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INQUIRY INTO CRIME IN THE COMMUNITY;
VICTIMS, OFFENDERS, AND FEAR OF CRIME
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There is fear in the general community regarding the possibility of becoming a victim of crime, and this fear emanates from the inability of being able to do anything about it. Consequently we witness houses barricaded with expensive security screens, doors, locks, and alarms. As the sun goes down the inhabitants withdraw inside, securely locking all doors and windows, and remain there until daylight.

Why is this? Because he knows that if his home is violated, then he is on his own, Human Nature such as it is, no one will come to his aid. Police response times are ludicrous so he cannot expect any immediate help from them. In fact we are all urged in the interest of self-preservation to do nothing and just let it happen.

Some of the reasons for this siege mentality is man's belief that his home is his castle and as such is sacrosanct and offers security.

If we assume that in the above scenario a:-

Break-in occurs (By an)

Armed Intruder/s (who inflicts)

Bodily Harm (on the householder)

Sexual Assault (on members of his family)

Malicious Damage to Property (and)

Stealing (causing)

Extreme fear and apprehension to all subjected to this attack.

The Judiciary does not have one crime to consider, but several individual crimes, each warranting some form of punishment.

The victim will be urged to pursue the case, which under our present system will lump all the offences together and the offender will walk away with a Community Service sentence of no consequence, and laugh his way out of Court. This occurs because the focus of attention is directed to the well-being of the offender, and ignores the victim.

The victim now feels totally vulnerable to reprisal on an ongoing basis, and in a percentage of cases will up and move from the neighbourhood as a last resort.

Is this one of the reasons why older Australians according to research, are the alleged least victimised group, because they do not report crime for fear of reprisal and the lack of concern shown by the Police

There is a great need for an intensive review of the relationship between violence and what our young people see at the Cinemas, Videos, Computer Games, and the most influential source which is our marathon viewing of Television in the home. I believe they have great difficulty in differentiating between fact and fiction.

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One strategy to support victims and hopefully reduce crime is a self-help community watch. If when something is happening, instead of watching from behind curtains (very little goes on that is not witnessed by a number of unseen neighbours) that the immediate community switch on every light and all come to the front door. This constitutes people power and would be daunting to a would be criminal

Community Safety and Policing The greatest deterrent to crime is a strong visual Police Force day and night, but it needs to be a community Police Force at ease with the community. Not some aloof organisation that most people will only come into contact with as an Offender or Victim.

There is too much emphasis on revenue raising at the expense of combating crime. It is of no consequence to say that the percentage increases in 3.7 are acceptable, because at that rate in a very short space of time it will have increased a hundredfold. We have to find an alternative to the mis-use of large numbers of Police involved in revenue raising duties. Surely these Officers did not join the Force to hide behind trees with radar guns when they should be fighting crime and patrolling the community to give people confidence that we do indeed have a Police Force.

Effectiveness of Sentencing . This is an area that causes a great deal of concern and disappointment to the general Public, and amusement to the Offenders.

What is a Sentence? It is a period of compulsory work or incarceration imposed by the Court of Law after due consideration of all the facts

What is the aim of the Sentence . Initially it is an attempt by Society to try and deter the offender from committing further crimes. For a repeat offender it is a means of removing him from the community for a set period with hopes of rehabilitation.

We, as the Public, witness gross inconsistencies by Judges and Magistrates in dispensing justice in various cases. We need to remember that the Judiciary is not infallible and mistakes occur, not that they would ever admit. etc .

Overall the sentence should fit the crime, and in the old adage justice should not only be done but should also be seen to be done.

Perhaps there is a need for legislation to impose mandatory sentencing for some crimes particularly where physical violence is inflicted.

To summarise:-

C.D.F. A Community self-help neighbourhood watch with involvement

Let us not forget the victim who has been brutalised in his own home while watching his family being attacked , and his property destroyed or stolen. He surely requires our assistance with Health Attention, Counselling, Compensation, and regular contact from the Police as a Community Service of reassurance that he is not on his own.

G. and H. A Review of Sentencing with a view to imposing mandatory sentences for some crimes, especially where violence is involved.

Guidelines for consistency in sentencing and a Board of Review on inappropriate sentencing

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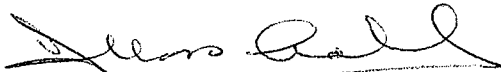
Review of Police activities

Visual Policing day and night

Withdraw Police from revenue raising duties to combat crime

Consider a Special Constabulary to take over revenue raising duties

A personal observation on the effects of visual policing. One Police car driving along the highway at the speed limit has more effect on Motorist behaviour than Cameras or Radar Guns.



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