QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

QP 0125
01/06
Δ16

Occurrence #:

Statement no.: 1 Date: 26/07/2022

Statement of

Name of witness: **REILLY, Emma Jane**

Date of birth: Age: Occupation: **Police Officer**

Police officer taking statement

Name: **REILLY, Emma Jane**

Rank: **Acting Inspector** Reg. no.: [redacted]

Region/Command/Division: **Ipswich District** Station: **Metro Patrol Group**

Statement:

I, Emma Jane Reilly of [redacted] state that:

Background and experience

1. I am currently an Acting Inspector in the Queensland Police Service working as the Metro Patrol Inspector in the Ipswich District. I was inducted into the Queensland Police Service on 29 July 2001 and the second time 26 August 2013.

2. I have a varied background in the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and have worked in specialist areas including Surveillance and Intelligence, Education and Training, corporate roles as well as general duties around the state of Queensland. I have also worked for two other law enforcement agencies within Australia, being the Crime and Corruption Commission of Western Australia and the Australian Crime Commission. I have over 21 years' experience in law enforcement.

3. From August 2017 to April 2020, I was the Officer in Charge (OIC) of Mornington Island Police Station, a discrete First Nations Community in the Gulf of Carpentaria. I lived and worked in the community during this time.

Introduction to culture and community

4. The importance of living and working within a First Nations community cannot be understated. The relationships that are formed within the community are extremely important and assist in the everyday running of a station and keeping the community safe.

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5. The Police Liaison Officers (PLO) role within community is vitally important to assist in developing trust and understanding between members and the community. On Mornington Island there are three PLO's. One attached to the station and two attached to the PCYC who have a focus on the youth within the community.

6. Throughout my time on Mornington Island the staffing capacity changed many times from full capacity to critically low. The model was for 10 general duties members, however at times we ran with 12. When we were 12 was when rostering and the ability to work with the community particularly in the prevention space was most productive. Mornington Island also had 2 plain clothes members, 1 PCYC Sergeant and an administrative officer.

7. The induction of new staff to community is vital and whilst I was the OIC of Mornington Island I implemented the following:

   - Welcome email to new officers prior to moving to community. This would include nuances to the community, housekeeping and also a list of cultural awareness training that was required to be completed within a few weeks of arrival.

   - OIC induction of new officer arriving. This type of induction is something an officer would receive at any station or unit within the QPS.

   - 4 hour Specific Cultural training run by the Mornington Island Council. This occurred once or twice a month, so depending on timings a new officer would have that training within a week or at the latest a month after arrival. This was a community organised cultural awareness program specifically for new persons working and living in the community. The cost of the program was paid for by our District Office at the time.

   - Police Liaison Officer (PLO) induction. New officers spent a day of cultural training with the PLO who would then take them to traditional areas, explain cultural protocols, traditional owners and introductions to elders and stakeholders.

   - The new members would also be rostered with the more experienced officers for at least the first couple of weeks within the community.

   - When new staff would arrive, the station would also have a welcome BBQ at the front of the station so stakeholders and community members could meet with the new police.

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8. The forming of relationships and trust within First Nations communities takes time and having this specific orientation for community is vital to jump start these relationships. This training was not mandatory within the QPS at that time, however whilst I was OIC it was mandatory.

9. Community engagement through Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC), Adopt a Cop, Junior Police program and Cricket with the cops program played a major part in building relationships with the community. Members and members family were also involved in the Community Football Team which helped to form trust.

QPS DFV Approach on Mornington Island

10. Domestic Violence Meetings were implemented weekly which included all relevant stakeholders such as Community Justice Group, Mission Australia (which includes Women's Safety House), Save the Children, Gigee Healing, QLD Health Psych, Probation and Parole and Northwest Remote Health. These meetings discussed DV incidents within the week prior and a review of the incidents that were currently still being managed. A summary would be sent out to all stakeholders prior to the meeting. In these meetings the nominated Sgt with the Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) portfolio would attend and the S/C DVLO would also attend when the Sgt could not for consistency.

11. DV was taken very seriously, and all incidents would be reviewed daily by the S/C DVLO, Sgts and as the Senior Sergeant I would audit on a monthly basis.

Challenges for QPS in rural and remote communities

12. Having the right people work in discrete communities is a must. Some people including police are not suited to this type of work, which hinders the relationships within the community and leads to higher sick leave and short staffing. In my opinion members should undergo further psychiatric testing prior to accepting a position within discrete communities. The age of the member is not important, more the attitude and resilience of the member.

13. There are challenges within any community to overcome, and Mornington Island is no different. In my time within community, I found the following:

    - Recruitment and retention of staff to remote community is a constant battle with the remote nature of the island and isolation playing a part in this, which leads to fatigue of members that are on Island and increases the chance of burn out.

    - Community organisations and stakeholders that provide services to the community, majority of the time were inadequate due to the recruitment and retention of their staff. This has a follow-o[redacted]als

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for support by police were not actioned. Whilst OIC on Mornington Island every aggrieved and respondent was referred through the Police Referral system for assistance. I can only recall one female aggrieved being assisted to leave the Island with her children by Ben Allen from Mission Australia. Ben lived and worked on the Island.

- Lack of housing plays a part in recruitment and retention.

- When Police become involved in the lives of community members, it is usually because an incident has occurred. Mornington Island police are the only 24-hour organisation and many incidents that should and could be dealt with in the prevention space by other non-government organisations are often left up to police due to the lack of services on the Island. In my opinion if there were more available services provided to the community then many incidents would not occur due to intervention and support.

- Poor health and alcohol fuelled violence.

- Limited housing within the community causing over-crowding.

- Domestic Violence Education within the community.

- Challenges at times investigating Domestic Violence due to intoxication and the ability to being able to gain valuable evidence. Reluctance of witnesses to provide statements.

- Comprehension of orders. I can clearly remember a respondent walking beside me out of court as he was in our custody. Once out of court he said, "Miss I don't understand that". This is after the fact he had just told the Magistrate that he understood.

- On Mornington Island I did not encounter language issues as the majority of the community speak English. Members of the community can be intimidated by the court process and it could be very overwhelming for them as they don't understand the process.

- Legal services provided on the Island were very limited and members of the community would either see their legal representative on the day of court or talk to them over the phone whilst in custody. Like any stakeholder and government department in the community, relationships with members of the community is what builds trust. In my opinion talking to a community member for one day and/or over the phone does not build that trust.

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- Because government organisations for example Department of Housing and Department of Child Safety were on the Island infrequently follow up would happen months later, most of the time this would be too late.

First Nations and Multicultural Affairs Unit (FNMAU)

14. Between Mach 2022 and June 2022 I have also completed approximately two months relieving as Acting Inspector in charge of the First Nations Portfolio within the First Nations and Multicultural Affairs Unit (FNMAU) on an expression of interest. I applied for this role due to my experience working in remote First Nations communities.

15. FNMAU purpose is to create a culturally inclusive, culturally responsive and culturally capable QPS, achieved through engagement internally and externally with stakeholders, leaders and partner agencies. On the First Nations portfolio we also focus on engagement and building relationships in the 19 discrete communities throughout Queensland through our 15 discrete community Police Stations.

16. Whilst in the FNMAU my focus was cultural training within the QPS. Currently in collaboration with People Capability Command (PCAP) an education plan is being established with the first stage a two-day face to face within the recruit training program. We also focused on the updating of the Community specific profiles for each discrete first nations community which also involved a video project with Woorabinda being the trial location. This project is in collaboration with Media and Public Affairs group and in consultation with community members and stakeholders. These profiles are designed to provide community specific information to QPS employees who go to work in these communities. The videos will assist members to be able to visualise and put into context the content of the profiles. Once completed the following discrete communities will have updated profiles and video.

- QC0764_02 Bamaga
- QC0769_02 Hope Vale
- QC0770_02 Kowanyama
- QC0771_02 Mapoon
- QC0772_02 Lockhart River
- QC0773_02 Napranum
- QC0778_02 Pormpuraaw
- QC0779_02 Wujal Wujal
- QC0782_02 Yarrabah
- QC0872_02 Aurukun
- QC0873_02 Palm Island
- QC0871_02 Woorabinda
- QC0780_02 Cherbourg
- QC0874_02 Doomadgee
- QC0875_02 Mornington Island

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17. There are some challenges since the FNMAU was established in November 2020, with a temporary staffing model which leads to lack of consistency and stability within the unit. Relationship building which is key to the success of the unit is only achieved through consistency of engagement and investment and this is stalled through positions being temporary.

18. When at the unit, I was the third Inspector in the First Nations Portfolio and I had two temporary Acting Superintendents in that short period of time. This instability makes it extremely difficult to drive the cultural capability of the QPS forward and creates a level of uncertainty within the unit itself.

19. A permanent staffing model would assist in the stability of the Unit and allow for progression of cultural capability within the QPS. In my view, an increase to staffing numbers in the recruitment and policy areas would also be of benefit.

Justices Act 1886

I acknowledge by virtue of section 110A(6C)(c) of the *Justices Act 1886* that:

(1) This written statement by me dated **26/07/2022 and contained in the pages numbered** 1 to 6 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and

(2) I make this statement knowing that I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false

[redacted] Signature

Signed at Yamanto (place) this 27th (day) day of July (month), 2022 (year)

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