

**Submission
No 8**

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Name: Mr Simon Waller

Date Received: 26 March 2024

My Submission is a simple submission.

I want to tell you my story. In 2022 our house was broken into twice in the same evening. At 2.00 am intruders entered our house we presume through a cat door. They stole my car keys and car and our house keys. At 4.00 am the same morning we were woken by an intruder standing in our bedroom door. He fled when I got out of bed. That is when I noticed our car had been stolen and my house keys were in the front door. My car was trashed. It cost us \$40,000.

Ever since my wife has been hyper-vigilant at noise in and outside the house.

Late last year (2023) we discovered that the number plates were stolen from the front of our car. They were used in crime in or near Mudgee a few days later. This has cost me about \$200.

This year, from the 16th of January our church has been broken into three times. We have lost musical instruments, cash, electronic equipment and food stored for the disadvantaged. So far this has cost the volunteers in our church between \$19,000 and \$20,000.

These are material goods and in one sense it doesn't matter. What concerns me the most is the emotional damage the crime spree is having on my wife, her colleagues and the elderly in our community. Single women where she works are afraid to the point of tears. If someone breaks into their house, what will happen? This has been exacerbated by recent reports of violence and weapons being used even against our most vulnerable elderly.

It is over 16 months since our first incident and my wife is still afraid when I leave to travel somewhere overnight, afraid for herself and our 18 yo son if we were to be intruded upon again.

I lay the blame on successive Governments that are gambling addicted, create poor social policy particularly in the area of family and marriage, and governments that perpetuate welfare dependency.

I recognize there are no easy solutions but it is my observation that our state governments are ignoring the safety of regional communities so they can get votes "where it counts" in the cities. At some point the question needs to be asked. Is this government going to protect those in our regional communities who are by-and-large law abiding, or continue to ignore them?

I am happy to supply more information if required.