



CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
COMMISSION

# **BEAT POLICING RESOURCE KIT**

*MANUAL*

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# PREFACE

In May 1993, the Queensland Police Service, Southern Region, and the Criminal Justice Commission launched a pilot Beat Area Policing Project in the City of Toowoomba. Day-to-day management of the project is the exclusive responsibility of Southern Region, but the Commission has been actively involved from the outset; first in the design and implementation of the project and, more recently, in its evaluation.

One of the aims of the Toowoomba project was to trial a different model of policing in the hope that, if the approach could be shown to work, police in other parts of the State would be encouraged to develop similar initiatives. Understandably, many police initially adopted a "wait and see" attitude, but now that the project is in place and working well, interest is beginning to spread to other parts of the State. In the 1994/95 Queensland State Budget \$300,000 was allocated by the Government to support the implementation of further beat policing initiatives broadly modelled along Toowoomba lines. Late in 1994, Metro South Region initiated a beat in the West End area of Brisbane. In February 1995 Southern Region established two beat areas in Ipswich. Another Region is currently examining the practicality of converting an entire police division to beat policing.

In line with this increasing level of interest, the Research and Co-ordination Division has recently dealt with a number of inquiries from local and interstate police who want to know more about what was done in Toowoomba, whether their own areas would be suited to beat policing and, if so, what they need to do to set up such a project. This *Beat Policing Resource Kit* is designed to answer these and related questions. The Kit is not intended to be a "cookbook" to be followed word for word. As we emphasise throughout the document, each area is different and there are a variety of ways in which the key principles of beat policing can be put into practice. What we have tried to do here is simply to bring together as much useful information as possible, based on our own involvement with the Toowoomba project and our knowledge of similar initiatives which have been taken elsewhere in Queensland, interstate and overseas. It is up to the users of the Kit to decide how best to use this information.

Given that the Kit draws heavily on the Toowoomba project, it is appropriate to acknowledge here the continuing strong support which has been given to this project by the Assistant Commissioner of Southern Region Ron McGibbon, and his officers. The Commission would also like to thank Senior Constables Henry Kochelakek and Russell McKee, the two Toowoomba Beat Area Officers, who have been excellent ambassadors for the project and have been very patient and cooperative in responding to our requests for information. Their contribution is much appreciated. Finally, we are grateful to the Media Unit of the QPS for providing us with the photos used on the cover of the folder which contains the Kit.

David Reiter and Maggie Blyth of the Commission were primarily responsible for writing the manual and preparing the accompanying appendices.

David Brereton  
Director, Research and Co-ordination



# CHAPTER 1: BEAT POLICING AT A GLANCE

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this kit is to provide officers of the Queensland Police Service (QPS) with the information they need to plan, implement and evaluate a beat policing project. You should consider this as a *source book*, rather than a set of rules to be followed without deviation. We suggest that you focus on the *manual* and refer to the *appendices* as the need arises.

This kit shows you how beat policing can improve the level of service that police provide to the community, but there is no single recipe for creating a successful project. What works for one community may not work for another. The kit identifies strategies which have proved effective in other projects, particularly the Toowoomba Beat Policing Pilot Project. We encourage you to consider adopting them, or modifying them to suit the needs of the community your project is intended to serve.

We are not suggesting that beat policing should *replace* reactive forms of policing like the mobile patrol. Beat policing is suited to particular areas, and it cannot exist in isolation. For example, in urban areas, beat area officers (BAOs) must rely on mobile patrols to provide back-up in certain situations and coverage when they are not on duty. So, another purpose of this manual is to illustrate how a beat project can be integrated into a larger organisational structure.

The manual also attempts to show how the pitfalls of beat policing can be avoided or at least minimised. The bottom line is that beat policing can only thrive where it is supported by all levels of the police establishment and the community. The kit highlights strategies for fostering that supportive environment.

## WHAT IS BEAT POLICING?

We all seek to improve the quality of life in the community. The key is to convince people that beat policing can make a difference *if* the system is given a fair go, and *if* the key players do their part.

The first step is to understand what is meant by beat policing. Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1994) define it as:

a philosophy of full service personalised policing, where the same officer patrols and works in the same area on a permanent basis, from a decentralised place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems.

The concept of beat policing is not new. In many ways, beat police operate like traditional country police by adapting certain strategies to an urban setting. But beat policing is more than just a set of strategies. It requires a shift in attitude and practice for police and the residents they serve: police have to do more than simply *react* to calls for service; residents have to do more than simply expect police to deal with their problems.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

There are certain key principles that underlie most successful beat policing projects:

- *the BAO is the focus of most police business in the beat area*

Police business includes *all* matters of concern that are brought to the attention of police, as well as problems identified by the police themselves.

- *BAOs are assigned full-time to the beat areas*

By working full-time in a specific area, BAOs gain "ownership" of the police business that occurs there. This puts them in a better position to solve problems and helps them gain the support of the residents.

- *BAOs must patrol primarily on foot or by bicycle, on their own if practical*

Foot or bicycle patrol encourages closer contact between police and residents by removing the physical barrier of the patrol car. Single officer patrols help to make police more approachable and enable greater coverage of the area.

- *BAOs answer calls for service whenever possible*

Police are expected to answer calls for service. Since BAOs are general duty rather than specialist police, it is essential that they see this as a part of their role.

- *BAOs work proactively to solve problems*

Working with social service agencies and community groups, BAOs attempt to find solutions to deep-seated problems before they flare up into criminal or disorderly behaviour. This can also mean working with people to prevent a recurrence of undesirable behaviour. In essence, BAOs take the lead in mobilising other groups to tackle local problems.

- *the policy and structure of the police organisation must be adapted to the needs of the beat project, rather than the reverse*

BAOs should have the flexibility and authority to tackle problems creatively, in accordance with QPS policy, rather than having to rely solely on standard law enforcement strategies

- *BAOs try to involve as many people as possible in the project*

This should include community leaders, business groups, resident groups like Neighbourhood Watch, social service agencies, individual residents and the local media.

Some policing jurisdictions may already think they are using beat policing. They must be clear about the differences between beat policing projects, as they are defined here, and other initiatives that use non-motorised forms of patrolling. For example, the *police beat shopfronts* set up by the QPS in various shopping malls have been established to provide a police presence in shopping centres to reduce the community's fear of crime and to deter offenders. While these officers patrol by foot, they have, to date, engaged in relatively little problem solving, normally do not answer calls for service and often do not have ownership of the area, since the practice has been to rotate police through shopfronts.

Beat projects, on the other hand, are generally set up in residential, or mixed residential/commercial, districts, to promote a problem solving approach to policing.

## INFORMATION SOURCES

Much of the information in the manual relies on existing or planned beat policing projects in Australia, especially in Toowoomba, West End (Brisbane), Ipswich, and New South Wales; and overseas, especially in New Zealand. Where practical, examples have been drawn from the proposals drawn up for these projects or from the lessons that were learned during their planning, implementation and evaluation. For further details on these and other projects, refer to the appendices and the list of references.

## THE REST OF THE MANUAL

The chapters that follow go into the details of setting up and running a beat policing project.

Chapter 2 focuses on *planning*. It considers the background information project officers will need before deciding where to locate the project, and discusses strategies for ensuring the success of the project once it gets underway.

Chapter 3 discusses the project's *implementation* and day-to-day management. The demands the project will place on the BAO, other staff and the community are discussed, as well as their roles and responsibilities.

Chapter 4 outlines the procedure for *evaluating* the project, including preliminary work that should be undertaken before the projects begins, monitoring that takes place during the project, and the means by which its effectiveness can be assessed at the end.

Besides providing details on beat projects elsewhere, the appendices contain guidelines, forms and other information you may find useful in setting up your project.



## CHAPTER 2: PLANNING THE PROJECT

### KEY STEPS

In this phase of the project, you need to:

- assess whether there is a need for a beat project in your area
- identify those who will provide project leadership
- form a project team
- decide which beat policing model to use
- set goals and strategies
- tailor the strategies to the beat area
- consult with the community
- market the project
- select and train staff
- organise resources

### IS THE PROJECT NEEDED?

All neighbourhoods have their own character; so not all will be suitable to beat policing projects. It is important to select those areas that are more likely to benefit from what beat policing has to offer.

How do you narrow down the possibilities? A first step is to consider the features of beat projects that are working, or have worked, fairly well.

The beat area should be no larger than an officer can patrol by foot or bicycle. There is evidence to suggest that foot patrols:

- encourage residents to share information with BAOs
- give residents a better understanding of what policing involves

- give BAOs a better understanding of local issues and problems
- make it easier to target localised crime and disorder problems.

The following criteria should also be considered:

- the area should impose a high demand on police, as demonstrated by an analysis of calls for service
- preference should be given to areas that contain a number of repeat incident, or “problem”, addresses, so that BAOs will have more opportunities to apply their problem-solving skills
- residential or mixed residential/commercial areas should normally be preferred over purely commercial areas because
  - workers and shoppers who do not live in the area tend not to report problems to the BAO and are less likely to get to know the BAO
- commercial areas, being active only during daytime working hours, offer only limited problem-solving opportunities for the BAO.

A needs assessment (see below) will help you tailor the project to the proposed area. You also need to monitor the project as it develops by gathering reliable data on how well it is working. This will be easier if you can match the boundaries of the area with Australian Bureau of Statistics census collector districts, because then you will have a source of demographic and census data that can be applied in later analyses.

The best areas for beat projects have proven to be busy in the ways mentioned above. Placing projects in areas of low demand is unlikely to produce any noticeable effects. This will make it difficult to argue for continued support of the project. On the other hand, busy policing areas generally do not respond well to traditional policing strategies and therefore have little to lose and the most to gain from a new approach.

## *CALLS FOR SERVICE*

You may feel that you know where the busy policing areas in your Region or District are, but it is still wise to carry out an analysis of calls for service. Such an analysis will yield important background data which will enable you to monitor the project as it proceeds and make necessary adjustments. It is also an essential basis for evaluating the project, which is your only objective means of demonstrating that beat policing is doing any good.

Calls for service data are more useful than other police records such as crime reports because they give a much more comprehensive picture of the work undertaken by police. Our research in Toowoomba has indicated that less than 30% of the jobs attended to by police relate to criminal offences. Some of the most common recurring problems dealt with by police, such as neighbourhood disputes and excessive noise, never show up in crime reports.

Prior to establishing the Toowoomba project in conjunction with the QPS, we collated and analysed around 9000 calls for service for selected months between August 1990 and February 1992. This information was analysed using SAS (a statistical package) and then transferred into MapInfo. This enabled us to generate computer maps of calls for service on the basis of type, location and frequency and then compare these data with those derived from census information to find the city's busy spots.

The analysis confirmed the conclusions of research on similar projects overseas:

- much police work does *not* involve enforcing criminal law
- most calls for service are not urgent and therefore do not require an immediate response
- many calls are repeats from the same address or persons and suggest deeper problems such as alcoholism, drug dependency, family problems, fear and loneliness
- many calls for service are clustered in distinct areas of the city.

The analysis gave us details on the types of requests made of police. This made it easier to allocate resources for the project on the basis of actual need. The analysis of requests specific to Toowoomba showed:

- where the requests were coming from, including 'repeat calls'
- the incidence of calls for service for which police are unsuited, highlighting the need to better inform the community about the role of police.

Manually collecting data from job cards can be costly, time-consuming and tedious. However, in the metropolitan area, and in some other regions with computer-aided despatch (CAD) systems such as Incident Management System (IMS), calls for service are automatically recorded in a computerised form. These data can be downloaded into MapInfo, SAS or another statistical package for analytical purposes.

There is no hard and fast rule about how many calls for service you should examine. This will depend on such factors as how long the IMS system has been in place and the volume of work in areas you examine. However, you will need a minimum of three to four months of data so that you can see what is typical of the area.

## *SOCIAL PROFILES*

It is also useful to profile the area before the project gets underway. Social and economic data on the community will help you develop strategies for preventing as well as solving the types of crime and public order problems that are most common there. A clear profile will also pinpoint elements requiring special attention in training sessions for prospective BAOs.

For Toowoomba, we gathered social data from census figures, a local crime and safety survey and other demographic information available to the public. We then compared these social data with concentrations of calls for service and reports of crimes committed. This not only helped us define the boundaries for the beat areas but also suggested problem solving strategies that could be adopted by police once the project was implemented.

Certain features common to successful beat projects elsewhere were found in Toowoomba:

- a diverse mixture of social groups
- localised crime problems amenable to local solutions
- a recorded crime problem, with a suspected large amount of serious yet unreported crime
- large youth and elderly populations, with a relatively high rate of unemployment.

## MANAGING THE PROJECT

### *THE PROJECT LEADER*

The community will look to the police to provide leadership during the early phases of the project. You will have to get people together to mobilise support for the project and to set the agenda for meetings. Once the project is firmly under way and gathering momentum, gradually you should be able to share responsibilities with others in the QPS, and the local community.

The project leader will have to ensure that:

- key police managers in the area are, and remain, committed to the project
- a statement of principles is developed that sets out that commitment clearly
- local police are told what will be expected of them before and during the project
- the project is adequately resourced and staffed
- proactive initiatives are integrated and coordinated with other local policing strategies
- all levels of police in the area, as well as residents, business people, community groups, politicians and the media, are educated about beat policing
- feedback from the community is solicited and analysed

- the project is monitored and adjustments are made as required
- the project is properly evaluated
- interested groups are updated on the status and achievements of the project.

### *THE PROJECT TEAM*

As early as possible during planning, a project team or implementation committee should be established. Its role at the planning stage should be to facilitate communication between the groups involved in the project and to make recommendations to senior management on:

- where the beat area will be located and how the BAOs will be accommodated
- the mix of policing strategies to be applied in the beat area
- resource requirements
- the overall strategic plan.

Once the project is up and running the project committee team should be responsible for managing the project and overseeing its evaluation. The project team should include at least one commissioned officer, a general duties officer and a person with research and computer skills. You should consider adding others to the team as needed. For instance, at the planning stage, it might be helpful to include a representative of the local community and someone from the Police Union.

### *DEVELOPING A PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN*

The more systematic your "game plan" is, the better. The project as a whole should be divided up into phases, and the phases into activities, each of which has an estimated time for completion and its place in the overall sequence.

In Toowoomba, we used a planning technique called Critical Path Method to help us decide on the order of activities. This technique answers questions such as:

- how long will the project take to complete?

- when must each activity start to finish the project on time?
- are there any activities which can have their starting time delayed without causing the project to over-run?

A network diagram can be constructed on computer, setting out the logical relationships between the activities that make up the project. The diagram will show which activities can be conducted at the same time, as well as those that cannot be started until other activities have been completed. A simpler manual method was used by QPS Southern Region for the Ipswich project (see Appendix 1).

### SELECTING THE MODEL OF BEAT POLICING

There are a range of options. Here are some possibilities, based on projects that have been set up elsewhere:

#### *HOUSING BAOs IN THE BEAT AREA*

Under this model, which has been used in Toowoomba and Ipswich, BAOs are provided with accommodation which becomes their base of operations. The premises could be specially leased (as in Toowoomba) or could be a police house. It might even be possible for a house to be provided free by a developer, as in Ipswich, although this must not be allowed to dictate the site selection. In Auckland and Edmonton, Canada, beat officers were expected to rely on the community for accommodation and were met with a positive response.

Locating the BAO in a house encourages residents to see the BAO as 'their' police officer. The BAO in turn may find it easier to mix – and work proactively – with residents. However, setting up a new station may reduce the flexibility of police management; once residents see the station as "theirs", it may prove difficult to abandon once the problems in the area have been resolved. There will have to be special arrangements for securing equipment in the house when it is not staffed. In addition, the BAO will have to work harder to

maintain contact with other police to avoid feeling isolated. Where the demands on the BAO become particularly heavy, the BAO may also find it difficult to "get away" from the job.

#### *OPERATING FROM A SHOPFRONT*

In cases where a number of businesses are present in the beat area, a shopfront location may be desirable. This approach was used in projects in New Zealand and Edmonton, Canada. Offering high visibility and contact with residents, this option provides BAOs with a place of work away from their residence. This option may be expensive, especially if leasing is required. However, where there are adjacent beats, it may be possible for more than one BAO to operate from the shopfront.

A shopfront may be better suited to the beat area, as long as it:

- is convenient and accessible to residents
- is open during hours when it is needed by the community
- has enough space for the BAOs' equipment and for small meetings
- has secure facilities suitable for police to carry out their functions.

Some projects overseas have worked in a space donated by community or business groups, for example, a shopfront in a shopping area. These groups realise the benefits of a visible police presence in or close to their site. However, it should be clearly understood at the outset, however, that donors should not expect extra police services in return. Otherwise, the space should be rented.

#### *THE "MIXED" POLICE STATION*

In this model, BAOs work alongside general duties staff in a regular police station, preferably with role descriptions that clearly distinguish their duties from those of other staff. This model was first used in Wilmington, USA, where it was termed the *split-force* approach. Available staff were assigned to reactive or proactive policing duties. A similar arrangement applies in West End and NSW, with beat police working out of regular police stations.

While a split-force approach offers certain advantages, the risk is that staff not committed to the project may try to undermine it. Some police managers in the stations may also try to divert the BAOs from proactive into reactive work.

In Glen Innes (Auckland), an area similar to Inala (Brisbane), these problems were dealt with by setting up a separate station for the beat officers, which was attached to the main station but had its own entrance. This gave residents immediate access to the BAOs and helped the officers get on with their work without being diverted into other tasks.

### *THE BEAT POLICE STATION*

Here, several BAOs may operate from one location, provided their ownership of individual beats is respected. The station devoted exclusively to beat policing:

- acts as an outreach into the community, giving residents greater access to their police, and giving police greater visibility
- provides a venue for police and residents to get together
- provides a base for the BAOs' work.

### *PROVIDING MOBILE PATROL BACK-UP*

One option for providing mobile patrol back-up is to "cluster" mobile patrols at district stations near the beat area. Clustering may be efficient in some circumstances, particularly where a substantial area has been turned over to beat policing. This is because:

- cars previously shared by two stations would be more fully used if they were located at a cluster station
- it costs less to maintain pools of cars
- rostering is more flexible where the pool of officers is larger.

The cluster station should, of course, be located close enough to the beat area so that service response times are kept within acceptable limits.

In the West End proposal, which involves only two officers and a relatively small area, back-up is provided from the local station. In Toowoomba, where the BAOs work in adjacent areas, it was left up to the BAOs to decide when to call for mobile patrol support from the Toowoomba station. They have tended to do this only when the other BAO is not available to assist them.

### *OFFICER SAFETY*

One objection to BAOs patrolling on their own is that the officer is placed at risk. Experience elsewhere shows that this need not be the case. Officers patrol on their own in Toowoomba and Ipswich. Single officer patrols are also used in parts of NSW, Canberra, New Zealand, and many American cities including those often regarded as very dangerous by Australian standards, such as New York.

Single officer patrols have several advantages over dual officer patrols:

- research has shown that the public finds single officers more approachable
- officers on their own are more likely to talk to residents than if they have a partner to talk to
- single officers are likely to feel a greater sense of responsibility for, and ownership of, their beat
- it is possible to achieve greater coverage using single officer patrols.

Taking the following measures will ensure that risk to the BAOs is kept to a minimum:

- not rostering them for foot patrol at times of high risk, such as after dark
- equipping them with hand-held radios, which will keep them in contact with the police station at all times
- under negotiated response, two-officer patrol cars should be dispatched to all calls that appear to be serious, urgent or dangerous
- BAOs should have secondary coverage from mobile patrols as required

- the training package for BAOs should include strategies for avoiding risks to their personal safety.

Under some circumstances, it may be necessary for organisational or industrial relations reasons to use a dual officer patrol model such as in West End. In this case, we strongly recommend that the BAOs work separately for at least some of the time, once it has been established when and where it is safe for the officers to patrol alone. For instance, the officers should split up for a time to patrol separate blocks or opposite sides of the street. It should also be possible to set up a system of overlapping shifts so that the officers work together only at the busier times.

## SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives for the project should state what you hope to achieve through beat policing in the context of your Region's overall mission.

Here are some general objectives that may give you some ideas on how to build your own strategic plan:

- increase community satisfaction with the police
- encourage problem-solving
- increase police – community interaction
- reduce the incidence of certain types of offending and undesirable behaviour
- increase the public's sense of safety
- increase job satisfaction for BAOs
- win acceptance of beat policing from other police.

Your objectives should be developed in consultation with:

- members of the QPS at all levels in the Region
- residents and community groups in the beat area
- representatives of community groups and agencies and local business leaders.

Appendix 2 is the revised version of objectives used in the Toowoomba project. You should also refer to the QPS Corporate Plan to ensure your objectives are compatible with Service-wide objectives.

## TAILORING STRATEGIES

The data you have gathered on the area will give you a basis for further action. You will then have to plan and set priorities, given the likely resources available for the project.

Rather than ignore the current strategies for dealing with problems in the proposed area, turn them to your advantage. Data on what has not worked in the past may be as revealing as strategies that have proven effective elsewhere. Strategies that ignore the needs of the community will likely increase the dissatisfaction of residents with the police and discourage residents from reporting problems to the police and cooperating with police efforts to deal with incidents. If you can identify these ineffective strategies, it should be easier for you to tailor new ones to promote a more positive relationship between the community and the police.

You may find the following questions useful in tailoring your strategies:

- what are the current and emerging problems to be addressed in our action plans?
- what strategies are available to us?
- which strategies will most effectively achieve our beat policing objectives?
- are there physical factors, such as terrain or settlement patterns, that will impede the use of certain strategies?
- are there social and cultural factors that will require special attention?
- what are the staffing and resource implications of adopting these strategies?

Your priorities and action plans *must* be realistic. If police find that the demands placed on them are too heavy, support for the project will erode and morale will suffer. If residents see that the project is not producing results, they will lose interest and not participate.

## CONSULTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Meeting with individuals and groups in the beat area is crucial to the planning phase of the project. For example, valuable information can be gathered through interviews with local victim assistance groups and workers in the area of domestic violence, child abuse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander welfare. You should also make contact with local social service agencies, Local Authorities and key community groups.

The local police will, of course, already know much about problems in the project area. You should interview a representative sample of police from all ranks about their views. These views can then be compared to those gathered through interviews with community representatives, and any differences could be discussed and hopefully resolved by the project team.

*Local business leaders* should be briefed and consulted regularly, especially on decisions that will affect how policing services are delivered to business districts. They may be able to suggest ways of delivering services that will avoid making business people feel as though their interests are being overlooked. They may also be a source of sponsorship.

*Other agencies* will be called upon throughout the project to assist the proactive work of the BAOs, so it is wise to also liaise with them during the planning phase. In Toowoomba, for example, contact was made with:

- Victims of Crime Association
- Health Department
- Department of Family Services
- Fire Brigade
- service clubs

- State Emergency Service
- Ambulance Service
- Neighbourhood Watch.

Meeting with the community groups in the beat area regularly will help keep them informed and provide feedback on their response to the project. Consultation will also help to sell the project to residents who might be concerned that the level of policing in their area will be adversely affected.

## MARKETING THE PROJECT

While community groups will pass on information to their constituents, you should not depend on them to reach all residents of the beat area. The project team, with the help of the QPS media section, should mount a concerted campaign to get out the word on the project to the general public.

Include the following in your campaign:

- *briefings for local journalists (electronic and print)*

In Toowoomba, about a month before the project began, a general briefing was held for journalists. Starting a week later, we issued a series of press releases, each focussing on a different aspect of the project, yet building on the others to form a total picture. The QPS media section should be able to organise interviews on talkback shows for people familiar with the project.

- *special briefings*

Hold special sessions for local politicians, community leaders and police throughout the Region. Try to anticipate what they will want to know about the project and tailor the information you convey accordingly. Plan on providing regular updates as the project proceeds.

- *brochures and pamphlets*

Organise a letterbox drop to all households in the beat area. The publications should be concise, informative and visually appealing. They should encourage residents to attend public meetings

where more detailed information will be available. In Toowoomba the project team was fortunate to have Australia Post distribute its pamphlets free of charge. Other publications can be made available at police stations, shopping centres, etc.

- *launch*

Ask a high-profile person to launch the project at a formal ceremony. Invite the media, as well as the public. At Toowoomba, media interest was heightened by the presence of the Police Minister and a senior officer from the Edmonton Police Service (where a beat project is already in place).

Introduce the selected BAOs and ensure they are prepared to be interviewed. Have a good supply of pamphlets or newsletters about the project on hand.

For further details on Toowoomba's public awareness campaign, see Appendix 3.

## SELECTING STAFF

Selecting the right staff for the project is essential. You will need to select a number of relief BAOs as well as regular ones. Relief BAOs will be used to replace regulars who are off duty for longer than three days. We suggest five relief BAOs be selected for every one regular BAO, and that you plan to review the adequacy of your pool of reserves every six months. A substantial number of relief BAOs will be needed to cover regular BAOs who have been transferred or who are tied up in other duties, as well as those who go on leave or on training courses. Training other local police as relief BAOs will also help win their support for the project.

Beat policing is hard work, so carefully consider what incentives you will need to offer to attract the best candidates.

At Toowoomba, the BAO positions were gazetted at the rank of senior constable, with a pay and conditions package designed to persuade prospective candidates that beat policing would have strong potential for career advancement. Eight candidates were shortlisted for two positions from a field of 23 and asked a standardised series

of questions. They were also asked to respond to scenarios designed to test their skills and policing abilities, especially on how they might respond to situations on the beat.

Those who express an interest in applying for a BAO position should be provided with a position description (see Appendix 4 for a suggested model) and a brief precis that explains the philosophy of beat policing and sets out the objectives of your project. This will discourage those who do not strongly support beat policing principles from applying, while those who do apply will have a clearer sense of what they might face in the interview.

For Toowoomba, the QPS project officer looked for candidates with:

- at least three years policing experience
- maturity and the ability to work with a minimum of supervision
- good inter-personal and communication skills
- good physical fitness
- strong problem-solving and dispute resolution skills
- a capacity to lead and work effectively in a community setting
- an ability to promote, initiate and facilitate community action
- an ability to respond well in crises
- an understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of beat policing.

Candidates will have to be lateral thinkers who can come up with ways of dealing with community problems while being mindful of their duties and accountability as police officers. A record of effectiveness under the traditional model of policing is no guarantee of success. Candidates will have to persuade the selection panel that they can work well under the new model.

The scenarios to be used at the interviews should be devised by the project team and be based on calls for service from the beat area. While there may be several "correct" responses to these



scenarios, the team should construct models against which the candidates' answers can be compared. Before the interview, the scenarios and model responses should be approved by the District Officer for the District where the project will be located. Input should also be sought from the Operations Co-ordinator and Regional Assistant Commissioner. Appendix 5 contains the interview questions that were used for the Toowoomba Project. Similar questions were used in interviewing applicants for the Ipswich project.

The selection panel should comprise:

- a member of the project team (to act as convenor)
- the relevant District Officer
- a sergeant or senior sergeant who will be supervising the BAOs
- an officer with expertise in beat policing
- a senior officer from another District
- at least one female.

Since the ideal number for a panel is three to five members, hopefully some of the people selected will be able to satisfy more than one of the above criteria.

You should also vet short-listed candidates by contacting their supervisors and asking them to rate the candidates on the basis of the selection criteria. The panel should rank-order the candidates according to their suitability; this will allow the panel to not only select BAOs but also a number of reserve BAOs from amongst those applicants who come from the District in which the project is planned.

## TRAINING STAFF

You will need to hold a training course before the project gets underway and other sessions as the need arises, particularly when your pool of relief BAOs is low. Those attending the course should include the selected and relief BAOs, and as many supervising NCOs and support staff as practicable.

Many of the skills and techniques used by BAOs will be similar to those used by conventional general duties police. Foot patrols do, however, involve a change in the *context* in which those skills are applied and in the *emphasis* placed on those skills.

At the outset, the attendees should be reminded of the principles of beat policing. The objectives of the project and how it will operate should be explained, with special attention to the BAOs' role and responsibilities, and how the project will fit into the overall policing strategy for the District.

The training program should also encourage BAOs to:

- detect patterns in repeat calls for service and relate these to underlying problems that can be addressed proactively
- see ways in which reactive strategies can be replaced by proactive ones
- accept that "doing the right thing" must come before "doing things right"
- find and apply specific solutions to specific problems.

The problem oriented approach requires BAOs to learn to:

- *consult* with residents about problems, policies and priorities
- *adapt* general strategies to meet the needs of a particular community
- *mobilise* all the resources of the community to tackle crime, disorder and insecurity.

For further information on what the training package for BAOs should contain, please contact the Research and Co-ordination Division of the CJC, which can provide you with a summary of the training components of the Toowoomba project. QPS Southern Region can provide you with details on the training package used for the Ipswich project.

## ORGANISING RESOURCES

Projects in Canada and New Zealand have shown that one of the strengths of beat policing is that it is less dependent on capital expenditure than traditional policing, since it can:

- use resources already available in the community
- reduce wastage by solving problems rather than simply treating them
- promote the view that police have limited resources and that solutions to some problems must be found within the community rather than in law enforcement
- discourage dependency on capital intensive strategies such as mobile patrols.

As BAOs will be allocated only core items of equipment and a modest operational budget, they will have to draw further resources from the community. If the residents accept the principle of sharing responsibility with the police, they should also realise that providing resource support is an essential part of the process.

It is important to note that the first priority is finding an area suitable for beat policing. Offers of free houses in unsuitable areas should be resisted.

In West End, Southbank Corporation has provided bikes for police. In Ipswich, a housing development group has provided a house within an area suitable for beat policing. The development group worked closely with QPS to modify the house to suit the BAO's requirements.

In Auckland, all beat policing vehicles are provided by local organisations. A small notation on the rear of the vehicle identifies who contributed to its purchase. On a smaller scale, a local BAO had his mobile phone donated by one Auckland community group with the running costs of the mobile being borne by another group. BAOs in Canberra also work with donated mobile phones.

For the West End and Ipswich projects, the Government provided funding from a special budget allocation. Depending on future State budgets, other projects might be able to access similar allocations.

In most cases, the Region should expect to fund the cost of:

- designing, planning and implementing the project
- conducting any community surveys and public information campaigns
- staff selection and training
- salary and overtime
- equipment for the BAOs such as bicycles, hand-held radios, computers and printers, additional telephone lines
- recurrent items such as telephone, power, rent, motor vehicle insurance, etc.
- evaluating the project.

## CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT

### KEY STEPS

In this phase, you need to ensure that the BAO acts as the frontline in the project by:

- using negotiated response wherever possible
- taking responsibility for decision making, problem solving and dispute resolution
- acting as the case officer for investigating crimes committed in the project area
- exercising the initiative to refer problems to specialist agencies in the community.

You will also need to ensure that

- supervisors are adequately trained to fulfil their responsibilities in the project
- BAOs develop an effective network of contacts in the community.

### POLICING THE BEAT AREAS

#### *THE BAO AS THE FRONTLINE*

Normally, each beat area should have its own BAO, who services most of its policing needs and is largely responsible for determining priorities and strategies for proactive work within the beat area. Another option is to assign two BAOs with overlapping rosters to a larger area. If this is done, both BAOs must accept responsibility for any problems that arise otherwise the key factor of ownership will be lost.

BAOs should spend most of their time "walking the beat". Calls for service should be relayed to them by hand held radios. When a BAO is already occupied, normally his or her routine calls should be "stacked", following the procedures used in negotiated response (see below). Mobile patrol crews, under the direction of the Shift Supervisor, should be asked to handle calls only when:

- the call requires an immediate response and the BAO is unable to attend in time
- the safety of the BAO would likely be at risk
- the number of stacked calls has become excessive.

Even when a job is judged to be urgent or potentially dangerous, the BAO should also try to attend in addition to backup or specialist staff. The reason for this again is one of ownership – the residents will expect their BAO to be there. The BAO may also have some local knowledge of the person or place involved that might help resolve the conflict.

An example of how a BAO can help occurred in Toowoomba when two families had a violent confrontation in the beat area. A number of officers attended the scene, including the BAO, who provided advice to the other officers on how the situation should be handled. Though the situation was potentially dangerous, the BAO had more than adequate backup and was therefore able to resolve the matter with diplomacy and tact. The BAO took charge of the situation and brought in a mediator.

The BAOs should also assume primary responsibility for proactive work in the beat area. This will include:

- improving the lines of communication between police and residents
- problem solving, especially in the case of repeat incidents
- preventing and investigating crime, especially problems that can be remedied with local solutions
- acting as an advocate for residents with other government agencies
- participating in consultative committees and Neighbourhood Watch programs and supporting the efforts of local social service agencies.

Since many of these activities require police to be available outside of "normal" working hours, the rostering of BAOs will have to be flexible. We suggest that rostering be negotiated between the BAOs, their District Intelligence Officer and their supervising sergeant, based on the policing requirements of the area and subject to any Award requirements.

Rostering arrangements could include split-shifts and shifts with varying starting and finishing hours. It is particularly important that BAOs work weekend shifts on a regular basis, as this is the time when people in the area are most likely to be at home and when many calls for service are received. In Toowoomba, BAOs were allocated a fixed number of weekend units per year to ensure regular weekend coverage.

It will also be necessary for the BAOs to work overtime occasionally, particularly if a residential model is used, allowing the BAO to be called "out of hours". In Toowoomba, the BAOs were paid a flat rate overtime component rather than having to put in for overtime on a case by case basis. We strongly recommend that you consider a similar arrangement for your project, as it is administratively much simpler and gives the BAO greater flexibility to work as required.

#### *NEGOTIATED RESPONSE*

One of the key means of keeping the BAOs' workload manageable is by substituting a system of *negotiated response* for the current practice of responding initially to all calls for service in the same way.

Under negotiated response, the caller is told what level of response to expect, given the demands for service on the police. Urgent matters are still attended to quickly by mobile patrol, while less urgent matters are dealt with by means of a delayed police response negotiated with the caller, or by the caller being requested to make a "walk-in" report. The effect is that the BAO handles most of the delayed response cases, freeing mobile patrols to deal with matters requiring immediate attention.

In Toowoomba, even 000 calls were dispatched in the first instance to the BAO, unless he was unavailable. The ultimate goal was to persuade residents to direct less urgent matters first to the

BAO at the beat area police station. The BAO can use negotiated response as a time-management tool. Where the BAO has other more pressing business, he or she can negotiate an appointment time that is mutually suitable to the caller and the BAO.

#### *INVESTIGATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE*

Ideally, beat policing should be designed to bring about changes in the investigation of crime. The BAO becomes the case officer responsible for investigating crimes committed in the beat area. Specialised detectives should be called in to investigate the more serious crimes only if required after the BAO has carried out the preliminaries:

- detaining (if possible) the culprits and their accomplices
- securing the scene of the crime, including all potential evidence
- taking statements and conducting records of interview from potential witnesses
- arranging assistance from investigative specialists for fingerprinting, photographs, accident investigation, etc.
- acting as liaison officer for victims of crime, facilitating support services and counselling
- co-ordinating case management activities such as informing witnesses of court dates, liaising with prosecution staff, etc..

This will require some redistribution of responsibilities between BAOs, criminal investigation staff and other police specialists, such as the Juvenile Aid Bureau. The new system should lead to a greater emphasis on *local* solutions to crime in the community. BAOs are also likely to gain more job satisfaction from undertaking investigative tasks.

BAOs also have a significant role to play in intelligence gathering. Because they are closer to the community than reactive police, BAOs are more likely to know who to ask for information when intelligence is required. Experience elsewhere indicates that fewer instances of crime go unreported under beat policing, so the BAO will have access to more information.

## DECISION MAKING

Much of what BAOs do on the job will require decision making. The more they feel able to make decisions independently the better it will be. This will also give them greater credibility with other officers and residents of the beat area.

BAOs are in the best position to make decisions affecting the community because they are "on the spot" and have the local knowledge necessary to decide on the proper course of action for dealing with a particular problem. Here are some examples of decisions that may arise out of the BAOs' proactive work:

- in addition to being seen on the beat, BAOs have to decide where to direct their efforts "behind the scenes" in identifying and prioritising problems then mobilising community action
- BAOs have to decide what initiatives to put into place beyond the obvious ones such as Neighbourhood Watch
- BAOs have a key role in keeping the channels of communication open between police, residents and community groups and agencies, and this involves deciding what information needs to be disseminated and how
- BAOs are the link between residents and agencies in the community that can provide specialist help and must decide which agencies should become involved in a particular problem and the timing of their involvement.

## INFORMATION NEEDS

BAOs need accurate, up-to-date and usable information about what is happening in their beat area. A research/statistics officer should be made responsible for ensuring that the BAO receives:

- *Information sheets*

Completed weekly, these sheets can provide important data about what and when something is happening in the beat area. The data can be extracted from jobcards, CAD or IMS by the statistics/research officer or a beat policing

support officer. In Toowoomba, the District Intelligence Officer viewed the sheets before passing them on to the BAOs. See Appendix 7 for an example of these sheets.

- *Repeat address analyses*

Repeat address data can be analysed weekly or monthly, though weekly comparisons using calls for service data are preferred. The more up-to-date the information is, the more helpful it will be to the BAO. The calls for service data should be set up on a spreadsheet from the information sheets or downloaded from CAD or IMS. Any location that necessitates two or more calls for service at the same address within a set period of time should be analysed more closely. Examples of some of the variables that can be used for Repeat Address Analysis are in Appendix 8.

- *Street analyses*

Calls for service may emanate from one or two households. As different callers and locations can be involved, it is necessary to focus on either the incident address or the general location of the street.

If your system is set up to record the two different address types, i.e. incident address and informant's/complainant's address, then you must ensure that you select the incident address for analysis as the two can quite often be different.

If the street is long, e.g. Brisbane Street, Ipswich, then it is imperative that police entering data into the system record a specific street number or the nearest corner. Without this, analysis will be impossible and important data may be lost.

## PROBLEM SOLVING

One of the essential differences between proactive and reactive policing is that BAOs are free to address the deeper problems that give rise to repeated calls for service, while police performing reactive duties generally have only enough time to deal with the surface problem. BAOs attempt to

get at and cure the disease rather than merely treat the symptoms. Relying on the law to enforce behaviour becomes only one of several options, and not necessarily the first one.

In the reactive role, police have to put enforcing the law above problem solving. Their efforts are generally evaluated on the basis of the number of arrests made, rather than on the impact they may have had on the quality of life in the community.

In a proactive role, police are given the time and opportunity to identify deep seated problems and then, in partnership with the community, to develop ways of resolving them or at least minimising their effect. The impact of problem solving depends largely on the ability of the BAOs to persuade the community not only to assist with the initiative but sometimes to take primary responsibility for resolving the problem. The more the residents of the beat area accept ownership of these tasks, the more problems their BAOs will be able to confront.

Appendix 9 contains an example of a reporting form on which BAOs can record details about their problem solving activities. The appendix also contains some examples of successful problem solving by the Toowoomba BAOs.

### *DISPUTE RESOLUTION*

One of the more difficult skills BAOs must learn is dispute resolution. This does not mean stepping into a crisis and simply imposing a solution. The BAO must have sound interpersonal skills that allow him or her to quickly grasp the basis of a conflict. This involves having the patience to listen to both sides and then forming an opinion based as much as possible on the facts of the case. BAOs must be sensitive to the views of others and realise that no one approach will work for all situations. As Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux suggest, '[c]ommunity policing exists to satisfy citizens' unmet needs, but with the lowest intervention necessary' (p. 61). These skills should certainly be addressed during training sessions.

Developing an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural differences is also crucial for the BAO. These differences not only influence the behaviour of groups in the community toward each other but also affect their attitudes toward the police and hence their openness to police becoming involved

in the resolution of their disputes. If the BAO is seen as favouring the interests of one group in the beat area over another, it will be difficult for him or her to be accepted as a mediator in a dispute involving residents who see themselves as cut off from the base of power in the community.

BAOs must be trained to appreciate these cultural differences so that they will understand where others are "coming from" and thereby be able to propose solutions that both sides will see as fair and equitable. Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (p. 62) suggest a few techniques to impart racial and ethnic sensitivity:

- *Case studies.* Trainees are given examples of how sensitivity helped solve a problem, and how insensitivity led to further problems.
- *Role playing.* Trainees enact a scene where sensitivity is the key to resolving a difficult situation.
- *Training films.* Trainees view a film and compare their responses to situations with those of the characters.

The key here is for the BAO to intervene before the situation becomes explosive, before it is no longer possible for "cool heads to prevail". Once the BAO has gained the trust and confidence of the community, it will be more likely that he or she will be called in before things get out of control.

### *REFERRALS*

Dispute resolution is only a first step in dealing with long-term problems, one which may not be appropriate in many cases. Once the BAO has formed an impression of what factors have contributed to a particular problem, he or she may decide to call on specialist help from other agencies or support groups in the community. For example, psychologists may be called upon to counsel abusive parents; family planners may be of help to single parents who have resorted to petty crime; volunteers can tutor youths who are having problems in school.

The project team may even want to consider setting up a *community police centre* similar to those operating in New Zealand. Representatives from various social service agencies there meet to discuss problems identified by the BAOs and

decide what help their agencies might be able to offer. Those agencies which are able to be involved then meet to set objectives and a strategy for solving the problem. Thus, the centre brings skilled professionals together in a "whole of government approach" to problem solving, which frees the BAO to attend to other policing matters.

Before the centre can be set up, representatives of the QPS will have to negotiate an agreement with the agencies involved that includes:

- a commitment to change in support of beat policing principles
- a response tailored to local needs and resources
- delegation of authority and responsibility to staff who will be working at the centre.

#### *SUPERVISORS*

Ensuring adequate supervision will give the project a better chance of attaining its objectives. If the project is large enough, you should consider appointing a full-time supervisor for the BAOs. He or she should be fully trained in the philosophy and principles of beat policing and be prepared to ensure its activities remain consistent with the broader policing aims of your Region. Smaller projects may be able to get by with only part-time supervision. In Toowoomba, for example, where there are only two BAOs, a Regional Community Police Co-ordinator meets with BAOs fortnightly.

Ideally, the supervisor should undertake the same training as the designated BAOs.

What is needed is a management style that empowers BAOs to try new ideas. Managers should lead by example, inspire others to do their best, provide them with the tools they need to do their job – and then get out of the way so that the BAOs can get on with it.

Supervisors need to feel that they are an important part of the process and that they will have the support of senior police. If they have been consulted as a group during the planning process, and if they are treated as a valuable source of feedback during the implementation process, supervisors will be more likely to see themselves as part of the team working to achieve the goals of beat policing.

Supervisors will need to get out on the beat from time to time to experience the problems BAOs are facing daily. They will have to make a special effort to keep relations positive between BAOs and general duties police by mediating between the two groups and promoting joint problem solving initiatives. They will also have an important role to play in "selling" the project to others in the police establishment as well as to external groups by keeping them informed about the initiative and the progress being made.

Supervisors should be facilitators who encourage BAOs to be creative and express their ideas, and who recognise the need for further training and resources, identify contact people in the community that the BAOs can approach for assistance, and reward the officers' efforts. Since burnout is a risk faced by BAOs, supervisors should monitor the BAOs' workload, encourage them to keep a healthy balance in their lives and not allow residents and community groups to manipulate BAOs into doing things that they should be doing for themselves.

Finally, supervisors will be expected to evaluate their BAOs for the purpose of Performance Planning Reviews. This will require them to negotiate a clear set of work objectives with the BAO. Realistic performance objectives that are directly related to the problems and needs of the beat area also have to be set and reviewed yearly. The key is to assess the BAO's ability to identify, develop and implement strategies to deal effectively with problems in the community.

## **LIAISING AND CONSULTING EFFECTIVELY**

### *NETWORKS*

BAOs must develop a *comprehensive* network of contacts within the community. It may be tempting to focus on those groups or individuals who make themselves known when the project gets under way, especially those who pressure the BAO to look after their interests. However, some groups may be reluctant to get involved because they feel they do not have a shared interest with other groups in the community, or because they distrust police. There may be many other people who do not see themselves as part of any group but whose views on the project should still be sought and

considered. If the project scores some early positive results, the word will get out and that may help change their minds.

The key is for the BAO to develop a network that will reach as many people as possible, so that no one feels excluded by the process. Once the network is complete, the BAO should prepare a list of contacts to which other BAOs, as well as other participants, can refer as the need arises. This can be developed into a community services manual for later reference.

### *DIRECT CONTACT*

BAOs should try to meet face to face with residents whenever possible. Direct contact:

- is more efficient than indirect methods
- personalises the problem solving process
- may identify issues that might be missed in group discussions
- makes it easier to explain actions and directions, and to follow up on concerns
- motivates people into taking action.

The personal touch makes people feel that they and their concerns really matter.

### *COMMUNITY COMMITTEES*

As discussed in previous chapters, committees can sometimes help in planning the project and in resolving problems as they arise. Members may offer suggestions that had not occurred to the BAO. When a consensus is reached, it carries with it a sense of ownership, so that the BAOs no longer are acting on their own, solely as an agent of the police service. In the hands of an effective committee, problem solving, then, becomes a considered community effort, not just an action taken arbitrarily by police.

How regularly should these committees meet? There is nothing worse than a meeting with an empty or padded agenda. It is better that the committee meet only as necessary. During the planning of the project, meetings should be timed

to deal with key issues so the action plan can continue to run smoothly. After implementation, consultations should take place as problems arise – and only members whose groups are affected by the problem should be asked to attend.

Committee members should work to an agenda circulated in advance and should not allow themselves to be “hijacked” to serve the interests of a particular group. Minutes should be kept and made available upon request.

You should not try to keep a consultative committee going for its own sake. If, despite your best efforts, attendance is poor, or the committee is not working effectively, it might be best to let it lapse. This does not mean, of course, that you give up on trying to find out what the community thinks – only that you go about doing this in different ways, for example, by working through networks, or even by occasionally undertaking some small community surveys.



## CHAPTER 4: EVALUATION

### THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION

Every significant project should include an evaluation component. If the project is working well, you need to be able to provide evidence of this to others in the QPS, government and wider community. This is especially important where the project is innovative and there is some scepticism about whether this type of initiative should be funded in the future. If the project is not achieving its objectives, you need to be honest with yourself and others about this fact. If you know what the shortcomings are, hopefully you will be able to address them in time to salvage the project. Even if this is not possible, you owe it to others planning similar projects to share the knowledge which you have gained: that way, they may be able to avoid some of the pitfalls which you encountered.

There are two basic types of evaluation:

- impact
- process.

The purpose of an impact evaluation is to measure the extent to which the project achieved its stated goals. For instance: did the project lead to increased community satisfaction with the police? Did it make people in the area feel safer? Were the BAOs successful in reducing the number of repeat calls for service? This type of evaluation generally involves making "before and after" comparisons and, where possible, comparisons with one or more control areas, with the aim of working out what effects can be attributed to the project. In simple terms, the impact evaluation is designed to answer the question: did the project make a difference in the ways it was supposed to?

A process evaluation focuses on the actual design and running of the project. For example: was it set up and run consistently with its stated objectives? Were the BAOs given sufficient resources and organisational support? Did the BAOs do what was expected of them and, if not, why not? Were the right types of areas selected for the beats?

The process evaluation and the impact evaluation should go hand in hand. If the project has not achieved its desired objectives, the process

evaluation will help tell you why. Even if the project has generally been successful, the process evaluation will often generate useful information which will assist in the design and management of future projects.

### KEY STEPS

The following are what you will need to do to ensure the project is properly evaluated:

- develop an evaluation plan which sets out the objectives of the project, the data you want to collect and the strategies which you will use to collect them
- before the project begins, collect relevant "baseline" data, so that you will be able to make "before and after" comparisons
- if possible, select one or more areas similar to the beat areas to act as "controls" where existing policing strategies will continue to be used – that way, you will be able to see whether any changes which you observe in the beat area were due to the introduction of beat policing or to other more general changes in the QPS or the local community.
- develop data collection forms, such as daily and weekly information sheets and problem solving reports, to be routinely filled out by the BAOs
- ensure that the procedures for recording calls for service in the Region or District will enable you to extract useable data for the evaluation
- conduct and document briefing sessions with BAOs, other general duties officers and senior police in the area, and representatives of relevant agencies and community groups
- after the project has been operating for a substantial period, say, 6-12 months, conduct a service users' survey in a project area and in a comparable area (control group) where conventional mobile patrols are still being used
- consider undertaking one or more local community surveys.

## THE EVALUATION PLAN

As early as possible in the planning process, the project team should prepare its evaluation strategy. The team may decide to call upon external people to complement the skills of the team members and to ensure the evaluation is conducted as objectively as possible.

One of the team's first tasks should be to review the objectives for the beat project to ensure that they are specific, measurable, realistic and appropriate. If the team believes the objectives need to be revised in order to meet these criteria, it should advise senior management at the Regional level of this as soon as possible.

Once a workable set of objectives is in place, the team should construct a framework for an evaluation of the project. This will require you to consider:

- what questions you want to be able to answer about the project
- what data you require
- when and how you are going to collect these data.

You may find it helpful to set up a table that provides an action plan for conducting the evaluation. Appendix 10 provides an example of the plan that was suggested for the West End project.

## RESOURCES REQUIRED

As part of developing your action plan, you will need to consider what resources will be required to undertake the evaluation. This will vary depending on how comprehensive the evaluation is intended to be, the size of the project and whether the information you require is already available or has to be specially collected. As a rough rule of thumb, you should look to spend around 5–10% of the total budget costs for evaluation purposes. In working out resource requirements, remember that you not only need to collect data but also enter and analyse them, as well as write up the results.

Our evaluation of the Toowoomba project was relatively costly, in part because we had to pay

people to collect and analyse much of the data. For instance, calls for service data had to be recorded manually. Another consideration was that, because the project was the first of its kind in Queensland, our evaluation was much more thorough than would normally be required. You should be able to undertake a worthwhile evaluation using considerably fewer resources.

Some ways of keeping costs to a minimum include:

- As much as possible, try to use data which are already being collected by the QPS, such as calls for service data taken from CAD or IMS systems, or Crime Report data from CRISP. However, you should only use such data if they are relevant to the objectives of the project. For instance, it makes little sense to depend on CRISP data – even if they are easily accessible – unless 'reduction of reported crime' is one of your project objectives. You must not allow the objectives of the project and the design of the evaluation to be determined simply by what data are readily available: otherwise, you will be letting the tail wag the dog.
- As discussed below, the BAOs themselves can be used to collect much of the data which you will require, especially for the process component of the evaluation.
- You may be able to use police not associated with the project to carry out some surveys, particularly a Service Users' Survey, provided the survey is properly designed and carefully supervised.
- It may be possible to obtain advice and assistance from local universities, particularly those which have teaching programs in criminal justice or social science research methods. Sometimes you may be able to interest postgraduate students in undertaking some or all of the evaluation as part of the assessment for their course.

**The CJC's Research and Co-ordination Division does not have the resources to undertake the evaluation for you. However, we are happy to provide advice on the design of your study and to assist with any problems you might have with data analysis and interpretation.**

## POSSIBLE DATA SOURCES

### *RECORDS KEPT BY BAOs*

The BAOs have a very important role to play in collecting data about the project, especially for the process component of the evaluation. The BAOs should be asked to record details about such matters as:

- how they spend their time
- the number and type of contacts which they have with the general public
- any problems which they have identified in their beat
- how they attempted to solve these problems.

This will help tell you whether the BAOs are spending their time in accordance with the objectives of the project, what successes they have had at the individual level and whether workloads and rostering schedules are appropriate. Information from these sources is also very useful for comparing the work done by BAOs with that of general duties officers.

Appendices 9 and 11 provides examples of the types of records which should be kept by the BAOs. As much as possible, completing these records should become part of the daily and weekly routine of the BAO. The information should be used not only for the evaluation but for the day to day management of the project.

### *CALLS FOR SERVICE ANALYSIS*

As discussed in Chapter 2, recorded calls for service provide a much more comprehensive indication of the type of work undertaken by police than do crime reports. Provided that someone on the project team has some quantitative skills, you can use this data source to determine whether the project has had any measurable effect on crime and other social problems, particularly at "repeat incident" addresses.

For the Toowoomba project, we had to enter calls for service data manually off job cards, which was a time consuming and costly process. It is unlikely

that you would be able to do this for your project unless funds were provided for this purpose. However, in several regions, calls for service are now recorded in electronic form: both Metro South and Metro North are on the CAD (Computer-aided Despatch) system and an increasing number of Districts outside of Brisbane are installing mini-CAD, or IMS, systems.

If you plan to use calls for service data, you should make sure at the outset of the project that the CAD/IMS is set up to provide information about calls for service in the designated beat and control areas, and that you can distinguish those calls attended by BAOs from those attended by other general duties officers. This can be done by allocating the BAOs special codes. You will also need to discuss with the local Computer Support Officer, or someone else with knowledge of the system, what statistical reports you will need to extract.

### *INTERVIEWS*

As part of the evaluation, project team members should consult with senior police at the Regional level about their expectations of beat police and the means by which BAOs were to be supervised. They should also determine what:

- instructions were issued to govern the activities of the BAOs
- concerns about beat policing were identified by senior police
- action was taken by senior police to address these concerns, and the impact of those initiatives.

The team should arrange for someone to interview senior police at Divisional level to determine what:

- resources were dedicated to beat policing and related activities
- strategies were put into place to assist BAOs in meeting the project's objectives
- proportion of time they have spent on beat policing – as opposed to general duties work

- data were gathered to measure the BAOs' workload and performance.

Beat police should then be interviewed by a non-QPS member to discuss the:

- relevance of the project's objectives to community needs
- degree to which expectations placed on them were realistic
- appropriateness of activities assigned
- adequacy of resources provided
- level of support offered by senior police and supervisors
- degree of co-operation offered by general duties police
- changes required to allow them to improve their service to the community.

In addition, some general duties police from neighbouring stations should be interviewed to ascertain how the introduction of beat policing has affected their performance and their morale, and to see how successful the project has been in changing police attitudes towards beat policing.

We strongly recommend that interviews with police, especially the BAOs and general duties officers, should be conducted by someone who is not a police officer and is not directly associated with the QPS. Anonymity should also be assured. This will make it easier for the police concerned to talk frankly about how the project has been managed and how much organisational support was provided.

Finally, members of the team should interview representatives of agencies and community organisations in the beat area to determine how these bodies perceive the project, and the extent to which, and ways in which, they have had dealings with the BAOs.

## *SERVICE USER SURVEYS*

A valuable method of gathering data on the effectiveness of your project is to survey service

users. Potential interviewees can be identified from telephone numbers obtained from job cards or CAD/IMS systems. Service users will generally be in a much better position than the general public to comment on the quality of service, because they will have had recent first-hand experience of dealing with the police.

Ideally, your survey should cover a sample of callers who have been attended to by BAOs within, say, the preceding 3-6 months, and a sample of callers from a control area who received regular service from mobile patrols over the same period. The results between the two groups can then be compared to determine such things as:

- whether residents prefer beat or mobile patrol service
- the degree to which residents are satisfied with the different types of police service
- reasons for the residents' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the different types of police service
- whether beat policing improves residents' confidence in the police.

In Toowoomba, we interviewed about 100 service users from each group. As discussed below, this is about the minimum sample size you need to undertake worthwhile statistical analyses.

See Appendix 12 for the survey that was used in Toowoomba. A more detailed account of the survey methodology and findings is contained in a CJC report, *Toowoomba Police Service Users Survey*, December 1993, which can be obtained free of charge from the Commission.

The Toowoomba survey had the advantage of relying on local police themselves to act as interviewers, which involved little cost. The use of police also helped to convey to the callers that the QPS cared about the level of service being provided. However, if you are going to use police for this purpose, you should follow some basic rules:

- to avoid putting the officers in a difficult position during the survey, you should exclude from the sample callers under the age of 18, calls from households where someone was arrested or charged as a result of the police attending, and

other sensitive calls (e.g. reports of sexual assault or family violence)

- if possible, you should use police from outside the district as interviewers, as they will be less likely to have a vested interest in the outcome of the evaluation
- the police conducting the survey should receive training on interview techniques and should be provided with a standard “script” with which to introduce the survey to the caller.

When conducting telephone surveys, you need to remember that the best time to make calls is between 5–8 p.m., when people are most likely to be at home.

### *COMMUNITY SURVEYS*

Another strategy you may wish to use is one or more community surveys.

Properly designed community surveys can provide the evaluation team with an objective means of assessing the impact of the project on the community, rather than depending on a “gut feeling”. Researching the effects of the project on the community also lets residents know that you are serious about acting on their views.

This type of survey can be used to collect information about:

- the degree to which the community understands the purpose of the beat project and supports its objectives
- the degree of visibility of the BAO
- if community attitudes toward police have changed as a result of the project
- if residents feel safer
- whether residents are more willing to report crimes to the police
- if they feel their area is being more effectively policed
- what changes the community believes are necessary to improve the delivery of police services.

Appendix 13 contains the questions which we used in the community survey undertaken for the evaluation of the Toowoomba project. You will see that we also included questions asking people whether they had been victims of various types of crimes in the preceding twelve months. However, our experience from Toowoomba is that there is not much to be gained from asking these types of questions, particularly if only a small-scale survey is conducted. Because some types of crime, such as serious assault, are very uncommon it is not possible to obtain statistically reliable measures of change. If you want to assess the impact of the project on crime and general disorder in the beat areas, it makes more sense to analyse calls for service and CRISP data.

In Toowoomba, we surveyed people in the beat areas and control areas before the project got under way and then about 12 months after it had been in operation. Each time, around 800 people – 400 in the beat areas and 400 in the control areas – were interviewed on a face-to-face basis, using random sampling techniques.

In evaluating your project, you may be able to get by with one survey, although this will depend on the size and nature of the project and the questions you wish to ask about it. For instance, if you are interested in measuring the impact of the project on fear of crime in the community, you will need to undertake before and after surveys in the beat area(s) and similar surveys in the control areas. On the other hand, if your main interest is simply to ascertain whether the public feels positively about beat policing, and whether there is sufficient public awareness of the project, you would only need a one-off survey in the beat area, after the project has been under way for some time.

### *SURVEY STRATEGIES*

There are three main types of survey techniques:

- face-to-face interviews
- telephone interviews
- “mail-back”, or “drop-off”, surveys.

Mail-back or drop-off surveys are the cheapest of the three to undertake. Their main limitation is that people often do not fill them out and those who do

may not be representative of the overall community. Research shows that mail-back surveys are more likely to be completed by people with higher levels of education, or those who feel strongly about the issues covered in the survey. Mail-back questionnaires also need to be very carefully worded, because an interviewer will not be available to explain what particular questions mean.

There is no firm rule about whether face-to-face interviews are better than those done over the telephone. Telephone interviews can generally be undertaken using fewer resources; and there is some evidence that people may be more willing to speak frankly on sensitive issues than when they are being interviewed face-to-face. The main disadvantage of using the telephone is that it can be difficult to identify the telephone numbers of people who live in beat or control areas, particularly if these areas do not align with particular telephone prefixes. If you plan to undertake such a survey, we suggest you use a market research firm to identify telephone numbers of households in the area, as the firm will be more familiar with the process and can do it quickly and more accurately. An approximate cost for obtaining 200 randomly selected telephone numbers in a designated area is about \$100-120.

Whichever technique you use, it is essential that you undertake some form of random sampling. An example of such a strategy is where you survey the person living in every fourth house on the street who is over the age of 18 and whose birthday is closest to June 30. If you do not use random sampling, your results could be attacked as biased. Some people might claim that you only interviewed those who thought that beat policing was a good idea. Also, you cannot make meaningful before and after comparisons, or comparisons with control areas, unless you have used the same sampling strategy each time.

It should not be necessary to survey as many people as we did in Toowoomba. However, you should aim to include at least 100 people in each beat area and an equivalent number in the control area. The error rating is approximately 6% for this sample size. If your survey is much smaller than this, it will be very difficult to obtain statistically reliable results or to undertake any worthwhile analyses of the data.

If you have the funds available, the best thing would be to have a market research firm to undertake the surveys for you. The cost will depend on the number of people to be interviewed, the length of the questionnaire and the survey method used. For example, 800 people surveyed in Toowoomba cost around \$12,000-16,000 each; a similar sized survey on the telephone would be around \$10,000-12,000. It is possible to do a smaller and shorter survey by telephone for around \$4000-5000.

An alternative to paying for the services of a market research firm is for police to undertake the surveys themselves, either by conducting interviews face-to-face or over the telephone. As discussed below we used this strategy successfully in Toowoomba when surveying service users. However, the survey will need to be carefully designed and supervised if it is to have credibility.

## WRITING THE EVALUATION REPORT

An evaluation is primarily conducted to provide information for decision-making. For example, information from an evaluation can be used by program managers to ensure that the program is operating consistently with its stated objectives, or by others considering introducing a similar project. Consequently, when you report the results of your evaluation you will need to consider who requires information about the program, when they need it, and how it should be presented. A single final report may not be sufficient. You may have to report different types of information to different stakeholders at different stages in the evaluation. For instance in addition to a final report about the performance of the Toowoomba beat project, regular meetings with the project staff and management in Toowoomba provided regular feedback about the program.

Prior to preparing a final draft, you should provide the BAOs and others who were closely involved in the project with the opportunity to comment on the findings. People "on the ground" often have valuable insights about the project; they may also be able to spot inconsistencies or inaccuracies in your draft. Also, if you are going to be critical of the project or those involved in it, those being criticised should be given the opportunity to respond.

In writing up the findings of your evaluation, you should at least:

- describe the program and its goals
- set out how the program was implemented
- document what data were collected and how they were analysed
- address issues that the readers may perceive as important
- make practical suggestions for dealing with problems or issues you have identified.

The needs of the audience for your report should dictate how extensive a document you produce. If it is for your regional management, then it can be much more concise than one produced for the use of persons unfamiliar with the program.

Appendix 14 contains the executive summary of the Edmonton project's evaluation, which is a good example of an evaluation report.





## SOME USEFUL SOURCES

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