



MINISTER FOR POLICE; ROAD SAFETY; DEFENCE INDUSTRY; VETERANS ISSUES

Our Ref: 70-32216
Your Ref: Petition 047

Hon Peter Foster MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Legislative Council Committee Office
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

By email: env@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr Foster

Thank you for your correspondence of 12 May 2022 in relation to Petition No. 047 – Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Across the Kimberley which was referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs.

The Western Australia Police Force advise the factors for juvenile offending and anti-social behaviours in the Kimberley are complex though may be attributed to disadvantage, disfunction, trauma and substance abuse. With the larger communities of Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and Kununurra experiencing high incidences of juvenile offending and anti-social behaviours, as result of excessive liquor consumption and juvenile high-harm offenders returning from periods of detention, with an escalation in their behaviour.

In February 2022. Operation Bignell targeted anti-social behaviour and crime in Derby, including any contravention of the *Liquor Control Act 1988* facilitating alcohol-related harm. The operation enhanced local efforts to minimise the harm of alcohol on vulnerable communities. The multi-phase operation targeting licensed premises/liquor stores, liquor restricted premises, 'sly grogging', carriage limits and public drinking areas.

Operation Regional Shield commenced on 15 February 2022 as the continued immediate response to juvenile crime in the Kimberley. The ongoing operation focuses on early intervention to identify at-risk street present young people and targeting high-harm offenders. Operation Regional Shield has realised success in terms of crime reduction.

Further, between September 2021 and February 2022, Operations Clay and Operation Heat Shield 3 were conducted to provide additional police resources across

the Kimberley to target outstanding high-harm offenders and reduce crime. The result of these operations show success with a decrease in reported crime.

As you may be aware, a Juvenile Facility in the Kimberley was announced by the State Government in the 2022-23 State Budget as part of a \$40.4 million commitment to the Kimberley Youth and Community Justice. As the Department of Justice are the lead in the initiative, I have forwarded a copy of your correspondence to the Attorney General for consideration and any appropriate response.

In order to continue the excellent work of police officers, the State Government has committed to additional police officers and resources to ensure police can protect the community of Western Australia from crime and emerging issues. The WA Police Force advise the police officers stationed in the Kimberley reside in their communities.

As the matter of funding for State Houses falls within the responsibilities of the Department of Communities, I have forwarded a copy of your correspondence to the Minister for Housing for consideration and any appropriate response.

I am advised interactions between police and juveniles occur on a daily basis, either with general police on patrol, Youth Policing Officers or Community Liaison Officers. The WA Police Force maintain engagement with District's high-harm offenders ensuring compliance with relevant bail conditions and court-imposed orders.

Though the Department of Education and Department of Communities are the lead agencies in relation to school and pathways to employment, the WA Police Force advises; Youth Policing teams are actively involved in social and community events/activities to help reduce youth offending, improve community relationships and trust with police. Further, the WA Police Force advises their collaboration with external agencies such as Department of Communities and Department of Education is vital to provide a holistic approach to diversion of youth from crime, which includes police officers actively engaging in localised school programs to provide educational initiatives in relation to personal and cyber safety.

I am advised local police continue to engage with the families to provide support and guidance with structure within the home in collaboration with Child Protection and Family Services where possible. As of 27 May 2022, over 1,000 at-risk street present young people have been engaged by local police with formalised referrals to Child Protection and Family Support with those at greater risk.

The WA Police Force continue to use a number of public awareness strategies, inclusive of social media, to provide community reassurance while providing useful targeted advice to reduce opportunistic spree offending.

To divert juveniles from engaging in criminal activity, the WA Police Force is working alongside State and Federal Government and non-government organisations. Which includes:

- Kimberley Heads of Agency (Child Safety Directors Group).

- with the purpose to assist with cross government collaboration and coordination in service delivery to remote Aboriginal communities.
- Kimberley District Leadership Group.
 - Led by the Department of Communities, which meets quarterly to develop and implement strategies to improve the health and wellbeing for all communities in the Kimberley.

At-risk juveniles identified by involved agencies, including through Operation Regional Shield, are triaged through a multi-agency working group to identify the appropriate intervention. This includes diversion to local programs including Young Persons at Risk (10-14 years), Children at Risk (under 10 years) and Target 120. The appropriate multi-agency case management and wrap-around services are provided to direct young people to positive outcomes.

I will continue to work with the Commissioner of Police to address issues of concern to the Aboriginal and Kimberley communities.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



HON PAUL PAPALIA CSC MLA
MINISTER FOR POLICE

16 JUN 2022