

The Principal Research Officer
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee
Legislative Assembly Committee Office
Harvest Tce., PERTH

Dear Madam

My submission into: Inquiry into methods of evaluating WA police performance.

Of the many times in my life whereby I have approached a police officer to communicate to him/her a possible and potential crime (or perception of a crime) that is nearby but not yet committed, that officer has usually said to me..."Has a crime been committed?"

If my answer is ..."No...but it looks like it's about to happen"...then I am sent off with a ..."Sorry, but we cannot do anything about that until the actual perpetrator does something that breaks the law".

This is not to say that the officer has become disinterested in the problem, just that no formal action can occur until the crime actually occurs. And it usually does. And thereby the arm of the law swings into action. All good....until you stop to analyse the logistics involved in waiting for something to happen as opposed to preventing that actual end game occurring.

The officer who takes action based on the perceived nature of a crime about to happen, should be allowed to follow through on that action and take it to its logical conclusion, without undue recourse, but with perhaps some oversight.

The evaluation of that (potentially) preventative action should be interwoven into the fabric of the police officers performance just as any statistic such as "apprehension" would be.

I can see certain preventative "campaigns" happening in the community, but if an officer on "the beat" lays outside of those campaigns, then his/her recourse to action is limited. Or at least that is the perception of the wider community.

My submission is that their performance indicators (either as individuals or as a group) should be freed up to reflect the wider community expectations that officers of the law can act in a preventative actionable way, that ultimately benefits the community. These preventative measures should be written into their performance appraisals and be given a weighting score that allows them to be continuously thinking about that sort of action in their ongoing professional life.

I sincerely believe that if the whole of the many, many police officer individuals were thinking along those lines, and be allowed to do so (indeed be encouraged to do so) then the logistics of policing the community would be more favourable.

The legislative enabling of police through an "Act of Parliament" must in some way communicate to the police force that the rigorous policing of the said Act, can in some way allow them to act preventatively.

Sincerely

Colin SCOTT

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