

**Submission
No 104**

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 29 May 2024

Partially
Confidential

Dear Committee Members, I am [REDACTED] of Gunnedah NSW 2380. As a resident of Gunnedah for about 20 years now, and an individual who values respect, consideration, professionalism and honesty, particularly among public servants, I have felt it necessary to submit to your inquiry as I believe many of the problems highlighted in the Gunnedah community specifically, are the long term results of political centric valued manipulation and choreographed distortions. Our local media conduits more than seem to be heavily politically influenced, and or intimidated.

The ongoing education I have experienced has been of value to me only in recognising that my initial thoughts that the LGC should have been replaced by competent and investigative administrators years ago, is now firmly cemented beyond a steadfast and solidified belief. After relocating to Gunnedah I was sadly involved in a verbal confrontation that eventually involved sections of the local constabulary and two eventual court cases, court proceedings that resulted in my vindication and the [REDACTED] stating the words, "I have been trying to sort out those bastards out there (Gunnedah) for years". Little did I realise, and though appreciating the assistance, direction, and input of officers of the LAC NSW policing force, I was unwittingly an active participant in the political machinations actively being fought out between polarised factions within policing groups cultures in the local community. Another part of my education through the experiences at that time included a local Solicitor, a person of credibility within Gunnedah and elsewhere, who I had then considered as potentially my legal representative stating, in relation to my case, "you will not win here, (Gunnedah Magistrates Court) but you will win elsewhere". I was astounded by his verbiage and wondered just what type of community I had moved into. As things evolved I was first found guilty in Gunnedah, but on appeal in Tamworth the complete shbang was thrown out. The experience led me to then attend LGC monthly meetings in an effort to better understand localised cultures and machinations.

I attended every one of the scheduled council meetings, bar one, over the following four years while [REDACTED] was the Mayor. Though there were obviously councilors (my judgement), who I considered valued honesty and integrity, at the conclusion of [REDACTED] term and on departing I spoke to the then local news reporter and said, "there's nothing here", meaning from my perspective after having seen and listened to the meetings for 4 years, that it was an exercise only for public consumption, ie, basically being seen to be doing a job. My beliefs over that time period were consolidated through experiencing/witnessing, unprofessional though consistent management behavioural patterns, that were described by a councilor as "smoke and mirrors" on many occasions, or apologies from the executives for breaches of budgeting protocols, and claims of corruption by a credible councilor.

The most outrageous personal experience endured included a folly of Gallipolian proportions initiated by the [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] who rang my home, possibly in an effort to ingratiate herself, and left a message on my answering machine that denigrated the councils administrative staff, and described them as a "bunch of dickheads". I brought [REDACTED] behaviour to the notice of the then [REDACTED], an individual in at the time a somewhat precarious position, but still of presumed responsibility; nothing resulted from my then concerns of hypocrisy, lack of intellect, tact, morality, or leadership. The "WHAT HAPPENS IN GUNNEDAH, STAYS IN GUNNEDAH" culture, had become more obviously transparent. (Councilors some time later had a vote on removing the [REDACTED] but alas, some originally in favour of [REDACTED] removal capitulated, and [REDACTED] remained, only to be subsequently removed later at a further cost of \$200,000 and a near new Toyota motor vehicle). At the time I replayed the tape to who I recognised as upstanding community members, credible community members,

and their response was, "to keep it, as in time [REDACTED] will deny it". The issue was reinvigorated by [REDACTED], then [REDACTED] for some obscure reason, some years later, but after I stated if it was not of concern to the LGC management back then what was driving it now, communication with [REDACTED] ceased.

[REDACTED] was at that time, during [REDACTED] term as mayor, the leader of the "Crime Prevention Committee", and I had also sat in on meetings, as a member of the public. It was an incompetent lot I believe, who did little to nothing but boondoggle their way through meetings, sandwiches, and cups of tea, along with ratepayers dollars, while hardly significant in enabling any section of the community apart from sustaining a "status quo", within the culture of police and their compliant conga line of obsequious, cringe worthy cohorts.

The machinations of others at the Gunnedah LGC included employees speaking honestly and openly of the misuse of thousands of dollars on hire machinery not utilised, open ended civil council works with open job numbers that non utilised goods were booked against, down to misappropriation of funding for newly acquired council logos, and the removal, then use of to fill tanks or vessels elsewhere, and then replacement of water meters to original site, something I was a victim of.

The above mentioned examples of probably long term culturally incestuous, incessant, expedient behaviour, does nothing to instill faith in a community, or that the council has a culture of honesty, impartiality, or indeed professionalism. The resultant erosion of some community values is reflected through that impact, and on other necessary organisations.

The "STATUS QUO", along with, "WHAT HAPPENS IN GUNNEDAH STAYS IN GUNNEDAH" is a continuing festering blight on the general community, and few locals honestly benefit from the cultures.

The most recent "Voice" referendum and the activities of sections of the local policing fraternity also raised grave concerns about the insidious creep of in house cultured and promoted intimidation, furthering intimidating thug styled activity and actions that already include, weaponising of image, weaponising of practices, weaponising of vehicles, weaponising of terrain in chases, and the psychological terrorism that alienates sections of the community from believing police, locally, or indeed elsewhere, can be trusted to administer authoritatively, with skill, honesty, conscientiously, and impartial efficiency. To have a badged up police vehicle with all the bells and whistles, parked outside the one and only active polling booth locally, in full view of potential voters along with a uniformed officer clearly visible within the vicinity, smacked of physical and emotional terrorism. (FYI I contacted the relevant Federal Minister and raised my concerns but to me his reply was not credible and or worthy of any parliamentary member). Local police officers while in conversation with them, have openly said that they have no respect for Tamworths leaders, and another ex officer transparently stated that the majority of local problems were, and are instigated through directions from Oxley LAC. Some years ago my house was vandalised along with other properties, by young thugs who were eventually apprehended and faced court. A part of the proceedings included some form of legal routine where victims and others attended a juvenile hearing and everyone had an opportunity to ask questions of the lout, and make a decision on further actions. I spoke up and said I would like to see the matter returned to the court. A police officer wearing sergeants stripes spoke up and said to the chairperson that she wanted it recorded that only one person was in favour of that direction. The trouble was that as we were sitting in a form of circle so as everyone could speak in turn, beyond me there was at least 3 other persons, from memory, who had yet to speak. So what did that police officer know, or what was choreographed? Later on when

speaking to the [REDACTED] in charge of Gunnedah, he said if I had kept my mouth shut everything would have been alright. I reflected on being told at the entrance to the hearing previously, "that if I didn't know the identity of all of the charged offenders, I was moving in the wrong circles". Influences of others discernibly manipulated proceedings, I honestly concur, and when speaking with others I believe that was a regular and accepted practice and routine involving police, solicitors, and the local judiciary.

My thoughts that no community can survive without an honest and professional authoritative administration, a respected and valued judicial administration, an honest and impartial policing service, and a sustainable healthy and skilled health structure, is echoed when I speak to others in Gunnedah, and beyond. Sadly though Gunnedah disappointingly strikes out terribly on the first three, and with cultures of venality, complicity, impregnated from the LGC, onwards to the local courts, and policing, unless there is a true effort to rid the community of the true scoundrels who govern and hold influences over the administrations previously referred to practices, it is going to be difficult to believe anything of real value will eventually emanate from this inquiry.

Weaponising race, and or economic circumstances to falsely create an image of outrageous revolving door crime is not insignificant in the vista of honesty and transparent knowledge and vigilance.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate; FYI, I am 75 years old ex tradesman, I was a volunteer after my apprenticeship into the ADF, I have no criminal record, I have not lost a point on my licence for the 25 years I have resided in NSW.

Sincerely, and in appreciation of you endeavouring to enable society;

[REDACTED]