

## **INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC DISTURBANCES AT MACQUARIE FIELDS**

**Organisation:**

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**Theme:**

**Summary**

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**Submission to the Standing Committee on Social Issues of the  
Legislative Council**

**Inquiry into Public Disturbances at Macquarie Fields**

**By**

**Dick Bennett**

**My submission addresses issues.**

**I leave it to grandstanding politicians, shockjocks, tabloids and disgruntled former police to cloud the issues with emotional appeals to implement a blanket crackdown on lawlessness.**

**I hope to sneak my remarks in under amended terms of reference (1) and (6).**

**The purpose of my submission is, hopefully, that lessons will be learned and applied to future police operations including the APEC conference in 2007.**

**The Macquarie Fields and Redfern disturbances were perceived by their respective communities as being directly caused by the consequences (deaths) of police pursuits.**

**Police strategies and resources must be directed to minimizing uncontrollable factors and rigidly implementing a risk management programme where eliminating possible loss of life, injury and/or damage to property always takes precedence over apprehending offenders**

**How can the programme be implemented?**

**1. Mounted police must be used for ceremonial occasions only.**

**Why?**

**Because, however well-trained and handled, horses will react without warning to marbles thrown under hoof, oil on roads, explosions and the like and become uncontrollable**

**Mounted police charges into crowds demonstrate a criminal disregard for the safety of the public and police.**

**1. Riot police are by their presence confronting.**

**Their movements should be deliberate, measured and controlled in formation.**

**Shepherding a crowd into a corner provokes heightened emotions. An "escape route" for the crowd should be facilitated to (allow the crowd to) disperse and arrest offenders.**

**2. Police vehicle pursuits should be discarded due to the massive downside which includes:**

**Death or injury to drivers/passengers of the pursued vehicle and damage to those vehicles.**

**Death or injury to drivers/passengers of the pursuit (police) vehicle(s) and damage to those vehicles.**

**Death or injury to members of the public and damage to their vehicles; damage to power poles (power lines brought down); damage to buildings, homes and infrastructure.**

**Immediately a police pursuit is instigated, uncontrollable factors are unleashed.**

**When it comes to police pursuits, Law and Order are mutually exclusive.**

**Does apprehending an offender mean more than death and**

**destruction? Of course not!**

**A contrary view only serves to show how sick a society we have become.**

**Since the above was submitted earlier this year prior to the delayed Inquiry of the Committee, a report showed that police protocol had not been carried out. To ensure it is in the future, tracking devices should be fitted to all police vehicles.**

**As a result of the Macquarie Fields disturbances, the police have formed a Riot Squad. It should be renamed the Major Incident Squad.**

**The announcement of Supt.S.Cullen as commander is a most inappropriate appointment. Supt. Cullen's previous position was LAC of Kings Cross where his tenure was characterized as displaying an arrogance towards the community. He unilaterally halted public meetings in Kings Cross whilst continuing to hold them in East Sydney and Woolloomooloo. I am advised that the minutes of PACT meetings did not faithfully record proceedings. His reputation at Kings Cross followed that of his Manly tenure.**

**The judgement of Supt. Cullen is consistent with that of the police from the Commissioner down. Commissioner Moroney publicly named police referred to the PIC. This caused open consternation among the commissioned officers. The Regional Commander, Asst. Cmr. R. Waites (one of those named and subsequently cleared) was distracted from his duties and appears to have not yet recovered. Snr.Asst.Cmr(ret'd). Dick Adams was responsible for detaining for some hours several children who had permission from their parents/schools to attend a protest at Australia's invasion of Iraq. Such action should have been dealt with by dismissal.**

**The pendulum on the powers of the police has swung for an increase given by the State Parliament and the Commonwealth anti-terror legislation. These increased powers are dangerous, "draconian" (as described by police) and unnecessary (Alan Ramsay's article in the SM Herald of 5-6 Nov 05, P.33).**

**The right to demonstrate is basic (or should be) in our democracy.**

**Police must respect that right.**

**Police are entitled to adequate even generous financial compensation for death and physical /psychological injury whilst on duty; adequate counselling and rehabilitation; counselling for family and dependents.**

**The public should demand this. As elected representatives, you, as Parliamentarians must pressure the government into immediate resolution of this issue.**

**The Committee of the Kings Cross Community and Information Centre has endorsed in principle the tenor of this submission.**