

Future of Police in the Torres Strait.

Historically

Torres Strait Islanders have always been involved in Policing the Torres Strait. This fact is highlighted with the point that Indigenous people of the Torres Strait Policed the region prior to European settlement. The structure of culture and tradition of people in the Torres Strait has also influence the manner in which Europeans approached Policing in the region from the late 1800s through too today.

- 1888 Saw the first record involvement of non indigenous Policing in the Torres Strait. Government official John Douglas worked adopted a tradition approach to Policing were Torres Strait Chiefs were given the responsibility for administer law through out the Torres Strait 24 Torres Strait Police were appointed to assist. This system of law enforcement was effective through the late 1800s and the early 1900s.*
- 1939 Torres Strait Act came into effect, by-laws were made and Community Police were appointed.*
- 1971 Torres Strait Act repealed and replaced with the current Community Service Torres Strait Act 1984 with similar principals of Community Police being employed by the council.*

Currently

- 2007 The Queensland Police Service has a station at Thursday Island and Horn Island.**
- The responsibility for Policing on all other inhabited islands in the Torres Strait falls under the responsibility of the each local council.**
- There are approximately 60 Community Police in the Torres Strait who are spread over the following islands: Boigu, Dauan, Saibai, Mer, Erub, Ugar, Masig, Poruma, Warraber, Iama, Mabuag, Moa (St Pauls & Kubin)**
- Badu Island has 5 QATSIP officers who are employed by the QPS and have been appointed special constables for the last 7 years. It is believed that the QATSIP program will cease to exist in the Torres Strait when fully sworn QPS officers become station on Badu.**

Future

The success of law and order in the Torres Strait must be attributed to all Torres Strait Islanders who have or are Community Police officers in this region.

The future of Policing in the Torres Strait needs to progress with changes to the current situation of Community Police being employed by local councils.

It is believed that the model of Policing which has occurred at Badu for the past 7 years is an ideal model for Policing throughout the Torres Strait. However we are aware that the Qld government are scrapping the program because they have stated that they don't want two standards of Policing.

As Torres Strait Islanders have Policed the region for centuries we are requesting that our standard of Policing be improved so we are providing the same services to the our people.

The following model is our proposal for the continued success of Policing the Torres Strait.

- 1. All Police in Torres Strait be employed by the Queensland Police Service.**
- 2. Community Police cease to exist and be replaced with the appointment of Special Constables to each island in the Torres Strait.**
- 3. Powers the same as fully sworn officer. (PPRA)**
- 4. Training programs developed to ensure high standards of Policing are given to the community. Standard of Policing is to be same as everywhere in Qld.(See appendix 1)**
- 5. Clear career paths developed for special constable to become fully sworn officers.**
- 6. Appropriate resources (See appendix2.0)**

Appendix 1.

- 1. Minimum of 3 months foundation training for all special constables before commencement of duties on appointed islands. (Suggested training – Police Powers - PPRA's, By Laws, Custody Awareness, Simple offences, DV, Drug, Traffic, Basic Prosecuting, Computer Skills, Correspondence required for all issues being dealt with, Use of force training.**

- 2. Competency based training to continue throughout service to increase knowledge and powers to bring special constables to the same level as full sworn constables.**
- 3. Career paths will be developed through competency based training which should also be mirrored with pays being increased with each level of competence obtained.**
- 4. Rank within Special Constables to have a senior people at each Island.**

Appendix 2.

- 1. Accruelements (handcuffs, batons, OC spray, torches)**
- 2. Uniforms**
- 3. Vehicle.**
- 4. Stations with 2 person watchhouse or holding cells.**

Positives for Torres Strait Special Constables under QPS.

- 1. Continued success of Policing in the Torres Strait which will minimise issues that have occurred on the main land. (i.e. Palm Island and Aurukun).**
- 2. Strong partnerships between the QPS and the Community, based on effective communication.**
- 3. Providing culturally appropriate policing.**
- 4. Most cost effective solution to Police the Torres Strait effectively. (i.e Persons appointed to Special Constable will not require housing supplied by QPS as they will already have accommodation on their Island.)**

- 5. Greater level of service to the people of the Torres Strait by providing the same standards of policing that is obtained elsewhere in Qld.**
- 6. Increase the number of Torres Strait Islanders transitioning to fully sworn officers with the QPS. (i.e. Improve the gap of transition which isn't being met by the QPS Justice Entry Program.)**
- 7. Support community self governance by enabling Torres Strait Islanders to continue Policing their Islands by placing people before local JP Magistrate's court who are also working in conjunction with Community Justice Groups and Elders. (Recommendation from Cunnen Report.)**
- 8. QPS supervision to come from the Officer in Charge Thursday Island who will be able to provide positive support with the allocation of the Police airwing to the Torres Strait.**
- 9. With the appropriated training and resources Special Constable will complement QPS staff at Thursday Island particular with staffing numbers are low.**
- 10. Transparency and accountability.**
- 11. Community have positively supported Badu model and see them as a step ahead of Community Police and Police liaison officers who are viewed as toothless tigers. Therefore implementing Special Constable throughout the Torres Strait would be viewed positively by the wider community.**

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