatives

- 1990-1991 - piloted the first *Community Crime Prevention* project in NSW (in Association with Fairfield Council).
- 1992 - developed the first *Development Control Plan* in NSW, which related specifically to Crime Prevention through Design (CPTED). This followed local consultation and drew on international research. (DCP 9 Community Crime Prevention).
- 1993 - seminars conducted on *Designing out Crime- Designing in People*.
- 1993-1994 - *Responsible Serving of Alcohol Project*. This involved the Department of Health, the Roads and Traffic Authority and voluntary participation of local licensed premises. The model of responsible serving practices piloted in Waverley achieved statewide application several years later.
- 1995 - *Community Crime Prevention Policy* developed.
- Ongoing *community safety workshops* for older people.
- 1998 - Development Control Plan 9 was superseded by the updated *DCP9 Reducing Crime Through Design*.
- 1996 - *Bondi Beach Community Safety Action Plan* developed and \$150,000 accessed from the State Government to implement the plan and ensure safety at the Christmas/New Year celebrations at Bondi. This approach, developed as a result of joint efforts by the police, Council, the community and State government, is a model for management of such events. Annual management of these events with community consultation is ongoing.
- Ongoing provision of *community grants and community worker support* to groups working with domestic violence, centre based and outreach youth programs and OOSH services. Employ a part time Community Worker specifically targeting youth programs with input, for example, into strategies to prevent graffiti.
- Provide a *direct Family Support program*, which targets children at risk and works with local Child Protection and Domestic Violence Committees.
- 1998-99 - involved with Charles Sturt University in a *comparative study* of fear of crime at Bondi and Marrickville.
- 2000 - *Community Safety Expo* for older people as part of Seniors Week celebrations.

WOOLLAHRA COUNCIL

Council's Community Safety Initiatives

- *Woollahra Community Safety Council (CSC) active since July 1998.*
- *Specialist Taskforces active under the CSC (Graffiti, Personal [women's & seniors], Youth and Little Paddington Taskforces).*
- *Woollahra Community Safety & Crime Prevention Plan being developed through 2001 (will include investigation of a CPTED DCP).*
- *Community Safety Expo held in Nov 2000 (incl Police, Fire, Emergency Services, Neighbourhood Watch, NRMA, Locksmiths, Self Defence and others).*
- *Seniors and Women's Safety public meeting & consultation held in February 2001.*
- *Youth PartySafe registration project developed and initiated with local Police, PartySafe promotional material developed and distributed through 2000.*
- *Partnership with local religious groups and Drug Arm to create Point Zero Youth Van for use at local 'hotspots'.*
- *Produced and distributing car tidy bags with printed safety tips.*
- *Worked with and lobbied public transport agencies for improved maintenance and environmental changes to make Edgecliff Bus/Rail Interchange a safer environment after safety audits completed.*
- *Contributing to a local survey on Youth Safety issues with Point Zero and local Police.*
- *Have completed and developing future youth aerosol arts projects.*
- *Established formal liaison with public agencies owning property in Woollahra to develop an understanding on rapid graffiti removal.*
- *Partysafe Fridge Magnets.*
- *Graffiti Reduction Brochure.*