QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

QP 0125A
05/22
A3

Occurrence #: _____

Statement no.: _____ Date: _____

Statement of

Name of witness: **BATEMAN Laurie**

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

Police officer taking statement

Name: _____

Rank: _____ Reg. no.: **4036064**

Region/Command/Division: Station: **Charleville Station**

Statement:

Laurie Bateman states:

Background

1. I was sworn into the Queensland Police Service (QPS) in September 2019.
2. Prior to being sworn in, I was previously a Police Liaison Officer (PLO) at Cunnamulla for 4 years (2015- 2018).
3. I enjoyed the role of PLO and saw the opportunity to join the QPS as a sworn officer as a chance to learn more and help a wider range of people. I have a passion for helping young people. This has come from working as a sheep shearer and trainer for over 25 years and prompted me to look for opportunities to work with communities, especially youth.
4. I attended the Townsville Academy as part of the Indigenous Recruit Preparation Program (IRPP). My first year was six months at Mundingburra station, then Charters Towers for the second six months. I was confirmed to Cunnamulla in 2020, were I performed general duties.
5. I transferred to Charleville in October 2021, and I currently perform the duties of the District Crime and Prevention Coordinator (DCPC) at the rank of Acting Senior Constable at Charleville police station.

Observations and experiences as a PLO

6. A PLO role is a community engagement role to address any concerns from the community and to educate the police of the diversity amongst First Nation communities. If a police liaison officer's role is done effectively it can create confidence within the community for healthy relationships between police and community. The training for the PLO course I

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completed was a two-week introduction course to prepare a police liaison officer for their role, with not a lot of training available after that initial course.

7. I believe that if we give people the tools, they will go forward and improve themselves and community. It does not matter what role they are performing, training and education are paramount, but it needs to be tailored to match needs of community. A single package to fit everyone will not work.

8. I believe ongoing training for QPS staff in relation to whatever ethnic group dominates your community is prevalent to understanding cultural beliefs and traditions, and to communicate effectively to those peoples.

Observations and experiences – Cunnamulla and Charleville

9. In both Cunnamulla and Charleville I have seen a healthy relationship between police and community. But it needs to be understood that this relationship is a working relationship, by that I mean it needs constant work to keep it healthy. Sometimes this can hindered by a vocal minority of community members not being able to see the changes made by the relationships built and wanting to question and bring up old issues rather than seeing the progress and improvements for the good of the whole community.

10. This relationship is built and maintained by the many programs the Charleville police and community run. Most youth in the area attracted to the programs are usually First Nations people and families that don't have the means to do other things or to travel.

11. Over my time in Cunnamulla and Charleville I have been involved in many projects and programs that give us as police, the opportunity to meet with the youth of the area, to have a conversation, but more importantly listen to what is happening in their lives. Some of the programs we have been running are detailed below.

12. The **Charleville Blue Edge** program is aimed at empowering vulnerable young children (aged 9-16 years). The program is a holistic program run by Charleville Blue Light committee combining physical training, mentoring and life skills for youth. The Program ran for a school term and a new round is starting in the first week of term 3 at the Charleville State High School.

13. Cunnamulla ran this program as well in conjunction with the Blue Light Shearing and Deadly Recruits program.

14. **Blue Light Shearing** is an ongoing program with Education Queensland and the Australian Wool Industry to provide education and training to youth helping them to enter the workforce by providing certification in agriculture and farm industry. The program provides industry standard training and enables youth to be job ready being awarded with a Certificate

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **BATEMAN, Laurie**

II in Rural Operations. The program is a seven-week program over two years. Week 1 of the current seven-week program was completed on the 18-22 June 2022, with 18 youths. Being part of the program I am able to use my previous skills as a shearing trainer and enabling conversation with the vulnerable youth to support and assist relationships. This program is run in both Cunnamulla and Charleville as well as may other areas.

15. **Blue Light Boxing** is a program for all ages within the Charleville area. A strong volunteer base allows the continuation of this program. I find that this program is a great engagement opportunity to build positive connections with youth in community, provide safe space for them to congregate while promoting and connecting healthy conversations and healthy relationships. This is evident when most youth are male adolescents and watching the relationships and respect grow for the female trainers. This multiagency program improves the self-esteem of youths and assists with reducing incidents of youth crime and recidivism.

16. The **Blue Light Learnit Driver** program provides an opportunity for school children with a learner licence to have free driving lessons, by utilising a vehicle during their free lessons at school to achieve their 100 driving hours. The students need to organise one of the Blue Light volunteers to be the instructor in the vehicle with them. Not only does this program help youth get a driver licence but it also provides the opportunity to have conversation and break down barriers and show police involvement in a positive way.

17. **Cultural Awareness pamphlets** – this is ongoing but the Murweh Cultural pamphlet has been finalised and launched. The Charleville patrol group have cultural awareness pamphlets left to finish for two shires. The pamphlets provide information relating to the legislation about moving, touching or collecting any artifacts. It also provides information about cultural artefacts sights and how to be respectful and considerate of the traditional owners and provides information for the reporting of damage and issues at traditional sites.

18. The process of creating the Pamphlets provided an opportunity to engage with community elders and have open conversations. This helps QPS members connect with community and local history whilst building a continual conversation with traditional owners and acknowledging the importance of traditional ownership.

19. An **Emersion programme** is being prepared by the Charleville patrol group. It includes an on country tour with traditional owners and an online learning product with guest speakers outlining the first nations family groups, traditions and cultures. The cultural package provides an opportunity for QPS members to meet traditional owners on country and learn about the history of land.

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20. **Blue light dances and movie nights** provides an opportunity for younger children particularly primary aged children to be involved in the community. It creates an opportunity for early connection with police to

build positive connections, provide safe space for youth to congregate while promoting and connecting youth with multiagency initiatives/partnerships to reduce incidents of youth crime and recidivism.

Observations and experiences – DFV

21. I have been in the DCPC role for a while now and my first response experience for Domestic and Family Violence has been limited. I believe that education and understanding are the important factors. The challenges I see within First Nations community is mainly the lack of knowledge associated with family connections. There is a need for understanding family and what that means to the community and understanding the need to provide support for those who don't fit into a family.

22. Example 1: First Nations man brings back to the community a First Nations woman that has no family connections to the community. If the male is relocated from the dwelling due to domestic and family violence, the woman is then segregated by male family members which causes other social issues.

23. Example 2: Two First Nations siblings with a no contact order in place. Due to social dynamics and poverty, you will find First Nations people will become nomadic and move between family's homes on a regular basis (couch surfing). Within smaller communities it is inevitable siblings will cross paths (hence a breach of their domestic and family violence order).

24. It is imperative that police have an understanding that community members may live in a different way and that police should not fit personal morals and views onto the community. Police need to keep in mind just because it is different it's not wrong, just another way to live. We should not judge people without knowing what path they have walked or shoes they have worn.

25. I have held a position on the advisory board for Sentencing and Parole for four years. It is my role to offer advice with several other First Nations peoples with a variety of different job roles in regard to the over representation of First Nations peoples in terms of incarceration. We provide advice relating to cultural issues and programs that can assist. These topics range from mental health to domestic and family violence.

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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 5 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

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Signature

Signed at Charleville (place) this 3RD (day) day of AUGUST (month), 2022 (year)

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