QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

QP 0125A 05/22 AV

Occurrence #: _____

Statement no.: _____ Date: _____

Statement of

Name of witness: **RAPSON Katrina**

Date of birth: [redacted] Age: [redacted] Occupation: **Senior Police Liaison Officer**

Police officer taking statement

Name: _____

Rank: _____ Reg. no.: _____

Region/Command/Division: Station: **Normanton Police Station**

Statement:

Katrina RAPSON:

Current role and previous history with the Queensland Police Service

1. My full and correct name is Katrina Mellisa RAPSON. I am a Kurtijar woman from the Normanton Region. I am a Senior Police Liaison Officer ("SPLO") at the Normanton Police Station, Queensland Police Service ("QPS"). I commenced that new role on 3 December 2018. I commenced as a Police Liaison Officer ("PLO") with the QPS on 29 September 2014.
2. I was previously employed as an Indigenous Sports and Recreational Officer at the Normanton PCYC. I have previously been employed as CDEP Online Support Officer at Bynoe Community Advancement Corporation Society and Trainee Administration at Pasminco Century Mine Lawn Hill.
3. I have a Certificate II in Community Engagement and a Certificate III in Police Liaison.
4. I was born in Normanton. My cultural heritage extends to Tagalaka people in or around the Croydon area. My mother is a Kurtijar women from Normanton Country. I also have traditional links to the South Sea Island people. I am a Kurtijar women as it is our mob way that you follow the tribal traditions of your mother.

Observations and experience as a Police Liaison Officer

5. In my role as a PLO and SPLO, I have observed a number of issues within my community, specifically relating to the offences that members within my community commit. These offences typically include sieges, domestic violence, assaults, break and enters and car theft.
6. I have also observed good and bad examples of policing within Normanton community. In my 8 years of policing, I have had three different OIC's at Normanton Station. My good experiences are OIC's who are involved with

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(Witness's signature) (Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/ Commissioner for Declarations' signature) (Signature of police officer preparing statement)

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the community and want to assist with not only policing but also problems around schooling and other issues. I am unable to discuss some of the other issues with poor policing practices as it is subject to civil litigation before the courts, but they involved workplace bullying and racism.

7. I have learnt about the law and I try and minimise barriers within my community of Normanton. I often form good relationships and friendships with police that are stationed at Normanton. This has allowed me to see what they need to do as a result of being a police officer which is often misunderstood by community members. I encourage police to participate in community events and I often try to instigate contact between police and community members. I also try to encourage community members to interact with the police and form positive relationships. I often utilise sport as a tool for interaction between the groups.

How were you recruited?

8. I was employed at the Normanton Police Citizens Youth Club ("PCYC") from 2010 – 2014 which was regularly attended by Senior Sergeant Duane Amos and Sergeant Matthew Rowe from the Normanton Police Station. They were happy with the way I delivered programs to the youths within my community and they both actively recruited me for the PLO position at Normanton.

Training – prior to the role and ongoing

9. I attended at the Oxley Police Academy in Brisbane for a period of two weeks. As part of that training, I undertook a Certificate II in Community Engagement and a Certificate III in Police Liaison which led me to successfully attain the level of SPLO. I also maintain competencies through On-line learning products ("OLP").
10. It was necessary for me to complete 200 points to progress from PLO to Senior PLO. I then completed a further 100 points to progress to my final pay point. I recall Domestic Violence and Out of Control Events were some of them.
11. I have also attended training in relation to Mental Health. The training was conducted by Centrecare Family Centre. I approached my current OIC, and I was allowed to complete the training during work hours due to the possible benefits to my community and police.

Experience and understanding of role of PLO

12. In my experience, community members look at you differently once you wear the blue uniform. This can be in both a negative and positive way.
13. I was recently involved in a DV incident where a young girl was threatening people with a large knife. During that incident police wrestled the girl disarming her without injury to any persons. During that incident the offender said the words "You think you're white but you're black like me'. I perceived this as being negative. Mostly my interactions within my community are positive.

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Attending call outs

14. I do not attend call outs

Involvement in DFV matters

15. I do not attend any DFV matters as they are occurring; however, I am often called upon by the Normanton police officers in relation to questions they may have about family relationships within the community, or any concerns they have about housing issues and connections within the community generally. I regularly provide background information about family connections within the community so that the police have a better understanding of the relationships (both generally and specifically) so that members who may otherwise not have any contact are not forced to have contact, as an example.
16. I am also called upon by officers about what I know about what is happening in the community which may inform them about community safety generally.
17. I am also consulted by police when there are members who are not from my community are victims or even offenders, who have been placed in Normanton and I assist those persons in finding accommodation and with any other needs that they may have.
18. I have previously been called upon to liaise with family in community and Croydon. This related to family disputes. I did this in order to educate them about what they were doing. This prevented continued fighting and possible police actions.

Shift work – rostering

19. In Normanton, a PLO is on the roster to work weekdays between 8am and 4pm. I sometimes work special events when community members from outside of Normanton attend. I am also aware that we have had other PLOs attend in Normanton to assist with those community and special events.

Challenges for you as a SPLO

20. One of the biggest challenges I have is when I attempt to engage with or initiate agencies to assist in relation to DFV and petty crime. I will expand on this by saying that the agencies are in town, but their responsibilities and roles are not clear and often overlapping. I am not sure whether these organisations are upholding what they are supposed to do and perhaps they could support each other more.

What assists with improving police relationships with the community?

21. Each community is unique, so I can only speak for my experience in Normanton.
22. In my experience, Normanton police are proactive within the community, in that they participate in social events and things like street parades and major

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community events, including the fishing competition, the rodeo, the Christmas parade, ANZAC Day and the Normanton Stingers cluster carnival as well as school events, the Elders' program, NAIDOC week and more.

23. The Normanton Police also sponsor some of those events including the fishing competition, the Elders' program, the goose club raffles and sponsor prizes and awards for community competitions.

What hinders police relationships within the community?

24. The Normanton Police have a good relationship with the Normanton community.
25. When a community member has committed an offence and arrested, sometimes the community will not correct the offender of their wrongdoing and will do everything in their power to blame the law instead.
26. In relation to DFV, it is common for indigenous partners to believe that if their partner is not assaulting them, then they do not love them. A lot of problems are caused by 'jealousing.' Jealousing is the word used instead of jealousy. In a small community when a relationship breaks down it is often the case that people will see their previous partner in a new relationship which causes jealousing. Jealousing can lead to violence and DV.
27. These beliefs are not shared by external communities and this creates a conflict when the laws are enforced. This conflict between community and legislation leads to conflict between community and police. Community subject to DV legislation often place the blame with police for acting when the victim does not want the action taken.

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Katrina Mellisa Rapson

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 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 4 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

_____ Signature

Signed at **Normanton** (place) this **18** (day) day of **July** (month), **2022** (year)

[redacted]

(Witness's signature) | (Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/ Commissioner for Declarations' signature) | (Signature of police officer preparing statement)