

**Submission
No 88**

INQUIRY INTO ISSUES RELATING TO REDFERN/WATERLOO

Organisation:

Name: Name Suppressed

Telephone:

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Theme:

Summary

SUBMISSION TO THE UPPER HOUSE INQUIRY INTO ISSUES RELATING TO REDFERN/WATERLOO

This submission has been prepared by concerned residents of East Redfern. We are proud of our community and the way it has flourished over past years. Some of us have lived here for more than a decade and many new residents have arrived, among them young families.

The local parks provide much needed outdoor space for young children and serve as a meeting place for children and adults alike. The social nature of the parks and the pedestrian nature of the community leads to the formation of strong community bonds and a desire to stay in an area which has many things to offer. We have regular local mother's dinners, take exercise together, socialize together, look out for each other and look after each other's children. We really like living in East Redfern.

Recently a spate of violent street crimes has occurred against local residents. Most alarming are those attacks against women with children in their care (at the time of the attack). The majority of attacks have been bag snatches and the thieves are predominantly young men. It appears that offenders are targeting women with children as they are more vulnerable and will clearly surrender bags in preference to putting their children in any sort of danger.

The following are examples of recent crimes in our area:

- Attempted bag snatch in Coles carpark June 10th. Reported to police.
- Car stolen 23rd June - recovered stripped in Auburn. Reported to police.
- Mail stolen numerous times from letterbox in Marriott Street Redfern. Reported to police by body corporate. Keys changed 1st July.
- Garage broken into numerous times. Things opened but nothing significant stolen.
- May 2004 -A pregnant vendor who sells garments in the Surry Hills Shopping Village was badly bashed (ambulance called) when she used the toilets in the complex.
- Early weekday morning bag snatch at the bus stop on the corner of Baptist St and Telopea St. There were about six or seven people waiting around for a bus. I heard someone yell out and turned to a woman falling to the ground, with a youngish aboriginal guy trying to grab her bag away from her. She let go of the bag pretty quickly and the guy then took off down Baptist St, towards Cleveland St. I immediately got up and ran after him. As I ran, I saw that there was a station wagon waiting for him, with the door open, about 60 or 70 metres up Baptist St. The guy got in the car, which had a very young aboriginal girl behind the wheel. I was catching up to the guy, but he got into the car and closed the

door before I got to him. I was almost level with the car as it took off up Baptist St.

I called the police on the day and gave them the Rego number of the car. Someone else who was on a bus which was pulling into the bus stop as it happened also called it in. The woman whose bag was snatched was upset and had some cuts and bruises, but was otherwise ok.

- My bike was stolen almost a year ago now. I had taken my daughter for a ride and on returning home, was silly enough to leave it out the front, on the tiled patio, for about three minutes. I made a telephone call at the other end of the house and when I came back out the front, the gate was open and it was gone. It disappeared so fast that it made me think someone must have been watching me.
- A resident of Boronia St (tradesman) has in the past 2 years had his van broken into 7 times and all tools stolen twice. He has also caught kids twice in his backyard.
- Another Boronia St resident has had lighted paper pushed through the letter slot in his front door. It was lucky he was home. Had a baby in the house
- Back fence (Boronia St) has been set alight.
- Boronia St /park near Coles - a woman taking her child out of the car had her bag stolen by an Aboriginal woman.
- May 2004 Boronia St - a woman was putting her child into her car and had left her front door open to go back to the house and get the pram when an Aboriginal woman entered her house and took her bag from the pram. The victim momentarily gave chase but stopped when she realized that the offender had an accomplice who came up behind her.
- Early one evening in Boronia St (week night around 6pm) an Aboriginal youth attacked a woman in her doorway as she went to open the door and attempted a bag snatch. Her husband came to her assistance and was attacked by the youth and two more accomplices.
- A pregnant resident of Boronia St (at Surry Hill Shopping Village car park) was threatened in the lane way near the Surry Hills car park. A Caucasian youth held a screwdriver to her neck, her bag was stolen.
- A woman with her two children suffered an attempted bag snatch whilst exiting Surry Hills Shopping Village car park. The offenders, who were waiting in the park to the south west of the car park, were warned via mobile phone a potential easy target was on her way – on this occasion the attempted bag snatch failed.

- Car windows smashed regularly.
- Mugging: May 2004 - I was mugged while entering my front door at 8pm at night. I was jumped from behind and had my bags wrenched from my arm. The offenders were 2 young men separately, but obviously working together, both in track suits, hoods up making their identification impossible. My 7 month old baby was in the car at the time and I have since been treated for fractures to the shoulder, pelvis and wrist and counselling for the mental effects of the incident. This was reported to the police.
- Malicious damage to vehicle: June 2004 - front passenger window of our car was smashed by 4 youths, who then ran off when my husband sighted them and shouted out from the kitchen window. The youths were seen running into the southern most housing commission building in Young Street. 22nd February 2004 - front passenger window of our car was smashed and all the door locks were damaged with a screwdriver or similar and there was considerable damage to door panels. My husband sighted 1 youth running down Young Street (to the north). 30th April 2003 - rear passenger side window, with the radio antennae of our car was smashed. My husband sighted 1 youth running down Zamia Street.

These incidents have been reported to the police and happened in the early evening, say between 6pm and 9pm. The youths were in track suits, usually with hoods up, and were unable to be positively identified. Nothing had been left in the car at the time of these incidents.

- Malicious damage to garden: Over the last 3 - 4 months we have planted trees on the nature strip outside our house in Young and Zamia Streets. Each tree has had a wire cage and stakes put around it to protect while it grows. On 5 occasions the wire cages have been stolen by young boys, who then ran off into the housing commission buildings in Young Street or south down Young Street. My husband has seen them and approached them on several of these occasions - where upon he's been threatened and sworn at. These incidents have not been reported to the police. These incidents are obviously less serious, but the young age of the offenders makes you feel the future for these children is pretty hopeless.

Some of us have noticed an increase in stalking. This has involved mothers with their children being followed; presumably with a view to potential offenders affecting a bag snatch. On the occasions this was noted the potential victims have returned into the Surry Hills Shopping Village and waited for the offending parties to leave.

We are concerned at the recent increases in street crime in our community and feel more vulnerable on the streets now than ever before. It is disconcerting to have to think about how you will protect your bag and your baby when you just want to pop up to Coles to do some shopping.

People chose to live in the city in a neighbourhood such as ours for many reasons, one of these being the diversity of our community. We are fully aware that if you let your guard down you might get robbed or have your car broken into. What is difficult to accept is that it as a mother doing the shopping or going for a walk with your child you are an easy target and need to prepare yourself accordingly.

Policing in Redfern is of prime importance to residents. Police have told us they are so busy policing "the block end" of Redfern, they have few resources for the rest of the suburb. We fully support the Redfern Police in their call for increases in resources and improvements in facilities in the hope that a flow on effect would be a reduction of violent street crime in our community.

Thank you for your time.
Concerned Residents – East Redfern