

SUBMISSION TO EDUCATION AND HEALTH STANDING COMMITTEE REGARDING DAMPIER PENINSULA

This report outlines a response, specific to the Dampier Peninsula, to the Education and Health Standing Committee Inquiry into the adequacy and appropriateness of prevention and treatment services for alcohol and illicit drug problems in Western Australia.

I am a Brevet Senior Sergeant and the Officer in Charge of the DPMFPF (Dampier Peninsula Multi Functional Police Facility) and have been so since 24th August 2009. Previous to that I was the Officer in Charge of Oombulgurri Police Station, I served 12 months in that position. I have also served as a police officer at Halls Creek, Broome, Balgo MFPF, Fitzroy Crossing to mention a few.

DAMPIER PENINSULA BACKGROUND

The Dampier Peninsula MFPF was officially opened on the 9th February 2007. The facility is in line with the outcomes of the Gordon Report and all other MFPF's throughout the State Of Western Australia.

At the facility which is situated on the corner of Lombadina Road and Broome Cape Leveque Road are three police officers and one DCP (Department Of Child Protection) Officer. Police cover a 24/7 service to the peninsula.

Prior to the MFPP opening all police and DCP duties here on the Peninsula were conducted from Broome. On the Dampier Peninsula police cover just under 100,000 square kilometres. In this area there are four major communities:

Lombadina Community (approx 90 people)	3 kilometres from police complex
Djarindjin Community (approx 300 people)	3 kilometres from police complex
Ardyaloon Community (approx 400 people)	25 kilometres from police complex
Beagle Bay Community (approx 400 people)	85 kilometres from police complex

Further to this there are also approx fifty five outstations on the Peninsula, these are scattered all through the Peninsula resident numbers ranging from one to twenty people in each. Latest figures show that there can be up to 1500 to 2000 people living on the Peninsula on any one day.

INFRASTRUCTURE

There are three medical facilities on the Peninsula one at Beagle Bay, one at Lombadina/Djarindjin and one at Ardyaloon. Three schools are also located here one at Beagle Bay, one at Lombadina and one at Ardyaloon.

Beagle Bay is approx 110 kilometres from Broome, a further 85 kilometres from Beagle Bay is the Lombadina/Djarindjin communities and a further 25 kilometres is the community of Ardyaloon or One Arm Point as otherwise known.

I have not been able to produce any figures on tourism but there is a huge influx of people who drive up to the peninsula each year more between the dry season months of May to November. The road surface from the Broome Highway turnoff is made of both bitumen and pindan surfaces. The road comprises of 95 kilometres of pindan and 110 kilometres of bitumen.

MAIN ISSUES FROM A POLICING PROSPECTIVE

As the officer in charge of the police station in my 11 months here I have identified the major issues on the peninsula.

Domestic Violence:

Although domestic violence is one area in which we have issues with, since my time as officer in charge our offences have declined due to a no tolerance on domestic violence and working closer with offenders and strategic partners.

Antisocial Behaviour

Antisocial behaviour is also declining as a result of police conducting activities with local people. Police and the LDAG (Local Drug Action Group) regularly provide film nights, camps, discos and other activities with local children, youth and adults.

Drug/Substance Use

Last year our drug offences rose on the peninsula by over 200% due to police performing more day/night traffic stops on the highway. I expect the figures will decline dramatically this year due to proactive and reactive measures taken by us. The main drug of choice on the peninsula is cannabis. I have noticed a major decline already in cannabis use by local people on the peninsula. Since my time here there has only been 2 reports of solvent/petrol sniffing, one at Beagle Bay and one at Djarindjin. The instance at Beagle Bay was by way of sniffing aerosol canisters and the second one was petrol sniffing. These two occasions were dealt with swiftly by police, DCP, and other govt partners as well as NGO's.

Alcohol

Alcohol abuse is and will continue to be a problem on the peninsula. All communities do not have alcohol restrictions. Although Djarindjin Community applied in May to have a section 175 imposed this application was not granted by the minister. As the officer in charge of the police station I would fully support liquor restrictions on the peninsula. Although I have not been officially informed I have had information that the road between Broome and the peninsula will be fully sealed next year. This in itself will cause more alcohol to be readily available to local people. Although 'sly grogging' has not been an issue in the past I believe there is more of a chance of this taking place if and when the road is sealed.

Driving Offence

Before the DPMFPF was opened a large amount of residence on the peninsula did not hold a current WA motor drivers license. I am currently working with community leaders and the DPI (Department Of Planning And Infrastructure) to assist more people in obtaining their licenses. Also with the help of other key stakeholders this is becoming more achievable.

Juvenile Boredom

Youth boredom is one issue which we are targeting. Myself and my officers are working extra hours to conduct activities with the youth to steer them away from the court system. On the previous school holidays there were no offences committed by the youth here due to proactive police measures. As stated above police conduct extra activities to communities.

Some other issues worth raising that affect the peninsula would be;

- No high School facilities available
- Mental Health worker/s not being available on the peninsula
- Not enough visitation by drug and alcohol workers
- Not enough employment opportunities
- Poor housing and overcrowding in most communities

- There are no safe houses/refuges available here

CONCLUSION

Dampier Peninsula Police in partnership with all community leaders and strategic partners are committed to making Dampier Peninsula a safer place for the Bardi Jawi people to live. We work very closely with the local DCP officer and between all of the NGO's on the peninsula. Myself and my officers work between 45 and 55 hours per week striving to achieve positive outcomes. Since the start of my duties here I have instigated an interagency group that meets once a month. All chairpersons of the communities attend as well as the DCP officer. These meetings have proved beneficial in strengthening partnerships and building stronger communities.

Forwarded for your information

NV RIPP

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OIC Dampier Peninsula MFPP