



Petition No 54 – Carnarvon and Gascoyne Region – Recommend a review of the judiciary to evaluate criminal sentencing and delivery of justice to the community.

More than 1100 Carnarvon residents signed this Petition in ten days because of their concern and disillusionment with the current sentencing and delivery of justice. The matters referred to in this Petition have not been taken to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (Ombudsman) or any similar body.

Residents (both Aboriginal and European) are on edge and frightened to the point of leaving Carnarvon.

Reasonable peace loving people will only take a certain amount of duress before being forced to take action by themselves. Already a peaceful resident of the town is being charged by police for defending his domestic residence against seven intruders in the dark of night fearing for his safety. This was not the first attack upon his property.

Given the demographics of the Gascoyne region comprising of various ethnicities (Vietnamese and other South Asian, Italians, Portuguese, Yugoslavs, etc) it is only a matter of time before this scenario escalates into something more serious e.g. where the intruder or the victim is killed.

Simplistically, the current generation of underage single mothers being financially rewarded for indulging in statutory rape is leading to a generation of orphans. This is compounded by removing the Elders and grandparents from the community because of the lack of Aged Care facilities in Carnarvon.

Inadequate services and facilities contribute to a lack of delivery to those in need. Remote decision making consequent to nearly all government agencies being managed under the umbrella of “Mid-West and Gascoyne” has resulted in a disconnect between local action and consequence.

It is apparent to our community that the focus of policing licence and vehicle checks (along with breath testing) is easier than the “red tape” of apprehending an intruder upon private property and following through the administrative and judicial system to gain a conviction.

This perception is underscored when inadequate punishment or sentencing/fines are given to offenders by the courts. It appears that the current justice system is ignoring the problem and helping offenders to continue robbing commercial and private dwellings and associated damage.

Regrettably, if the justice system does not meet community expectations in handing down reasonable consequences and appropriate restitution, then the community will be forced to take matters into their own hands. Consequently, vigilante groups will develop to deal with this local problem.

When the farmer’s flock of sheep is threatened by a dingo, you trap the dingo rather than lock up the sheep!

R Baunt