



WESTERN AUSTRALIA POLICE

**OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF POLICE**

POLICE HEADQUARTERS  
6TH FLOOR

2 ADELAIDE TERRACE, EAST PERTH  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6004  
TELEPHONE : (08) 9222 1256  
FACSIMILE : (08) 9222 1717

Your Ref: 0136410FV001  
Our Ref: Detective Senior Sergeant Lindsay Garratt  
Inquiries: 08 9428 1557 [lindsay.garratt@police.wa.gov.au](mailto:lindsay.garratt@police.wa.gov.au)

Mr Jerome Brown  
A/G Committee Secretary  
Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety  
R1-109 Parliament House  
PO Box 6021  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Brown

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON CYBER-SAFETY – INQUIRY INTO CYBER-SAFETY**

Due to the re-establishment and continuation of the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety – Inquiry into Cyber-Safety, Western Australia Police has been invited to provide a submission in relation to the following newly inserted term of reference:

- (a) *That a Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety be appointed to inquire into and report on:*
- viii. the merit of establishing an Online Ombudsman to investigate, advocate and act on cyber-safety issues.*

As is regularly stated, the internet has broken down traditional physical or imaginary boundaries between jurisdictions, both nationally and internationally. This brings many challenges to law enforcement agencies which have traditionally been built around these boundaries and dealing with the physical world. Central to these challenges is the fragmentation of agencies across Australia that have within their charter some aspect of addressing cyber-safety. This is further compounded by fragmentation within agencies.

In Western Australia the fragmentation issue has partially been addressed. However, there is considerable scope for further reduction. For example, the Online Child Exploitation Squad of the Western Australia Police and the Child Protection Team of the Australian Federal Police are co-located and work closely on investigations and intelligence sharing. However, within Western Australia Police there is a separation of responsibilities between the Online Child Exploitation Squad and the Computer Crime Squad who also investigate online matters.

Advocating and the education of young people, teachers and parents on cyber-safety issues is also fragmented. For example, the Australian Communication and Media Authority operates the Cybersafety Outreach Program and CyberSmart Program while the Australian Federal Police, in conjunction with Microsoft, delivers the ThinkUKnow Program.

Within Western Australia Police, the Office of Crime Prevention is exploring the role of crime prevention officers in cyber-safety, while the Online Child Exploitation Squad has retreated from cyber-safety presentations due to operational requirements. The reporting of online offences/matters is also fragmented with the Australian Communication and Media Authority, Australian Federal Police, and the Crime Squad receiving reports. Similarly, the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy recently announced the "CyberSafety Help" button which encompasses a reporting and educational function.

Of concern is the duplication of some functions while there may be gaps in services offered by existing agencies. This is obvious with the disparity between the State police agencies' approach to investigating online offences. For example, based on heads of population, Queensland, through Taskforce Argos, is significantly resourced compared with New South Wales, while other jurisdictions do not have an area that contributes to the investigation of online offences.

Related closely to the issue of fragmentation is the technological advance outstripping law enforcement agencies' ability to adequately resource areas of investigation. For example, often quoted Moore's Law ("The number of transistors and resistors on a chip doubles every 18 months") suggests the capacity of digital storage devices doubles every year and computational power (performance) doubles every 18 months (Joshy Rice – Microsoft). This issue creates a major challenge for law enforcement agencies.

Therefore, there is an argument for a centralised agency within Australia at a national level, with broad powers to investigate, advocate and act on cyber-safety issues, and this question is certainly worthy of further inquiry and exploration.

I trust that this additional information I have provided will be of further assistance to your Committee.

Yours sincerely

 KARL O'CALLAGHAN APM  
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

 January 2011