



MINUTES

Crime Prevention Committee

held at

Council Administration Centre
Committee Room
180 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Monday 13th February 2023

at 4:00 PM

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1. Present

Councillor Maree Statham, Mayor; Deputy Mayor Cassandra Coleman, Chief Inspector Chris Sammut, Senior Constable Crime Prevention Arna Martin; Kath Compton, Danny Whitty

Meeting Opened 4:08pm

Staff

Kylie Blakemore

2. Apologies

Jill Cusack, Geoff Small, Matthew Johnson

3. Declaration of Interest

Nil

ACTION

THAT the Present, Apologies and Declarations of Interest be noted.

Moved: Danny Whitty Seconded: Arna Martin

4. Previous Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting were ratified by the committee and reported to Council on 26 September 2023. There was no business arising.

5. Staff and Police Reports

5.1 Bureau of Crime Statistics Crime Statistics

Summary

The Bureau of Crime Statistics (BOCSAR) quarterly report dated 30 September 2022 was provided for the committee's consideration.

Commentary

The BOSCAR quarterly report dated September 2022 includes the following information on the Lithgow LGA:

1. Trends in recorded Criminal Incidents in Lithgow LGA for major offences over the 24 months to September 2022

There were no significant trends in Lithgow crime rates during the reporting period.

2. Ratio to the NSW rate (per 100,000 population) of recorded criminal incidents in Lithgow for the 12 months to September 2022.

- Lithgow rates of sexual assault were 1.9 times the NSW rate.
- Lithgow rates of sexual touching and other sexual offences were 1.5 times the NSW rate.
- Lithgow rates of Domestic Violence related assault were 1.6 times the NSW rate
- Lithgow rates of Non- Domestic Violence related assault were 1.5 times the NSW rate
- Lithgow rates of other stealing offences were 1.9 times the NSW rate.
- Lithgow rates of malicious damage to property offences were 1.5 times the NSW rate.

3. Number of recorded criminal incidents in Lithgow LGA for major offences over 12 months to September 2022 and to September 2021.

	12 months to September 2022	12 months to September 2021
Murder	0	0
Assault (Domestic Violence Related)	139	146
Assault (Non- Domestic Violence Related)	116	116
Sexual assault	37	34
Sexual touching and other sexual offences	29	40
Robbery	5	2
Break And Enter Dwelling	44	49
Break And Enter Non-Dwelling	22	20
Motor vehicle theft	21	26
Steal From Motor Vehicle	67	98
Steal From retail store	47	51
Other stealing	174	186
Malicious Damage	196	204

ACTION

THAT the discussion on the Bureau of Crime Statistics (BOCSAR) quarterly report dated 30 September 2022 be noted.

Moved: Kath Compton Seconded: Arna Martin

5.2 Police Report

Chief Inspector Chris Sammut presented data on local crime incidents and Policing activities.

Break & Enter

The statistics for this quarter are actually quite good compared to the previous reporting period and other comparable regions.

The Chief Inspector explained the differences between different typed of properties including non-dwelling such as sheds and storage units.

Fraud

Numbers of reported fraud incidents have increased in this reporting period, however the Chief Inspector noted that this happening everywhere, especially online and over the phone and is mostly

perpetrated by organised crime syndicates which are operating nationally and internationally and are very hard to trace.

Several Committee members recounted increasing examples of family members receiving SMS texts with requests for money from 'a parent or a child, and many elderly residents are being targeted by phone and email scams asking for personal info and banking details.

The Chief Inspector explained that fraud can also include not paying for petrol at petrol stations, which has been increasing with the rising cost of fuel.

Senor Constable Crime Prevention Arna Martin noted that different scams target different demographics via a range of platforms.

Other types of fraud including reports of fraudulent images being posted on social media and altered by photoshop etc to cause malicious harm to a person's reputation or take advantage of a private image – possibly sent by the victim as an SMS (e.g. sexting) or obtained by solicitation or deception.

Malicious Damage

The Chief inspector explained that this is mainly alcohol-related incidents and covers a broad area.

Robbery

Reported incidents include stealing from motor vehicles, opportunistic crime, targeting visible items eg loose change, phones, electronic items (that are easy to pawn) and stealing from a person but without the element of assault – there was one incident in this period.

It was noted that stealing from a retail store is up a little bit from the last reporting period, but not dramatically. The exact numbers of retail theft are very hard to ascertain as shopkeeper's are prepared to accept quite high losses (it is often cheaper than pursuing the offender through the legal system particularly for small items in large stores) so it is generally assumed that a lot more petty theft occurs than is reported unless there is a spike, when the stores reach out to the crime prevention officers.

Break and Enter Dwelling

Chief Inspector Sammut explained that Aggravated Home invasion is defined by break and enter when the occupants are at home (typically asleep) and the numbers are still very low. Generally, a spike in these type of crimes is associated with transient crime waves targeting certain towns – sometimes travelling by train but not always, sometimes the perpetrators are known to the resident, sometimes they are just opportunistic and seemingly random, others may have been somewhat premeditated, its not always easy to tell after the fact (despite the rumours and tattle on social media!)

Security lighting with sensors, locking gates and securing doors and windows can help as a deterrent for break and enter.

Murder, Assault (Domestic Violence and Non- Domestic Violence related)

The figures for this reporting period were quite good overall.

Action

THAT

1. That discussion on the police report be noted.
2. Reminders need to be given out (via Council and police liaison communications) to be vigilant of scams – if something seems too good to be true, it probably is.
3. The Police Youth Officer will continue to inform schools about the dangers of scamming and solicitation and profiling online and remind students – and parents – not to post too much personal information that is easy for criminals to piece together to steal your identity.
4. Council will continue to work with police and local community groups to educate the community on ways to keep your personal information and property safe and encourage

people to stay vigilant, look out for their neighbours and report anything that seems suspicious – at the time, time is very important.

ACTION

That the discussion of the Police Report be noted.

Moved: Senior Constable Chris Sammut **Seconded:** Cr. Cassandra Coleman

5.3 Lighting from Wallerawang School to James Parade

Summary

The committee discussed the need for improved lighting from Wallerawang School to James Parade.

Commentary

Danny Whitty noted that lighting still hasn't been installed after the issue was first raised over an incident involving damage by young children out late at night apparently aged 7-10 years.

It is not clear as to who is responsible for funding the lighting between the School and James Parade and whether it does qualify as a council issue, given the very low levels of reported incidents by the community and local businesses.

Danny Whitty asked to what extent does external/ street lighting help reduce crime in town areas/ parking lots etc?

Senior Constable Chris Sammut noted that street lighting and security lighting outside premises have a big impact on deterring and reducing crime, especially opportunistic crime in carparks and dark alleys. Lighting is the cheapest and first strategy followed by signs warning of CCTV cameras in use and/or actual or fake cameras, sensor lighting on exterior of houses, garages and shops can be a great deterrent.

ACTION

That the discussion on Lighting from Wallerawang School to James Parade be noted

Moved: Kath Compton **Seconded:** Arna Martin

5.4 Anti-social behaviour

Summary

The Committee raised questions about community reports of kids out of control causing damage at playgrounds and council properties, including the Adventure Playground as well as reports of loud, out of control parties at Air BNB/ Holiday properties in Hartley, and how much power the Police have to intervene?

Chief Inspector Chris Zammit explained that Section C of the Police Act Delves into matters of property and personal damage and people need to report any incidents to the police to investigate in a timely manner, not rely on 3rd party complaints to Council.

Action:

THAT

1. Council needs to remind the community to contact 000 immediately if they see any suspicious activities. Neighbours can also report noise complaints to the Air BNB owners.
2. Police will continue to work with school and welfare groups to try and monitor kids and families who are known to be out unsupervised after hours.

ACTION

That the discussion on anti-social behaviour be noted

Moved: Danny Whitty Seconded: Arna Martin

6. Meeting Close

The meeting closed at 4.50pm