

CABRAMATTA

A REPORT ON PROGRESS



APRIL 2002

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Overview

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Challenges & Priorities

Drug abuse and the supply of heroin and other illicit drugs is a global issue which is also a major challenge for our community.

The use of illicit drugs creates significant demands on the public health system with heroin being responsible for the majority of illicit drug related deaths in Australia. The use of illicit drugs is also a key cause of crime and social disruption.

The number of dependant heroin users in Australia has risen continuously since the 1970s and reportedly doubled during the mid-80s-90s. The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre has estimated there may be about 74,000 dependent heroin users in Australia¹. Nearly half these people live in NSW.

Heroin is an entirely imported substance. This has had a particular impact on NSW because Sydney is the gateway to Australia for the majority of legal and illegal imports.

This has posed special challenges for particular communities in NSW. Some communities, such as Cabramatta in Sydney's south-west metropolitan area, have been targeted by the illicit drug trade to be centres for the distribution, sale and purchase of drugs.

For Cabramatta, this has meant an influx into the area of comparatively cheap

¹ Hall W, Ross J, Lynskey M, Law M, Degenhardt L, *How many dependent opioid users are there in Australia?*, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre Monograph No 44, NDARC, Sydney, 2000, p. xii

heroin with a high level of purity and the community increasingly confronted by:

- visible and aggressive drug dealing on Cabramatta's streets and in public places, such as the local railway station and bus shelters, with local residents living with fear and harassment from drug dealers
- large numbers of people coming into Cabramatta from other areas to purchase and use illicit drugs
- drug affected people and used needles and syringes in public places including streets, stairwells, car parks and children's playgrounds
- new methods adopted by drug dealers to avoid or frustrate police detection and law enforcement responses, including the establishment of fortified and guarded drug houses for the sale and manufacture of illicit drugs
- an increasingly violent struggle by drug dealers and gangs for control of the illicit drug trade.

Over time, there was a decline in the confidence, feeling of safety and public amenity of local business and residents.

There was also a decline in the relationship of trust and communication between the Cabramatta Police Local Area Command and key community groups who did not think local police were giving sufficient priority to tackling the problems caused by drug related crime. This spilt over into concerns by local operational police about the management of policing in the Cabramatta area.

The Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy

On 27 March 2001, the Premier of New South Wales announced a four year, \$18.8 million comprehensive package of initiatives to tackle drugs and drug-related crime in Cabramatta and across the State.

An additional \$12.78 million has also been allocated for the construction of a new police station for the Cabramatta local area command.

The Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy comprises four main components:

1. a criminal justice plan with tough new laws to provide police with the powers and resources they need to better tackle drug crime and:
 - shut down drug houses
 - clear the streets of drug dealers and users
 - stop the illegal trafficking of firearms
 - decrease the number of illegal guns in the community

2. a compulsory treatment plan to encourage and support drug users to break out of their drug addiction and stop their criminal activities by:
 - Police bail for compulsory drug treatment
 - Cabramatta MERIT program to divert offenders from court to treatment
 - extra drug treatment places
 - additional crisis accommodation places
3. a plan for local crime prevention to build partnerships with the community to find local solutions to local crime through:
 - the City Watch program
 - targeted police training in working with diverse communities
4. a prevention and early intervention plan to help families and young people at risk of drug addiction, crime and social alienation through the:
 - Cabramatta Street Team to help homeless and drug affected people
 - Gateways Program to keep students at school and away from drugs
 - Schools as Community Centres program to link families with schools
 - Primary Connect program to support at risk 5-12 year old students.

The roll-out of initiatives under the Strategy began on 1 July 2001 and has been a staged process. From 1 July, most of the new legislation, the Cabramatta Street Team and access to compulsory treatment programs commenced. More time was taken to develop the prevention and early intervention initiatives. These have now commenced or will do so shortly.

It has also been necessary to work closely with Fairfield City Council to determine how best to deliver the Strategy's key treatment services in the Cabramatta area. This work continues.

Details of implementation progress are included in Part 1 of this report.

The development and implementation of this comprehensive strategy required, and will continue to call for, coordinated and cooperative responses by key agencies involved in the criminal justice system, health administration, and the delivery of social and community services.

To drive implementation, the Government's Cabinet Committee on Drugs has on-going responsibility for overseeing this work and regularly reports progress to the Premier.

Implementation is also being supported by a community communication strategy to ensure that local community groups in Cabramatta are aware of services available under the Anti-Drug Strategy and informed of implementation progress.

Information sheets in English, Chinese, Khmer, Lao, Spanish and Vietnamese have been distributed through local police, schools, Fairfield City Council, libraries, leisure centres, local events and the Government's "Druginfo" web site. The bi-annual *Cabramatta Update* newsletter is also now in English, Chinese and Vietnamese and disseminated to local businesses, clubs, community groups and service providers.

Parliamentary inquiry into Cabramatta Policing

The inquiry by the Legislative Council's General Purpose Standing Committee No 3 into Cabramatta Policing was established on 28 June 2000, at the Committee's own initiative.

The Committee's terms of reference were to inquire into and report on the:

- adequacy of police resources in Cabramatta, especially in relation to drug crime
- impact, if any, of the NSW Police Service's Crimes Index on Cabramatta's policing
- effectiveness of the Police Service in addressing the needs and problems of Cabramatta's residents and, in particular, people from non-English speaking backgrounds

The Committee commenced its twelve month Inquiry in July 2000 by collecting formal evidence through a call for public submissions and holding ten public hearings attended by 37 expert and other witnesses.

The Committee also held a series of informal public consultation sessions with Cabramatta residents, schools, and community workers.

On 26 July 2001, the Committee tabled its Cabramatta Policing report and 25 recommendations to "bring about a more open, outward looking and responsive Police Service" and to deal with the particular policing difficulties it had identified in Cabramatta.

The Government is working through these recommendations. Our response and action to date are included in Part 2 of this report.

Cabramatta today

While there is still much work to be done, significant inroads have been made in reducing the level of local drug crime and its impact on Cabramatta:

- about 75 drug houses have been eliminated in Cabramatta
- Cabramatta Police have issued 2,487 directions under new “move-on” powers which commenced on 1 July 2001
- in 2001, 209 people in Greater Hume (including Cabramatta) were charged with 288 drug supply offences, an increase of 50 percent from 2000

The Director of the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has reported that recent trends in recorded crime in Cabramatta, compared with the rest of the State, are “quite favourable” (Appendix A).

The effectiveness of the targeted and concentrated policing in Cabramatta is evident in the following trends for January 2000-December 2001:

- Cabramatta Police have maintained their concentrated level of detecting narcotics (heroin) dealing and trafficking offences compared to the statewide decline of 45.9 percent
- Cabramatta Police have increased their detection of cocaine users by 384.2 percent and cocaine dealers by 1,366.7 percent compared to the statewide increases of 121.2 percent and 146 percent respectively
- weapons offences in general in Cabramatta declined by 19.2 percent compared to an increase statewide

The Bureau has also reported that trends for the following offences generally reflect underlying crime trends and public willingness to report crime. In Cabramatta during January 2000-December 2001:

- motor vehicle thefts declined by 37 percent while the statewide trend remained stable
- stealing from a motor vehicle went down by 24.8 percent while the statewide trend remained stable
- robbery with a weapon that is not a firearm went down by 7.1 percent while the statewide trend remained stable
- robbery without a weapon declined by 4.9 percent while the statewide trend remained stable

The evidence indicates that increased policing and law enforcement activity in the Cabramatta area has helped reduce the availability and use of heroin:

- the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has recorded a 63.9 percent fall in the number of possession/use of narcotics (heroin) offences since December 2000
- In 2001, there was a substantial decline in the number of needles and syringes dispensed to drug users in the Cabramatta/Fairfield area:
 - the number of needles dispensed dropped from 195,420 in October-December 2000 to 46,140 in the equivalent period for 2001
 - the number of needles dispensed from the Drug Intervention Service Cabramatta van dropped from 40,239 in January 2001 to 9,991 in January 2002
- There has been an overall decrease in the number of drug related deaths. In the six months after 1 July 2001, there were five drug related deaths in the Cabramatta area compared to 24 deaths in the corresponding period for 2000
- The number of ambulance call-outs in Cabramatta to suspected overdose incidents has fallen dramatically. There were 15 call-outs in the six months after 1 July 2001 compared to 385 call-outs in the corresponding period for 2000

The Heroin shortage

The Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy has been implemented in a broader context. Since December 2000, there has been a heroin shortage in NSW and the rest of Australia.

The Australian Illicit Drug Report for 2000-2001, which was released on 12 March 2002, showed that the cooperative law enforcement approach between Commonwealth, State and international agencies continues to be the most effective deterrent to illicit drugs entering Australia.

The Commonwealth Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Ellison reported that the heroin shortage in Australia "is largely due to significant law enforcement seizures and the disruption of drug trafficking routes and organised crime".

In December 2000, a joint NSW Police, Customs and Australian Federal Police operation led to the seizure of 184kg of heroin destined for the streets.

Since July 2001, NSW Police alone have seized:

- 1.6 kg of heroin worth almost \$1.5 million
- 55.2 kg of cannabis worth more than \$21.5 million and

- 14.4 kg of cocaine worth about \$14.5 million

However, the heroin shortage is also attributable to factors outside the control of Australian Governments and their law enforcement agencies.

Eighty percent of Australia's heroin comes from Myanmar and the Golden Triangle in South East Asia. Opium production in Myanmar has fallen because of poor rainfall. A significant proportion of Myanmar's heroin is also being redirected from Australia to the rapidly growing population of heroin users in other Asian countries.

While these external factors have helped local efforts in reducing the drug trade and drug related crime in Cabramatta and elsewhere, this also means that there can be no room for complacency. Drug markets fluctuate. A positive trend one year could be replaced by a negative trend the following year which may adversely impact on Government efforts to tackle the drug trade and drug crime.

The Government is watching the evidence of this closely in implementing its commitments under the Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy and in responding to the recommendations of the Cabramatta Policing Inquiry.

chapter one: a criminal justice plan stronger powers and more effective policing

- reduce drug crime
- better police resources
- increase feeling of safety
- increase public confidence
- improve public amenity

Highlights

- about 75 drug houses eliminated in Cabramatta
- 50 people charged with being in a drug house in Cabramatta
- 209 people charged in Greater Hume with 288 supply charges
 - 532 charges for illegal firearm trafficking in NSW
- 214 people charged with illegal possession of firearms
- 12 persons charged with 184 illegal firearms supply offences
 - 5,772 firearms surrendered to police
 - 72,381 firearms newly registered
- Cabramatta Local Area Command re-graded to Grade 1
- new \$12.78 million Cabramatta police station by mid 2003
- 10 extra drug detective positions and 5 appointments to date
 - 6 additional rapid response Bicycle Squad officers

Commitments & Action

New legislation to shut down drug houses and “move-on” drug dealers and users

The Government's *Police Powers (Drug Premises) Act 2001* commenced on 1 July 2001, to provide police with new, better targeted powers to tackle drug crime

and effectively counter new methods being adopted by drug dealers. In response to police targeting street drug crime in Cabramatta, many drug dealers moved from the street into drug houses.

Many of these premises are fortified with steel doors and guarded by lookouts to alert illicit drug dealers to police presence. This meant that illicit drugs were often destroyed before police could gain entry to the premises, making prosecution under the old laws difficult.

The *Police Powers (Drug Premises) Act 2001* empowers police to:

- search and close down drug houses
- arrest drug dealers and lookouts operating from drug houses
- arrest any person in or entering or leaving a drug house (and require them to establish that they have a lawful purpose or excuse to be there to avoid conviction)
- hold owners of premises criminally responsible if those premises are used as drug houses.

Under the Act, police do not have to prove there are illicit drugs on a suspected drug premises but may rely on a wide range of evidence including:

- police being wilfully obstructed from entering the premises
- external or internal construction to prevent entry to the premises including bolts, bars, and chains
- people acting as look-outs to warn of police presence
- syringes and other devices used in the supply, manufacture or use of drugs
- presence of what appear to be drug affected people on the premises
- large amounts of money which the occupier or owner of the premises cannot account for.



(left) Fortified entrance to a drug house

Drug premises: Police experience in Cabramatta

"Most drug premises in Cabramatta are in residential units close to the town centre and the railway station. They can be fortified with heavy metal doors and bars on windows. It is not uncommon for wedges or bars to be pressed against the back of doors or for doors to be reinforced with metal plates.

Drug premises are generally filthy with decaying food scraps and piles of rubbish spread about, surrounded by flies. Used and unused items of drug paraphernalia such as syringes, swabs, foil, scales, and balloons are also scattered about.

These premises are unfurnished with no normal signs of occupation or living, like fridges, beds, furniture, cutlery and no food in cupboards. There can, however, be items like stereos, televisions and Playstations to entertain the drug dealers.

There are also often weapons such as machetes, firearms and knives, large amounts of cash of up to \$10,000 and more, and stolen property which has been used to exchange for drugs, like televisions, laptop computers, stereos, videos and DVDS."

*Michael Weston, Detective Senior Constable,
Cabramatta Detectives Office*

Since 1 January 2001, about 75 drug houses in Cabramatta have been eliminated, including 15 shut down since 1 July 2001 using the new drug premises legislation. There is no sign that they are re-opening.

"The new drug premises legislation has provided the Police with the capacity to deal effectively with this phenomena.

The police have applied the legislation in the attack on drugs with the effect of putting this type of drug dealing out of business"

*Superintendent Frank Hansen
Cabramatta Local Area
Commander*

(right) Policing in Cabramatta



The introduction of new offences under this legislation has meant that police have been able to successfully target and charge a much wider range of drug offenders than was formerly possible. Up to March 21 2002:

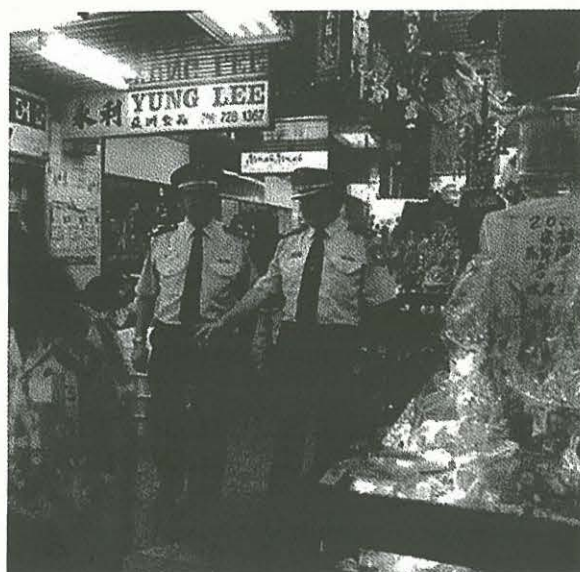
- 50 people in Cabramatta have been charged with being in, entering or leaving a drug house
- 14 people in Cabramatta have been charged with organising, conducting, or allowing a premise to be used as, a drug house

The Act applies statewide to ensure that major, organised commercial drug dealers and manufacturers across NSW can be similarly dealt with. There have been 209 charges issued statewide under the new laws.

Move-on powers

To help clear Cabramatta's streets and public spaces of congregating drug dealers and users and disrupt street dealing, amendments were also made to the *Summary Offences Act 1988* to provide police with a new "move-on" power.

If police have a reasonable suspicion that a person is involved with the unlawful supply or purchase of a prohibited drug, police can now direct drug dealers and users to move from the area.



Police in Cabramatta have issued move-on directions on 2,487 occasions since 1 July 2001.

Milestones

- About 75 drug houses eliminated from Cabramatta
- 50 people in Cabramatta charged for entering, leaving or being in a drug house and 14 people charged with organising, conducting, or allowing a premise to be used as, a drug house
- 209 people charged in Greater Hume with supply of drugs, a 50 percent increase from 2000

- 288 drug supply charges laid across Greater Hume, a 54 percent increase from 2000
- 2,487 “move-on” directions issued in Cabramatta

Case study 1: Police search of Cabramatta drug house

In July 2001, local police executed a search warrant under the *Police Powers (Drug Premises) Act 2001* against a house in Cabramatta, acting on complaints from the community about the premises and police intelligence reports.

Police found drug paraphernalia on the premises and seized a half gram of heroin. Four individuals were charged with new drug premises offences. A three year old child on the premises was referred to the Department of Community Services.

One individual was sentenced to six months imprisonment for being in a drug house while a second individual received a 12 month bond for the same offence and was ordered to participate in a drug treatment program under probation and parole supervision. Other charges are still to be determined.

Case study 2: Operation Tira

As police activity in Cabramatta forced drug dealers into surrounding areas, police targeted those new centres of drug dealing with a series of major operations.

In October 2001, more than 300 officers from Operation Tira raided 30 drug houses across south-western Sydney.

42 people were arrested and 149 charges were preferred for:

- supplying heroin, cocaine and amphetamines
- possession of paraphernalia
- possession of firearms and knives
- operating a drug house

Heroin, amphetamines, cocaine and cannabis valued at \$5 million were seized along with \$16,000 in cash and \$52,000 in property.

Another element of this comprehensive legislative package are amendments to the *Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990*. These amendments enable the NSW Crime Commission to confiscate the assets of drug house owners who have more than once allowed their premises to be used as a drug house.

Police Powers (Internally Concealed Drugs) Act 2001

This legislation was developed in response to the practice of street dealers attempting to avoid police detection by swallowing or otherwise internally concealing their supply of drugs.

The *Police Powers (Internally Concealed Drugs) Act 2001* will enable police to detain suspected drug dealers and offenders and obtain consent for a non-intrusive search such as an X-ray or CT scan in a hospital or medical practitioner's surgery. This will apply to any person over the age of ten years believed to be concealing prohibited drugs for the purpose of illicit supply.

The commencement of this legislation has been delayed until the procedures of putting it into effect have been resolved. Arrangements are being finalised with one metropolitan and one regional hospital for these non-intrusive searches to be done in those facilities.

The Government will implement the legislation by mid-2002.

New legislation to tackle the illegal trafficking of firearms

Police have long recognised the strong link between drug dealers and the illegal trafficking of firearms for often criminal purposes.

The *Firearms Amendment (Trafficking) Act 2001* was introduced to limit the availability of these firearms for criminal use by ensuring police have sufficient enforcement powers to tackle illegal trafficking.

The legislation commenced on 1 July 2001 to provide police with powers to not only target those involved with the actual illegal sale and purchase of these firearms but also the criminal masterminds who organise, and profit from, large scale illegal trafficking.

The legislation has introduced new powers and offences to help police tackle illegal trafficking:

- the definition of possessing an illegal firearm has been expanded to overcome a legal loop-hole used by offenders to avoid prosecution. Police

can now charge the owner or occupier of a premises where an illegal firearm is found and that person must establish why they should be not found in possession

- there is a broader range of supply offences, including sale to persons unauthorised to possess a firearm, illegally taking part in a sale or illegal ongoing sales, and illegal purchase of a firearm
- cross-border conspiracies can now be targeted as NSW penalties apply to conspirators in NSW although the crime is committed in another State
- there are new offences relating to dealers including wilfully recording false details and acting as a front for an illegal dealer, and new requirements for dealers to declare close associates, record all firearms parts and allow police to inspect them to stop these parts being used in the making illegal guns
- Police are able to prescribe unsuitable people from being involved with the sale of firearms

To help deter criminal activity, new tough penalties have been introduced and existing maximum penalties increased:

- 20 years imprisonment for illegal trafficking of a prohibited firearm or pistol
- 14 years for illegal possession of a handgun or prohibited firearm (up from 10 years)
- 14 years for dealers wilfully recording false details in firearms transactions

Further amendments were made to the *Criminal Assets Recovery Act 1990* to enable the NSW Crime Commission to confiscate the assets of persons who have illegally sold firearms on an ongoing basis.

Firearms Amnesty

To ensure that these new laws did not impact on otherwise law abiding citizens, a six month Firearms Amnesty commenced on 29 June 2001 to enable people to register or surrender firearms without being exposed to penalties.

Milestones

- 447 charges laid statewide for illegal firearms trafficking
- 12 persons charged with 184 charges for illegally supplying firearms

- 214 people charged with illegal possession since the penalty was increased
- 50 people, who may have escaped charges under previous legislation, successfully charged with the new extended definition of illegal possession
- 5,772 firearms surrendered to police under the Firearms Amnesty
- 72,381 firearms registered during the Firearms Amnesty

Case study: Strike Force Tanego

In September 2001, Police conducted extensive physical and electronic surveillance of a large scale suspected conspiracy for illegal firearms trafficking.

The new legislation enabled Police to take action against the conspiracy which would not have been possible under the old laws. There were six arrests with 326 charges laid. 21 handguns, 14 rifles and six shotguns were seized.

Significantly, Police were able to arrest three principal offenders and to arrest two other offenders who could not have been successfully charged under the old legislation.

Cabramatta - a Grade 1 command

On 4 April 2001, the Cabramatta Police Local Area Command was re-graded to be a Grade 1 command in recognition that Cabramatta is a complex policing area which should be a priority.

The grading of a police command determines the rank and salary of its police officers, and the more challenging police work required in a Grade 1 command is rewarded by higher rank and salaries.

The upgrade for Cabramatta will ensure that the Police Service's most senior and experienced officers will choose to work there.

The facilities and resources of the Cabramatta Local Area Command are also being significantly enhanced to better help police to effectively tackle the particular policing needs and challenges of the Cabramatta area.

The Government has allocated \$12.78 million to build a new police station for Cabramatta. Construction of the new facility has been given the highest priority and is scheduled to be completed in the second half of 2003.

In the interim, the existing accommodation needs of the Local Area Command, which were identified in evidence to the Cabramatta Policing Inquiry, will be better met by the location of a new portable building at the Police Station in April 2002.

The Police presence in Cabramatta has also been boosted and consolidated:

- 10 new drug detective positions available – 5 detectives appointed to date
- Rapid response
Cabramatta Police Bicycle Squad boosted from 6 to 12 officers
- Crime Coordinator and Investigations Manager appointed
- 5 new duty officers positions – 4 appointed
- Drug detection dogs available as required



The full quota of 90 officers in the Greater Hume Tactical Action Group has also been effective in targeting drug crime and crime hotspots in the Cabramatta area.

As part of Stage 2 of the restructure of the NSW Police, the Greater Hume Tactical Action Group will be working from Local Area Commands from 1 July 2002. The Team will retain the capacity for both cross-command operations and single command blitzes as have been undertaken in the Cabramatta area to date.

Milestones

- Cabramatta Police Station upgraded to Grade 1
- New \$12.78 million Cabramatta police station to be completed in 2003

- 10 additional drug detectives positions at Cabramatta and 5 new appointments to date
- 6 new Cabramatta bicycle squad officers appointed
- 5 new Cabramatta duty officers positions and 4 appointed

Interpreter services - ensuring the Cabramatta community can report crime to police

Evidence given in public hearings to the Cabramatta Policing Inquiry confirmed the need already identified in the Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy, that non-English speaking members of the community needed help to ensure they are able or willing to report crime to the police.

The Government has allocated \$150,000 per annum for four years to the NSW Police to ensure that Cabramatta police are able to access interpreters as needed for community languages in Cabramatta.

Interpreter services are provided to Cabramatta police by 24 hour access to:

- 75 languages through the Community Relation Commission's telephone service
- face to face interpreter services from the Community Relations Commission.

General inquiries to Cabramatta Police by members of the public can also be dealt with by Ethnic Community Liaison Officers and general support staff.

In August 2001, a trial arrangement was set in place with a Vietnamese interpreter available at the Cabramatta Police Station from 12.00 pm to 8.00 pm seven days a week.

The experience of this four month trial indicated this may not be the most effective way of providing the interpreter services required at Cabramatta.

A new approach has been adopted. The Local Area Command is using the Community Relations Commission's on-call and telephone interpreter services, and the Commission has employed an additional Vietnamese interpreter dedicated to giving priority to the interpreter needs of the Cabramatta Local Area Command.

The needs of Cabramatta continue to be under consideration. The Community Relations Commission will be surveying non-English speaking members of the Cabramatta community about their contact with police and will develop recommendations based on the survey results. This will be completed in the coming months.

chapter two: a compulsory treatment plan breaking the drug – crime cycle

- reducing drug use
- stopping re-offending
- better opportunities for treatment
- more effective links to services

Highlights

- 33 offenders bailed by Police to be assessed for treatment
 - 393 offenders bailed to not return to Cabramatta
 - 70 offenders referred to Cabramatta MERIT
- 15 offenders currently participating in Cabramatta MERIT
 - 8 Cabramatta MERIT graduates
 - 100 extra drug treatment places
 - 50 extra crisis accommodation places
 - 42 people provided crisis accommodation

Commitments & Action

Bail conditions for compulsory drug treatment

The introduction of new police powers to tackle the drug crime problem in Cabramatta and elsewhere in NSW has meant that police are coming into contact with more drug users.

Many drug users have serious health problems, chronic addictions, and are often homeless. Many also turn to crime to pay for their drugs. The introduction of compulsory drug treatment under the Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy is critical to stopping this drug-crime cycle.

Since 1 July 2001, Cabramatta police have been able to use the Police Drug Bail Scheme when they have reasonable grounds to believe that treating an offender's drug problem will stop the person re-offending on release to finance more drug taking.

Police are now able to order adult drug offenders to attend drug assessment and treatment as a condition of bail.

This scheme is only open to offenders who are Cabramatta residents and who pose no risk to the community. For non-resident offenders, police can instead impose a mandatory bail condition that the offender not return to the Cabramatta area unless they have a legitimate reason to do so.

Participants in this scheme are able to quickly access treatment. Clinical assessments must be completed within one day of referral and a dedicated contact number has been established for referrals on a 24 hour/seven days a week basis. Assistance may also be sought from the Cabramatta Street Team and other services.

Milestones

- As of 28 February 2002, 33 offenders referred by Police to health services for assessment
 - 6 offenders completed their treatment
 - 6 offenders referred for mental health assessment and treatment
 - 7 offenders referred for treatment to another service
 - 2 offenders referred for residential rehabilitation
 - 1 offender referred to accommodation services
- To March 20 2002, 393 offenders bailed by Police to not to return to Cabramatta

Case study 1: Rhonda

Rhonda is 17 years of age and homeless. She was also a regular heroin user with a high potential for significant physical withdrawal syndrome. She was not well supported by her family.

Cabramatta Police referred Rhonda for assessment and treatment under the Police Drug Bail Scheme. The Cabramatta Street Team helped her through the assessment and negotiation of her treatment plan.

Because Rhonda was homeless, she was admitted after hours to the Corella Lodge detoxification unit. While there, she continued to be helped by the Street Team and arrangements were made for a local youth recovery support service to provide ongoing support for her and make future plans.

Rhonda has now completed her detoxification and is currently in a residential rehabilitation service.

Case study 2: Nhan

Nhan is an unemployed 21 year old living with his parents. There was conflict within the family and Nhan had recently had a failed relationship. He had started using heroin more frequently over the last few months.

Cabramatta Police bailed Nhan under the Police Drug Bail program on the condition that he receive drug treatment.

The Police referred Nhan to the specialist Central Assessment Service in the South West Sydney Area Health Service and a treatment plan was developed. He undertook detoxification and counselling sessions with a General Practitioner. Nhan successfully completed his treatment plan and did not require follow up counselling.

Cabramatta MERIT – diverting offenders into treatment

The Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment (MERIT) Program is a drug-crime diversion initiative which operates through the Local Court. As a condition of bail, magistrates can order adult defendants with drug problems to undertake assessment and supervised drug treatment before final sentencing occurs. This may be taken into account at sentencing.

As part of the Government's statewide roll-out of the program, MERIT was originally to commence in Cabramatta in July 2002. However, this was expedited under the Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy.

Cabramatta MERIT commenced on 2 July 2001, in the Liverpool Local Court, which hears the majority of drug charges laid in Cabramatta.

By providing bailed defendants with a specific and managed plan for their care and treatment, defendants are helped to stop their illicit drug use and criminal

offending. People who have committed violent or sexual offences are not eligible for MERIT, helping ensure that community safety is protected.

Cabramatta MERIT has now been expanded to cover the whole Fairfield Local Government Area to provide opportunities for a greater number of adult defendants with drug problems to benefit from the program.

Milestones

To 20 March 2002:

- 70 people referred to Cabramatta MERIT for assessment
- 28 accepted into the program
- 15 currently in the program
- 8 graduates from Cabramatta MERIT

"[Police] don't want to see the gaols clogged up with drug users.

[Police] want to see them get treatment and stop committing crime. In this way, both the individuals and the community benefit"

Clive Small,
Regional Commander
Greater Hume Region
December 2001-March 2002

Case study 1: Joe

Joe is 41 years of age and has a long history of heroin and cannabis use. In the Cabramatta MERIT program, he received counselling, participated in a transition program and recreational activities.

Urine tests confirmed he was drug free during the three months he was on the program. After graduating, he was sentenced to 80 hours of community service. The program has helped Joe regain control of his life. On his own initiative, he is continuing treatment, has re-connected with his family, and is actively looking for work. Health workers are confident he will succeed in living independently and remaining drug free.

Case study 2: Mr Tran

Mr Tran is 20 years old and has a three year history of heroin use. Participating in the program helped him stop his drug use and start afresh. When Mr Tran was reviewed several weeks after graduating from program he had found a job and was still drug free.

Expanded services for drug treatment

One of the keys to the success of the MERIT and Police Bail schemes is ready access to effective drug treatment services in the Cabramatta and south-western Sydney area.

Since early 2001, the Government has been negotiating with Fairfield City Council to reach agreement on a comprehensive plan to expand drug treatment services in the area, including up to 500 additional drug treatment places.

These negotiations have been complex. Past experience with poorly planned treatment services in the area has caused community concern about new treatment facilities being established in local commercial and residential areas.

One hundred drug treatment places have already been made available at Liverpool Hospital. To date, this has met demand.

The Government is working with Fairfield City Council to identify an appropriate site for a treatment facility which is outside commercial and residential areas and away from the main streets of Cabramatta and Fairfield. The facility will dispense medication to up to 300 people.

The Government is also developing an alternative plan for the provision of after-services for people who have been in acute care treatment. New non-residential after-care services will be provided for day or evening group programs, counselling and welfare support.

Residential mental health services are being provided through a local non government provider, GROW, which is giving priority access to up to four people at a time referred from programs under the Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy.

Other mental health services are being provided through the Fairfield-Liverpool Mental Health Service where two specialist mental health nurses provide assessment and arrange for on-going treatment.

Milestones

- 100 treatment places available for Cabramatta MERIT and Police Drug Bail
- 4 residential mental health treatment beds established with priority for Cabramatta

The new Central Assessment Service established to coordinate the assessment and referral of people requiring drug treatment services has resulted in a 10 percent improvement in the rate of completion of detoxification programs.

Linking drug and alcohol affected homeless people to services

The *Intoxicated Persons Act 1979* enables Police to detain intoxicated and often homeless people who are found in public places and who may be a harm to themselves or others. The intoxication may be caused by alcohol or other drugs.

Police are able to release these people to their families or refer them to treatment, accommodation and other services.

To ensure that Police are able to refer intoxicated people to appropriate services, Police, NSW Health and the Department of Community Services are required to develop protocols in each local area which set out in practical terms how this will be achieved.

The local protocol for Cabramatta was expedited under the Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy and commenced on 1 July 2001.

Milestones

- 11 people referred under the Cabramatta Intoxicated Persons Local Protocol to health services for immediate assessment of health risks (three refused assessment)
- 6 people entered into treatment and two referred to other treatment services
- 8 people accommodated by the Cabramatta Street Team at housing designated for use under the protocol
- 2 people referred for mental health assessment under the protocol

Working with intoxicated people has particular challenges. People assisted under the Intoxicated Persons Protocol are often intoxicated, uncooperative and refuse help. In other cases, a continuing relationship can develop when a client relapses into his or her addiction and needs ongoing support.

Case study 1: Deborah

Deborah is 16 years old, a heroin user and homeless. Cabramatta police found her in an intoxicated state because of her heroin use and she was charged with possession of an illicit drug.

The Police referred Deborah to the Cabramatta Street Team who tried to find a responsible adult to take care of her so she could be released on bail. Her family were not willing to do this but agreed to Deborah being placed in temporary care for 3 months. The Street Team also arranged for Deborah to have an immediate health risk screen by the Central Assessment Team and to have supervised overnight accommodation at housing dedicated for use under the Protocol.

Deborah subsequently completed her detoxification program and remained in rehabilitation for three weeks. However, she relapsed and is again using heroin and on the streets. The Street Team are continuing to work with Deborah.

Case study 2: Peter

Peter is 40 years old and attempted to commit suicide by jumping from a moving train. He was acutely intoxicated, incoherent, confused and uncooperative. Under the Cabramatta Intoxicated Persons Local Protocol, Police took Peter to the Central Assessment Service for immediate assessment. Peter was assessed to be at risk of harm to himself and others. He was admitted for treatment to the Mental Health Unit at Liverpool Hospital.

Ensuring there is crisis accommodation to meet need

People with serious drug problems often have housing or other social needs which keep them at risk of harm, including turning to crime to find a means of supporting themselves and their drug taking.

To prevent or break through this cycle, one component of the Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy is the provision of 50 additional crisis accommodation places to help people stabilise and regain some control of their lives.

There are now 40 short term leases in Cabramatta and 10 long term leases for accommodation available in Cabramatta and other areas, depending on the needs of the client. Most accommodation places are provided for three months.

At present, there are 35 people (including seven families) housed under this program which is being managed by the non-government service provider, Hume Community Housing.

Providing the opportunity for stable accommodation has helped people maintain their schooling, hold down jobs and help them move in a new direction.

Milestones

- 42 people provided with accommodation since 1 July 2001
- 35 people currently housed, including 7 families
- 14 of these people have succeeded in stabilising their lives and remaining in these tenancies for several months

Case study: Cindy

Cindy was a habitual drug user and homeless. Although she had a family who cared for her, her drug addiction meant living at home was not an option. She had tried to stop taking drugs but found it too difficult to go through with.

To keep off the streets, she spent the night in a backyard tract but was picked up by Police after complaints from the property owner. At the court, Cindy met June, a counsellor and support worker with the Cabramatta MERIT program. June recognised that Cindy needed a stable place to live to avoid returning to the streets or winding up behind bars.

June arranged crisis accommodation for Cindy and another client, Matt. Cindy and Matt agreed that sharing a flat would mean they could support each other back to a normal lifestyle. They were provided with money from a local community centre to pay the bond on the flat and buy some furniture.

Cindy and Matt continue to receive support from June. They have started on a methadone program. Cindy has enrolled at TAFE to finish her HSC and has regained contact with her family. June is confident that Cindy and Matt now have a stable base to start making progress on their own.

chapter three: a plan for local crime prevention building partnerships

- local solutions
- better communication
- shared ideas
- responding to diversity

Highlights

- City Watch Council operating
- 6 link groups of local representatives meeting
- 110 people participate in City Watch's first annual community workshop
- first 13 police language skills graduates
- 125 Cabramatta police trained in cultural awareness

Commitments & Action

City Watch – working towards local solutions

Community policing is a key component of the NSW Police, *Future Directions strategy for 2001-2005*. Police are developing partnerships with all sections of the community to promote a shared responsibility for crime prevention, crime reduction and public safety.

In places like Cabramatta, there are special challenges and opportunities to this approach.

Cabramatta is one of the most culturally diverse suburbs in Australia². Sixty eight percent of its population were born in a non-English speaking country compared to just over twenty three percent across Sydney as a whole.

² Cabramatta Place Management Project, Premier's Department, NSW Government, 2001 (based on Australian Bureau of Statistics' 1996 Census on Population and Housing)

Thirty one percent of Cabramatta's population is from Vietnam followed by Cambodia (9.5%), China (6.5%), former Yugoslavia (3%) and Laos (2.6%).

Seventy nine percent speak a language other than English at home, compared to twenty six percent across Sydney. Nearly half the Cabramatta population do not speak English or do not speak English well.



The main non-English languages spoken in Cabramatta are:

- Vietnamese (25.3%)
- Cantonese (15.4%),
- Khmer (6%)
- Mandarin (4.8%)
- Serbian (4.1%),
- Spanish (2.6%)
- Lao (2.1%).

(left) Cabramatta

Cabramatta's diversity is dynamic and enriching. It also poses challenges.

Since 4 July 2001, the Cabramatta City Watch program has been operating to enable local police, the community, businesses, and government representatives to work together to develop local solutions to crime, promote community safety, and enhance local policing.

This unique and innovative project brings together community leaders and local people, many being among the most disenfranchised of the Cabramatta community.

The City Watch program was proposed by the Local Member for Cabramatta and developed by the Community Relations Commission. The Commission is also responsible for driving the program's implementation.

The main forum for discussion and decision-making is the City Watch Council which comprises:

- Cabramatta Local Area Commander and other senior local Police
- Chair of the NSW Community Relations Commission
- Mayor of the Fairfield City Council
- Local Member for Cabramatta
- President of the Vietnamese Community in Australia

- Cabramatta Business Association
- Canley Vale Chamber of Commerce
- Cabramatta Chamber of Commerce
- Principal of Cabramatta High School
- Cabramatta Neighbourhood Watch Link Group
- NSW Premier's Department
- NSW Premier's Youth Advisory Council.

The Council has now met five times. It is supported by a network of link groups which represent particular community interests and focus on community safety needs. The establishment of the link groups network is a staged process and each is represented on the City Watch Council as they are established.

Link groups which have already commenced include those representing Neighbourhood Watch, Educators' (principals of local primary and high schools), Youth, Khmer Elderly, Senior Citizens, and Media and Public Relations.

New link groups to be established shortly include Khmer Workers, Lao Community, Student Representatives, Business, and the Youth and Policing Issues link group. Work has already started on establishing others.

By bringing these groups face to face in the forum of the City Watch Council, there is opportunity for stereotypes to be overcome and for the perception of people from different backgrounds and interests to be better understood.

"...City Watch [is] an opportunity for people living in Cabramatta to talk and take a more active role in managing their city.

As for me, it was great to see so many people from diverse backgrounds and age groups discussing and sharing their ideas for the first time.

[City Watch] addresses more than community concerns...it promotes harmony in our community...."

*Soour Hai Gou
Community Relations Director
Cambodian-Australia Welfare Council*

An annual Cabramatta City Watch Community Workshop has also been instituted as a mechanism for surveying community priorities and concerns.

On 5 December 2001, 110 people attended the first workshop and identified a range of community concerns and possible action regarding the negative media

representation of Cabramatta, drugs and crime, and youth resources and facilities.

Milestones

- The City Watch Council has now met on five occasions
- Six link groups formed – and five to be established shortly
- Annual community forum instituted

Planned key initiatives for 2002 – proposals from links groups and first annual Community Workshop

- Children's Day family carnival
- Youth & Parenting Forums to deal with local needs
- Senior citizens' workshop to identify key concerns and provide service information
- New Cabramatta press kit to encourage positive media depiction of Cabramatta
- Emergency contact information sheets in six community languages
- Seminars for small business on safety and crime

(below) first annual City Watch Community Workshop



Better skills for police working with the community

As part of the Diploma in Policing Practice, all recruits to the NSW Police receive training to increase their skills in dealing with people from different cultures and to raise their awareness of the cultural and racial issues affecting different community groups.

Building on this, NSW Police have also instituted a specialist TAFE certificate course which is facilitated through the Randwick TAFE (Sydney Institute) for officers of the Cabramatta Local Area Command.

Through this course, Cabramatta police are being trained to have a basic knowledge of Vietnamese for simple conversations and take down crime reports. Officers will also have an appreciation of Vietnamese culture and history.

(below) Cabramatta police and community members

A shorter course is also available to officers in the Cabramatta area.

In November 2001, the *Cabramatta Police and Community Training (PACT)* program was launched after four years of consultation between local police and the community.

Its focus of improving trust between the community and police was determined by the community and encapsulated in a video ("A Question of Trust").



Milestones

- In December 2001, the first 13 officers graduated from the specialist TAFE course
- 122 officers in the Cabramatta area progressively trained in the shorter course in cultural awareness and skills
- Cabramatta PACT program launched in November 2001

chapter four: a prevention and early intervention plan helping young people and families

- supporting and informing families
 - reconnecting families
- better linking of people with services
 - enhancing public amenity
- keeping young people at school

Highlights

- 377 people helped by the Street Team
 - 219 people on the streets referred to services
 - 8,457 discarded syringes cleaned from public areas
- 43 students being helped through the Gateways Program
 - *Schools as Community Centres* established in 4 schools
 - *Primary Connect* to be trialed in Cabramatta

Commitments & Action

Cabramatta Street Team

Homelessness has many causes including the use of illicit drugs, family conflict, and physical, emotional and other forms of abuse. In Cabramatta, there have been estimates that there may be up to 100 homeless young people in the area.

Since 1 July 2001, the Cabramatta Street Team has been working 7 days a week

in two shifts to make contact with runaway or homeless, and often drug or alcohol affected, young people and adults on Cabramatta's streets.

The Street Team works proactively and carries out street patrols in areas known to be frequented by young people at risk. Some patrols are with local police.

The Street Team's aim is to re-connect people with their families or link them to any accommodation, drug and alcohol, and other services they may need. The Team includes a Vietnamese and Aboriginal caseworker, and works closely with local police, youth and other organisations. It is co-located with the Cabramatta Police, working side by side with frontline police.

"The introduction of the Street Team initiative is considered a success. It shows the benefits of police and other government agencies working collaboratively and focussing on the cause of problems of this nature, rather than relying on the criminal justice system to attempt to resolve them in isolation."

*Superintendent Frank Hansen,
Cabramatta Local Area
Commander*



(above) Cabramatta Street Team

Milestones

The Street Team has:

- had contact with approximately 377 clients on 708 occasions
- conducted 547 street patrols, including 11 with Cabramatta police (who have made 171 referrals to the Street Team)
- been approached directly by people in need on 128 occasions
- referred 219 people to accommodation, drug and alcohol, and other services
- removed 7 children at risk of harm from unsafe homes under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 2000*

Case study 1: Karen's story

Fourteen year old Karen ran away from home because of conflict with her parents. She was reported missing to Cabramatta police who referred her details to the Street Team. The Street Team initiated street patrols, distributed Karen's details to local organisations and youth hangouts, and ultimately made contact with her.

Over six weeks, the Street Team was able to work with Karen to identify why she left home and what would help Karen return to her family. The Street Team organised for Karen to have foster care, re-enrolled her in school, and set up family counselling for Karen and her parents.

Karen's case has now been transferred to the Department of Community Services where work continues to re-unite the family.

Case study 2: Rosie's story

Sixteen year old Rosie is pregnant and had nowhere to live. She is also a prior heroin user and was buying methadone off the streets.

Rosie was referred to the Street Team by a local support service. She was offered intensive ongoing support but repeatedly refused all help. She was accommodated in the Cabramatta Street Team's dedicated house overnight with two youth workers on call to support her.

Rosie is now being case managed by the Street Team under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 2000*. After three and a half months, the Street Team continues to link Rosie to drug and alcohol and ante-natal services.

Case study 3: Sheree's story

Seventeen year old Sheree is a young Aboriginal woman with a history of heroin use. She has also been involved in prostitution.

Sheree was referred to the Street Team by the local needle and syringe exchange and information bus. The Street Team arranged detoxification and other support services for Sheree, including transport to services and for court attendances.

The Street Team also arranged for Sheree to participate in a course targeting young unemployed people and to receive government financial support. The Street Team referred Sheree to a vocational training course where she is currently participating.

Cabramatta Needle and Syringe Clean- up

This is a Government initiative with Fairfield City Council and the Drug Intervention Service Cabramatta (DISC). It aims to enhance the public amenity of local residents and business by clearing Cabramatta's streets and public areas of discarded used needles and syringes.

This clean-up work is done by periodic detainees from the Metropolitan Detention Centre at Parramatta who are carefully screened by the Council and DISC. Periodic detainees with drug-related backgrounds are not selected for this work.

Milestones

Since 1 July 2001, the Clean-up teams have worked on 1,162 occasions and collected:

- 8,457 one ml syringes
- 493 three-packs of one ml syringes
- 134 five packs of one ml syringes
- 123 ten packs of one ml syringes
- 19 barrels (a two, five or ten ml syringe)

Helping families cope with illicit drug problems

People with entrenched illicit drug problems need intensive support to help them overcome their long standing drug habits and break out of that lifestyle.

The best support is often to reconnect them with their families. But this is very difficult for many families who have been damaged or torn apart by the impact of a family member using illicit drugs.

Uniting *Care* Burnside's "Moving Forward" provides intensive family support and therapeutic counselling for these families while also linking people to drug treatment and other services that may be needed.

While the package of support for individual families varies according to need, on average they are supported for four to five months.

Milestones (since the program commenced in November 2001)

- 17 families, including 22 family members who are drug users, have been helped:
 - 8 families self-referred to the program
 - 4 families were referred by the Cabramatta Street Team
 - 4 families were referred from other community organisations
 - 1 family was referred by the Department of Community Services
- Of these families, five cases have been closed. Only one family was not ready to accept help through the program.

Case study: Family A

Family A is a Khmer family of five who have lived in Australia for 16 years, after several years in a Thai refugee camp. The eldest son used illicit drugs and had previously been in gaol for drug dealing on Cabramatta's streets to pay for his drug habits. He also had Hepatitis C. The youngest son is currently in prison for drug dealing.

Over four months the family received intensive support. The eldest son was counselled and supported through his detoxification. He was shown how to improve his health, lifestyle and helped to make plans for his future. He has had a few relapses when he used illicit drugs but is no longer involved in drug dealing. He is also communicating better with his family and contributing to their living costs.

The family has also received intensive counselling to help them understand heroin addiction and how to support their sons through detoxification and rehabilitation. The family was helped to prepare for the return home of their youngest son from prison and worked with the prison rehabilitation service. The youngest son has been off drugs for a month now and is starting to plan for living independently.

Linking families with schools and communities

Schools can provide effective settings for promoting and supporting positive relationships between children and young people, and their families and communities.

This can help build resilience and confidence in children and young people to

help them stay at school, and avoid future problems with drug use and dislocation from their families and schools.

Schools as Community Centres is part of the *Families First* program and individual projects have been established in four primary schools in the Cabramatta area - at Cabramatta, Canley Vale, Bonnyrigg and Fairfield – to help disadvantaged or isolated families.

Through this program, children aged 0 – 8 years and their families are being supported to connect to their schools, community and local services. In each of the four schools, between 70 and 100 families are already being helped through:

- referrals to local services
- family and child-related activities such as supported playgroups to help families build relationships outside the family unit
- mentor support for the family particularly in the first year at the school
- language skills classes
- newsletters and information about services, child development and parenting

By mid 2002, the *Schools as Community Centres* program will be complemented by a new program *Primary Connect*. Cabramatta has been selected as one of the areas to trial this program.

Primary Connect will provide support for vulnerable 8-12 year old children and their families, particularly children at risk of leaving school early, drug use, criminal behaviour and self harming behaviour.

Children will be helped to build connections with their families, schools and communities, and linked to services they may need. Identifying and dealing with problems early on will stop such problems becoming entrenched difficulties.

Milestones

- *Schools as Community Centres* established at Cabramatta, Canley Vale, Fairfield and Bonnyrigg
- 70-100 families in each school currently being supported
- *Primary Connect* program to commence mid 2002

Gateways Program

The *Gateways* program targets students at risk of not completing Year 12 satisfactorily or who are at increased risk of drug misuse. The program commenced in June 2001 and will help up to 600 Year 6-12 students over the next two years.

The program has six main components:

- enhancing drug education opportunities for students and staff
- identifying and case managing at risk students
- individual education plans for students
- vocational and life skills courses
- training and development of mentors
- family and community development strategies

This program also enables schools to link with other initiatives under the Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy such as the Cabramatta Street Team, and to work with existing youth support services in the area.

Milestones

Up to December 2001, 43 students at risk have had individual case management resulting in:

- 17 students deciding to return to school in 2002
- 7 students moving on to alternative education settings
- 4 students given work experience placements
- 2 students obtaining full time work and 3 obtaining part-time work

31 students also participated in vocational and life skills courses:

- 23 completed the TAFE program
- 12 students obtained competency in Work Skills Course One

Case study 1: Student A's story

Student A was an intelligent 15 year old student at a Fairfield high school. He was in foster care and had a history of juvenile offending. Attempts to engage him at school were not successful.

After being referred to the *Gateways* program, Student A admitted he had trouble relating to teachers and difficulty with academic work. He started attending the program at a TAFE college and learnt to travel there independently. His school attendance improved as did his social interaction and communication skills.

Student A felt that the vocationally oriented course had real meaning for him and decided to pursue a work experience placement.

Case study 2: Student B's story

Student B was nearly fifteen when she referred herself to the *Gateways* program. She was living at home but her parents were often absent. She had low self esteem, poor literacy and numeracy skills, and was bored with school. She did not want to go back to school.

Student B was helped to attend the program to stabilise her attendance. She developed trusting relationships with staff and agreed to counselling. When she became interested in part-time employment, she was referred to a community agency which could provide low key and continuing case management support. She has been helped to develop work based skills and continues to participate in two community programs.

Supporting families affected by drug abuse – the Multicultural Drug Education Program

The Multicultural Drug Education Program is a community-focussed program which will help culturally and linguistically diverse families in the Cabramatta area which have been affected by illicit drug use.

This program will have links with the *Gateways* and *Moving Forward* initiatives to also help families being supported through those programs.

Comprehensive drug education programs and materials will be produced targeting four communities (Vietnamese, Khmer, Lao and Chinese). A variety of media is being considered, including community newspapers, radio, television and live theatre, to provide information on a wide range of issues for parents, including coping and family support options.

This material is being developed through a cooperative network of government and non-government agencies, and community advisory groups, to ensure that education resources are pitched at the family level and effectively convey the message that there are a range of treatment options available to deal with illicit drug use.

The first initiatives under this program are scheduled to roll-out progressively from the end of April 2002.

Better service responses for young people

Through the Premier's Department's Cabramatta Place Management Project, youth services in the Cabramatta area have identified a need for additional or improved youth supports with regard to:

- recreation and sport
- relations between local police and young people
- increased accommodation, health and other support services for young people and their families
- service delivery to young people

To deal with these issues, Fairfield City Council and the Premier's Department have co-convened a Youth Action Team of government and non-government service providers. This Team is identifying existing youth services and ways of maximising service delivery to young people, building on the links between services and the potential for more collaborative approaches.

Through the Youth Action Team, better responses are also being developed to youth homelessness issues identified in the December 2001 report *Everyday's the same: Youth Homelessness in Cabramatta* (commissioned by the Youth Action Team). Particular emphasis is being given to ensuring there is support for young people at critical times, before risk taking behaviour such as drug use or homelessness becomes entrenched.

Legislative Council
General Purpose Standing Committee No 3

Report on

Cabramatta Policing

Government response

April 2002

Government response

to the recommendations of the
Legislative Council
General Purpose Standing Committee No 3
report into *Cabramatta Policing*

■ recommendation 1

■ gang intelligence

The Committee recommends the Police Service take urgent steps to ensure that it has in place procedures and resources to ensure sufficient intelligence is available to Local Area Commands to investigate gang activity.

Response & Action

The Government endorses this recommendation.

NSW Police has taken action to create and disseminate intelligence on gangs:

- The attack on gang crime has been consolidated by the recent formation of the Gangs and Organised Crime Strike Force in Crime Agencies. The Strike Force focuses on breaking up criminal gangs, and coordinating and assisting Local Area Commands to target their own resources to fight gang crime. The Strike Force currently has a staff of 23 detectives and a further five seconded staff. The staff have backgrounds in investigating drug dealing, firearms trafficking and ethnic based organised crime.
- The Greater Hume Region, which includes Cabramatta, has taken an intelligence based approach to youth gangs.

A tiered policing approach to gangs has been adopted, ranging from improving relationships between police and youth, to aggressive law enforcement against those gangs involved in drugs, weapons or violence.

- On 24 March 2002, the Ministers for Police and Education and Training announced a joint task force to tackle allegations of gang activity in south western Sydney High Schools.

The task force will thoroughly examine the trends and patterns of gang activity. It will consider: establishing a hotline for principals to directly contact senior police; enabling better exchange of information between local police and high schools; regular meetings between police and Department of Education and Training officials; and reinforcement of the truancy program.

- The Intelligence and Analysis Gangs Team, part of the Information and Intelligence Centre of NSW Police, analyses gang information collected from the COPS (Computerised Operational Policing System) database and provides tactical and operational intelligence to frontline Local Area Commands about gangs. Information provided includes gang profiles and reports of activities as well as "intelnets" - which include confidential reports of specific activity by particular people and their modus operandi.
- Enhancements to the COPS system were completed in January 2002. These have enabled better collection and assessment of information concerning gangs, covering youth gangs, street gangs, criminal gangs and outlaw motorcycle gangs. This will assist the Information and Intelligence Centre to provide an improved service.
- The Information and Intelligence Centre has also completed an Intelligence Assessment of Gang Activity in the Sydney metropolitan area. This is a major assessment of gangs operating in the Sydney area during January 2000 – July 2001. It includes regional assessments of key gangs, their members, the risks they pose and their activity. It is designed to help NSW Police to better target operations to shut the gangs down.
- The Minister for Police recently announced that, as part of the restructure of NSW Police, the Intelligence and Information Centre will merge with Crime Agencies, in order to increase the effectiveness of both units and ensure a strategic intelligence focus for the future. Planning for the merger has begun.
- Thirty nine Civilian Intelligence Analysts (CIAs) are being trained at the NSW Police College at Westmead. When deployed at the Local Area Commands, the analysts will collect and analyse information about local crime. They will specifically focus on helping to solve lingering crime problems by researching best practice and considering what works and what does not. The first CIAs will be deployed to Local Area Commands with the highest level crimes, in both metropolitan and rural areas (this does not include Cabramatta).
- Prevention of gang crime is another focus. A new Crime Prevention Workshop module on gangs and groups has been developed. It targets

year 8 students and will be delivered in a number of school districts in the coming year.

■ **recommendation 2**

- reporting to premier
- reporting to cabinet committee on drugs
 - driving action

The Committee recommends that the Premier require the Ministers for Police, Health, Community Services, Housing and Juvenile Justice, together with the Special Minister of State, to regularly report to him on progress in the implementation of the package of initiatives for Cabramatta announced by the Premier on 27 March 2001.

The Committee recommends that the existing Cabinet sub-committee on Drugs, co-ordinate and drive the implementation of the package of initiatives for Cabramatta announced by the Premier on 27 March 2001.

Response & Action

The Government endorses this recommendation.

The Government already has in place oversight arrangements for the Government's Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy. These arrangements ensure a coordinated, whole of government approach to drive progress on the initiatives and ensure they deliver benefits to the people of Cabramatta and New South Wales as a whole.

The Premier announced on 21 June 2001 that the Cabinet Standing Committee on Drugs would oversee the implementation of the Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy. This matter is now a regular item on the Committee's agenda.

Supporting the work of the Cabinet Committee is the Senior Officers' Coordinating Committee (SOCC) on Drugs, chaired by the Director, Office of Drug Policy in The Cabinet Office. The SOCC has met regularly to consider progress on the Government's Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy (in addition to its other meetings). At these meetings, all participating agencies provide detailed reports on implementation of the Government commitments. The meetings provide opportunities to identify and resolve issues, and assist the Cabinet Committee to ensure effective progress on the initiatives.

In addition, the Government has received regular reports on the implementation of the recommendations of the Legislative Council General

Purpose Standing Committee No 3. Because of the importance of the recommendations for NSW Police, this role has been undertaken by the Cabinet Committee on Police Reform.

■ recommendations 3 and 4

■ distribution of police personnel

- 3 The Committee recommends that the NSW Police Service develop and publish a clear, useable Resource Allocation Formula to guide the distribution of resources for each Local Area Command, such as Cabramatta LAC.

The new Resource Allocation Formula must be used in an open and transparent way, so that the public is able to understand the basis of the allocation of resources across the Service.

- 4 The Committee recommends that the new Resource Allocation Formula outlined in Recommendation 3 include specific consideration of the socio-economic factors facing Local Area Commands, together with the specific resource implications of the multicultural diversity of Local Area Commands.

Response & Action

The Government endorses this recommendation.

The distribution of police officers to meet the needs of communities throughout the State should be done on a basis that is fair and clear. NSW Police is a large organisation and its Local Area Commands respond to a wide variety of geographic and socioeconomic conditions. Developing a formula is, therefore, a major undertaking.

NSW Police has established a small full-time team to develop a Workforce Distribution System, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2002.

The work in developing the Workforce Distribution System will take into account the conclusions of the Auditor General's report on staff rostering, tasking and allocation (January 2000). The system will also need to build in factors such as demographics, housing developments, shopping centres, railways stations and other local socioeconomic and infrastructural factors.

The Workforce Distribution System will be a computer-based model, with component databases of information about workloads, local environment, and socio-economic conditions. The model will provide a snapshot of the resources in each Local Area Command and the demands placed on them. It

will provide a decision-making tool for the Commissioner and his executive team to determine staffing levels.

NSW Police anticipates that the process used by the Workforce Distribution System will be published on the NSW Police website.

■ **recommendation 5**

- **night time services**
 - **police overtime**

- (a) The Committee recommends that the Cabramatta Project of the Premier's Department bring together all agencies providing services in the Cabramatta area to outline the need for services and staff resources outside 9 to 5 office hours, with particular reference to the effects of the implementation of the Premier's initiatives for Cabramatta announced on 27 March 2001 and Assistant Commissioner Small's Seven Point Plan. The LAC should identify the services it currently provides out of office hours which are more properly the responsibility of other agencies, and a strategy should then be drawn up with those agencies to address this issue.
- (b) Following the development of this strategy the Committee recommends the LAC prepare a revised overtime policy which gives priority to ensuring continuity of investigations and effective protection of the community. The policy needs to be clearly explained to all staff and to the wider community.

Response & Action

The Government endorses both parts of this recommendation.

Night time services – 5(a)

Twenty-four hour a day services are now provided to the Cabramatta community by two main government support services, apart from NSW Police:

- The Department of Community Services (DoCS) Street Team operates on a 24 hour a day basis, and is located at the Cabramatta Police Station. The team assists young people and others with drug problems and people who are homeless.
- The Central Assessment Service at Fairfield Hospital provides a 24 hour contact point for referral from police officers or DoCS. This service assesses and considers treatment plans, and can refer clients to health, drug treatment and welfare services.

Together these two services provide referral points for police officers under the *Intoxicated Persons Act 1979* and in relation to Police Drug Bail (as it operates under the Cabramatta package). Protocols have been developed and operate between NSW Police, DoCS and NSW Health to ensure appropriate referrals are made.

The services of numerous non-government agencies in Cabramatta, including services provided in the evening and at night, should also be acknowledged.

As recommended by the Committee, on 18 October 2001, the Premier's Department convened a meeting of all key Government and non-government agencies to discuss after hours services.

The meeting was attended by:

- Open Family Cabramatta
- Cabramatta Youth Team (a unit of the Cabramatta Community Centre)
- South Western Sydney Area Health service
- ADRACare Centre Cabramatta (a centre run under the auspices of the Adventist Development Relief Association)
- Department of Community Services (DoCS), Fairfield
- Cabramatta Local Area Command, NSW Police.

The purpose of the meeting was to identify after hours services provided to the Cabramatta community, identify any gaps, and consider action to ensure that the services worked well together.

As a result of the meeting, agencies have resolved to improve communication. The DoCS street team has revived the bi-monthly case management meetings of relevant Government and non-government agencies. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity for agencies to identify and resolve issues that impede working together. These meetings will develop joint protocols, where required, to ensure communication and to coordinate action.

Recommendation 5(a) responds to the specific issue identified by the Committee that police officers were being called on to deal with matters which should properly fall to other agencies. The Government called for specific advice from the Local Area Command on this issue. The Cabramatta Local Area Command advises that, although NSW Police are often the first agency to respond to crises, the Cabramatta Local Area Command Management Team considers that there are sufficient support services available out of hours as outlined above.

Overtime and rostering – 5(b)

NSW Police advises that there are no restrictions on overtime in the Cabramatta Local Area Command. Overtime is worked according to operational requirements. This position has been clearly communicated by the Local Area Commander to the officers of the Command, and overtime expenditure in the Command has increased significantly.

NSW Police also advises that mechanisms are in place in Local Area Commands, to ensure that police officers are deployed where they are needed. These include:

- Rostering. This is generally based on anticipated demand for services and the First Response Policing Agreement (a mechanism for ensuring that there are sufficient police officers on duty to respond to call outs).
- Intelligence based tasking. In setting rosters and “tasking” officers (that is, setting the duties and priorities for officers), Local Area Commands use intelligence to locate hotspots, and patterns in crime.
- Using computer technology. The NSW Police Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) computer database assists in using the intelligence effectively. The EDW takes information from other police systems, and uses it to assist in identifying patterns and predicting future risk areas.
- Crime management case notes. Crime hotspots, emerging crime trends, risk areas, and critical operational issues are discussed at regular crime management meetings. In Cabramatta, these meetings bring together the Crime Manager, intelligence staff, Youth Liaison Officers, crime prevention officer, DoCS street team staff, PCYC staff, the Ethnic Community Liaison Officers and duty officers.

▪ **recommendation 6**

- police accommodation
- audit of physical resources

The Committee recommends the Cabramatta Local Area Commander, together with representatives of the Police Association, undertake an immediate audit of the vehicles and other physical equipment available for use by frontline officers in the carrying out of their duties so that sufficient funding can be allocated to provide the necessary resources.

Response & Action

The Government endorses the recommendation.

A new police station for Cabramatta

The facilities at the Cabramatta Police Station were considered to be inadequate by the Committee. Echoing these concerns, the Member of

Parliament for Cabramatta, Ms Reba Meagher, has called for a new station to be built.

In response, the Government has decided to build a new police station at Cabramatta as the highest priority on the NSW Police building program for 2002/2003.

This reflects the Government's commitment to ensuring that the Local Area Command and its officers have adequate accommodation to do the job, and that facilities at the police station meet the needs of the community the station serves.

NSW Police and the Department of Public Works and Services have been working together to expedite the timeframe. A site has already been identified and acquisition is well underway. A development application was lodged with the Fairfield Council on 11 January 2002 and approved under delegation on 13 March 2002.

Tenders are expected to be called early in the second half of 2002 in order for construction to begin in late 2002. The new \$12.78 million building is planned for completion in the second half of 2003.

In the meantime, a new portable building will be located at the Police Station to provide overflow accommodation in April 2002.

The audit of physical resources

NSW Police Audit Group completed an audit of the physical resources at Cabramatta, in December 2001.

The audit aimed to identify whether the physical equipment is sufficient to meet maximum working capacity. It was benchmarked against other Local Area Commands and covered: radios, batons, torches, camera equipment, and alcometers. A small number of recommendations for additional purchases were made and resulted in the purchase of: 8 bullet resistant vests, 11 torches, and 3 extendable batons. The recommended purchase of additional radio batteries will be addressed as part of an ongoing equipment review in the Command.

In undertaking the audit, the Audit Group consulted with the Local Area Commander, and the local Police Association representative. The Local Area Commander advises that the Association agreed with the final report and audit.

In addition, the vehicle needs of the Local Area Command were reviewed, and reconfigured: a truck has been replaced by a marked police car, and one of the two buses is soon to be replaced with an unmarked police car for use by detectives. Existing station security has also been upgraded by installing a bullet resistant screen for the entry doors.

■ recommendation 7

■ interpreters

The Committee recommends that, following the deployment of the additional ten interpreters for the Cabramatta LAC announced by the Premier on 27 March 2001, the Local Area Commander and the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW (CRC) ensure that there are interpreters available to assist police officers at the police station 24 hours per day.

Response & Action

The Government endorses the recommendation.

The Government has allocated \$150,000 per annum for 4 years to NSW Police to ensure that Cabramatta police are able to access interpreters as needed for community languages in Cabramatta.

Cabramatta Local Area Command – and other Local Area Commands – already have 24 hour access to the Community Relations Commission's two services:

- the 1300 number telephone interpreter service in 75 languages and dialects;
- the face to face call-out interpreter service.

Routine inquiries to Cabramatta Police by the members of the public can often be dealt with by general support officers or Ethnic Community Liaison Officers (ECLOs) with language skills.

Recognising Vietnamese is the most common community language in Cabramatta, a trial arrangement was set in place in August 2001. A Vietnamese interpreter provided by the Community Relations Commission was located at the Cabramatta Police Station from 12.00 pm to 8.00 pm seven days a week.

The experience of this four month trial indicated this may not be the most effective way of providing the interpreter services required at Cabramatta.

A new approach has been adopted. The Local Area Command is using the Community Relations Commission's on-call and telephone interpreter services, and the Commission has employed an additional Vietnamese interpreter dedicated to giving priority to the interpreter needs of the

Cabramatta Local Area Command.

The language skill needs of Cabramatta continue to be under consideration. The Community Relations Commission will be surveying non-English speaking members of the Cabramatta community about their contact with police and will develop recommendations based on the survey results. This will be completed in the coming months.

■ **recommendation 8**

■ **police assistance line**

The Committee recommends that the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW, or other agency independent of the Police Service, regularly conduct a random call survey to test the effectiveness of the Police Assistance Line in assisting callers from a non-English-speaking background. If problems are identified the Police Service, working with the Commission, should take immediate steps to enhance the service before advertising again in ethnic media.

Response & Action

The Government supports the intent of the recommendation to ensure that the Police Assistance Line (PAL) is effective for all its client groups, including those from a non-English speaking background.

NSW Police advises it is in discussions with the Community Relations Commission (CRC) concerning how the CRC could randomly assess the effectiveness of the PAL.

Before this can happen, however, issues for callers and for the system of reporting need to be resolved. For example, if the CRC listens in to calls, how can the privacy of callers be protected.

However, pending resolution of these issues, the Government has taken other action.

To ensure that the PAL is as effective as it can be, the Minister for Police, as part of his 12 February 2002 announcement of the restructuring of NSW Police, announced a general review of the effectiveness of the PAL to better meet community expectations.

NSW Police also advises that the following action is underway or planned:

- Internal controls on service quality have recently been implemented. Under this system, Team Leaders monitor at least 10 calls per operator per month on a random basis to ensure that operators are providing good

quality customer service. Callers to the PAL will be told their calls may be listened to, and opt out, if desired.

- Focus groups and customer surveys are also planned for 2002 to test the satisfaction level of callers to the PAL. These will involve callers from non-English speaking backgrounds. NSW Police will involve the Community Relations Commission (CRC) in the development of the surveys.

NSW Police also advises that the PAL already has protocols in place for dealing with callers who have difficulty with English. These provide that:

- if callers have insufficient English to make an accurate and full report they are linked into a conference call with the CRC translating and interpreting service;
- the PAL has priority access to this service through a separate telephone number;
- the interpreter then assists in identifying the language involved and ascertains whether an interpreter of a particular sex is required;
- the interpreter then asks the standard questions normally asked by the PAL operators.

▪ **recommendation 9**

▪ **recruitment of police from diverse backgrounds**

- (a) The Committee recommends that the Government establish targets for the Police Service in relation to the recruitment and retention of officers from non-English speaking backgrounds, against which the Service should report progress in its annual reports to Parliament.
- (b) The Committee further recommends that the Police Service include in its annual reports the strategies put in place to raise the proportion of officers from a non-English speaking background to a level reflecting the proportion of the NSW population from such a background.

Response & Action

The Government endorses the intent of the recommendation but is implementing this by other means.

Recruitment targets

The Government supports the establishment of specific strategies for encouraging increased recruitment and retention of officers of non-English speaking backgrounds and reporting on these in the Annual Report, but does not support establishing recruitment targets.

The Government notes that the 1997 Final Report of the Royal Commission into the New South Wales Police Service considered and did not support the establishment of recruitment targets. Instead, it favoured a recruitment policy encouraging diversity in the NSW Police.

Recruitment strategies

NSW Police advises the following action has been taken or is planned:

- NSW Police commissioned research on the attitude of persons from non-English speaking backgrounds to policing as a career in January 2001. This research has been used to formulate approaches to recruitment.
- NSW Police has moved, as part of the current recruitment advertising campaign, to improve recruitment from diverse ethnic groups. A key part of this campaign targets language groups including Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

The campaign involves a mix of print advertisement and radio advertisements. Primarily, the advertisements target young potential recruits on radio stations and in print media, referring to cultural and language skills as a desirable attribute. The advertisements also target parents of potential recruits in their own languages. These advertisements outline the advantages of policing as a career and are designed to overcome the frequent reluctance of parents to see their daughters and sons join the Police based on their experience in other countries.

- Serving officers from non-English speaking backgrounds are encouraged to invite family members and friends to information sessions on policing as a career.
- Further work will be done by the Police Minister's Advisory Council which formed a recruitment and retention working group, chaired by Mr Peter Anderson, on 18 December 2001, which has amongst its terms of reference, the need to recruit and retain persons from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- NSW Police has entered a national agreement with other police forces to encourage recruitment and retention of officers from non-English speaking backgrounds. As a result, the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau's *Culturally Competent Police Organisations: National Recruitment and Retention Strategic Framework* has been adopted by all Australian

jurisdictions as the national framework for recruitment and retention of officers from non-English speaking backgrounds.

- Building on this framework, NSW Police's Cultural Diversity Team is developing an action plan which will be finished by October 2002. The timeframe for this project allows for extensive consultation within and outside NSW Police, including consultation with the Community Relations Commission.
- The NSW Police Annual Report includes reporting on key strategies under the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS). NSW Police advises that, in the 2001-02 Annual Report, and beyond, recruitment strategies will be reported on either as a key EAPS strategy or under a separate heading. NSW Police is in the process of finalising its new 2001-2004 EAPS Plan.

Overseas experience

The Premier also asked the Minister for Police to consider the United Kingdom's experience of recruitment targets and plans. NSW Police's initial consideration of the experiences of the Metropolitan Police Service in the United Kingdom and its recruitment targets has indicated that there are difficulties with establishing targets. Further work is to be done by the Cultural Diversity Team researching international experience including that in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, as well as the experience of other Australian jurisdictions and other organisations (for example the defence forces).

■ recommendation 10

- cross-cultural training
- cross cultural skills for promotion
- dealing with complaints

- (a) The Committee recommends that all officers who work at Cabramatta LAC must have completed in excess of the minimum requirements of the Service for training with a cross cultural component.
 - (b) The Committee further recommends that no officer be employed at Cabramatta who has been the subject of substantiated complaints of a racially discriminatory nature. Any officer who is the subject of a substantiated complaint of discriminatory behaviour should be immediately transferred to another LAC.

- (c) The Committee further recommends that the Cabramatta LAC liaise with the Regional Command to ensure junior officers stationed temporarily at Cabramatta, such as the TAG operations, have received in excess of minimum Service requirements for cross cultural training.
- (d) The Committee recommends that where positions at Cabramatta LAC are being filled on a competitive, merit selection basis, weighting should be given to previous experience in Commands with large populations of non English speaking background communities and to officers who have skills in a second language.
- (e) The Committee recommends that the NSW Police Service develop incentives for officers to acquire skills in a second language and to enhance their level of cultural literacy generally.

Response & Action

The Government endorses parts (a), (c) and (e) of this recommendation. Though recognising the concerns underlying parts (b) and (d) of the recommendation, the Government has dealt with those concerns by alternative means.

Cross-cultural training for officers based or operating in Cabramatta - 10(a) and (c)

NSW Police, recognising the special needs of Cabramatta, has instituted additional training for officers in the Cabramatta Local Area Command.

Cabramatta officers have the opportunity to attend a TAFE certificate course in Vietnamese language and culture. The course is delivered by Randwick TAFE and consists of three hours of face to face teaching each week for 18 weeks. It covers Vietnamese language tailored to police needs, broad Asian cultural awareness, and techniques to assist police to use interpreters well.

Graduates of the course will have a basic knowledge of Vietnamese sufficient to have a simple conversation and assist victims of crime, including names addresses and telephone numbers. They will also have an appreciation of Vietnamese culture and history.

In December 2001, the first 13 officers graduated from this course, with a further two to complete the final module in the first half of 2002. A second course commenced in February 2002 with 17 officers.

A second, shorter TAFE course was delivered to 122 officers from the Cabramatta Local Area Command and the Regional Target Action Group in 2001. This is based on the training provided to Olympic volunteers and is a two hour workshop for 15-20 participants at a time.

Cross cultural training for all NSW Police officers – 10(a) and (c)

All recruits to NSW Police receive training designed to increase their skills to deal with people from different cultures from their own and raise awareness of cultural and racial issues affecting members of the community. This is included in the Diploma in Policing Practice.

Specific subjects include:

- *Communication in policing 1 and 2*
- *Police and society*
- *Policing and vulnerable populations.*

NSW Police advises that this training exceeds the minimum of 22 hours, as recommended by the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau in 1997.

In addition, the Police and Community Training Program (PACT) aims to reduce crime by bringing together police, youth and community groups to increase awareness of policing and related issues. PACT develops and funds a number of local training and education projects each year. These projects assist ethnic groups by explaining the law and how it applies to them. They also help police understand the special needs of each community, break down barriers and improve police-community relations. Joint projects foster stronger relationships between police and the local community.

A successful project initiated by PACT was the Bankstown/Campsie Project, which is a five stage training framework that includes intensive cultural diversity training for police, as well as community forums. This project focuses on police and Arabic speaking communities.

Cabramatta's PACT project developed a video entitled *A Question of Trust* that highlights community perspectives on policing. Together with an education package, the video can be used by community workers and police as a training resource. The project was developed after discussions with the community and was launched in November 2001.

A number of requests have since been received from other communities wishing to be involved in similar projects. NSW Police advises that it has allocated \$485,000 to the PACT Program in 2001/2002.

Incentives for language and cross cultural skills - 10(e)

The courses outlined above for Cabramatta officers are offered in work time and at no cost to the officers. The longer TAFE course gives officers an external TAFE qualification. These opportunities are, in themselves, incentives to undertake training and develop language and cross-cultural skills.

In addition, NSW Police, in common with other public sector organisations, operates the Community Language Allowance Scheme (CLAS). Under this

scheme an allowance is available for officers competent in other languages, if they are recommended for it by their Local Area Commander or Manager, based on competence, need for the language and ability of the budget to support payment. This is available to sworn officers and civilian staff (unless second language skills are part of their job, as in the case of the Ethnic Community Liaison Officers).

Five Cabramatta staff speaking Serbian, Croatian, Thai, Cantonese, and Vietnamese currently receive this allowance.

Officers with substantiated complaints of racial discrimination to be transferred from Cabramatta - 10 (b)

New South Wales is a multicultural State with a diverse population. Police officers in all Local Area Commands must be able to deal with the wide range of cultures they encounter.

NSW Police has advised that to transfer an officer from one Local Area Command to another because of that officer's lack of competence in dealing with cultural diversity, or worse, an officer's racist action, merely transfers a problem from one area to another without dealing with it.

Officers with sustained complaints of racial discrimination are dealt with according to NSW Police's Employee Management policy (EM policy). This policy was developed to implement recommendation 71 of the 1996 Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service (the Wood Royal Commission).

EM policy gives primary responsibility for dealing with complaints to the Local Area Commander and mandates that suitable discipline or correction action be taken at the Local Area Command level according to the level of complaint made and whether it is substantiated.

This approach offers the chance of *immediate* remedial action of a type which is relevant to the complainant (eg an apology direct to the affected complainant). It also allows the Local Area Commander to monitor officers over time, and ensure that minor problems do not become major problems.

Serious complaints of misconduct of this nature are required in terms of the *Police Service Act* and the EM policy to be referred to the Internal Affairs Command, the Ombudsman and the Police Integrity Commission, as appropriate.

Merit based selection to give weight to cross-cultural experience and skills - 10(d)

The Government supports the intent of the recommendation.

The recommendation seeks to ensure that Cabramatta has officers with the skills and experience needed to operate in cross-cultural environments. The Government acknowledges this issue.

However, positions in NSW Police are advertised in bulk, and recruitment is undertaken for promotions in various commands at the same time. This ensures that the police promotions system is efficient.

NSW Police has advised that special qualifications for individual Local Area Commands are therefore impractical.

Options for dealing with this recommendation were considered by the NSW Police Tripartite Committee, which consists of representatives of the Ministry for Police, NSW Police, and the Police Association. The Committee's favoured option was to develop a strategy to ensure that officers who are selected for positions in areas with large communities of non-English speaking background undertake early extensive training in the skills they will require.

This approach will ensure that officers increase their communication and cross-cultural skills and the community is served by well-trained officers.

■ **recommendation 11**

■ **ethnic community liaison officers**

- (a) The Committee recommends that the Police Service increase the number of Ethnic Community Liaison Officers (ECLOs) at Cabramatta from 3 to at least 4 by appointing an additional Ethnic Community Liaison Officer to Cabramatta LAC from an appropriate language or ethnic group.
- (b) The Committee further recommends that all police at Cabramatta LAC are educated about the role and revised work duties of the ECLO and similarly to the Cabramatta non English speaking background community about the role of the ECLO's within the Cabramatta LAC.

Response & Action

The Government endorses the recommendation.

Ethnic Community Liaison Officers in Cabramatta

Three Ethnic Community Liaison Officers (ECLOs) are currently attached to Cabramatta Local Area Command. They have Vietnamese, Cambodian and Lao backgrounds.

A fourth ECLO for Cabramatta, who speaks Cantonese and Mandarin, has been appointed and is expected to start work in mid-April 2002.

Ethnic Community Liaison Officers across New South Wales

In addition, NSW Police advises that they are currently implementing a phased increase in the number of ECLOs across New South Wales, as recommended by the ECLO review completed in October 2001.

This process resulted in an additional nine ECLOs last year, with an additional 11 expected this year.

At the end of this process, expected to be in March 2003, NSW Police expect to have 37 ECLOs across the state.

Raising awareness of ECLOs and their role

ECLOs are recruited for their ability to assist police to provide services to the range of cultural groups in the communities they serve.

They are recruited primarily for their ability to liaise across cultures, rather than specific language skills. They are not interpreters, though the selection criteria for ECLOs include the proficiency in a community language.

NSW Police has taken steps to ensure ECLOs are coordinated and supported, and awareness of their role is raised. These steps include:

- development of a newsletter which includes features about the role of ECLOs. The first edition was distributed to Commands with ECLOs, including Cabramatta, in August 2001.
- Action by the Cabramatta Local Area Commander and the Cabramatta ECLOs have been active to ensure that officers are aware of ECLOs' role.

The ECLOs are active in the community including educating the community about their role.

- Appointment of an ECLOs coordinator in March 2001 to coordinate, support and promote the work of the ECLOs across the State.
- The first annual conference for ECLOs which was held in September 2001. This is a mechanism to develop the professionalism and skills of ECLOs and to enable them to share with each other.
- The Organisation and Policy Development Directorate is currently producing a Police Fact Sheet on ECLOs and their role. It is envisaged that the Fact Sheet will be available in 25 languages other than English.

- **recommendation 12**
- **support for community policing**

The Committee recommends that the NSW Police Service investigate the operation of Community Policing Support Units established in other police services, with a view to the establishment of such a unit in the NSW Police Service. The unit would act as a driver of reform in the area of police and ethnic community relations. Its role should also be to provide a source of expert assistance to operational police officers in relation to cross cultural issues, and to be a source of support for both ethnic community liaison officers and police officers from a non-English-speaking background.

Response & Action

The Government supports the purpose of the recommendation to provide good support to community policing.

NSW Police has assessed the structure and functions of the key overseas model for Community Policing Units – the unit established in the Toronto Police in Canada. Building on this assessment, a comparative study of the Toronto model compared with the NSW Police structure is currently being undertaken.

NSW Police advises that the main elements of the Toronto model, including elements identified by the Committee, are already present in NSW Police.

These elements include:

- The Cultural Diversity Team within the Organisational Police and Development Unit which initiates policies and programs, and advises on matters to do with the relationship between police and a variety of community groups. These include:
 - the diverse cultural and linguistic communities of NSW
 - clients with disabilities
 - gay/lesbian clients
- The Ethnic Community Liaison Officers (ECLOs) program began in 1987 and is about to undergo major expansion. ECLOs work in Local Area Commands developing links into local communities, building relationships and assisting the community and the Police.
- Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers perform a similar role with respect to indigenous communities.
- The Police and Ethnic Communities Advisory Council (PECAC) which advises the Commissioner on initiatives concerning policing in a multi-

cultural society. It consists of nine senior representatives drawn from a variety of communities, as well as key NSW Police personnel.

■ **recommendation 13**

■ **operations and crime reviews**

- (a) The Committee recommends that the Police Service make public the report by Professor Davis on the evaluation of the Operations and Crime Review (OCR) process.
- (b) The Committee recommends that the Police Service take steps to ensure that the OCR process is flexible enough to enable the assessment of the performance of local area commands and their commanders to take into account the real crime problems in their areas, in addition to the five crimes that have been the focus of the assessment process to date.
- (c) The Committee further recommends that Local Area Commanders be encouraged by senior management to use the OCR process to provide input on the indicators that are to be used to assess their performance in the OCR process.

Response & Action

The Government endorses the recommendation.

Professor Davis' report

Professor Davis' report was finished late in 2001 and is publicly available.

The report's key conclusions include:

- that the Operational Crime Review (OCR) process is a powerful tool that focuses Local Area Commands on crime, creates accountability for action, and ensures that problems are explored and solved
- that OCRs allow the Commissioner and his Executive Team to demonstrate leadership, and improves communication between Local Area Commands and State headquarters
- that OCRs are likely to have helped reduce or slow the increase of crime

Professor Davis also identifies areas where the OCR process could be improved. For example, he suggests OCRs could be shorter but more frequent.

OCRs responding to Local Area Commands

The OCR process has changed over time to reflect the conditions of each Local Area Command. In OCRs now, Local Area Commands are asked to provide case studies for discussion. This allows Local Area Commands to demonstrate local crime problems and how they have been resolved. In addition, OCRs draw from the Local Area Commands' Business Plans and require Local Area Commands to demonstrate how Business Plan objectives are met.

Local Area Commanders are also encouraged to contribute to OCR processes by attending Executive Briefings on OCRs, at which they have an opportunity to have input into the indicators they are assessed against. The Corporate Information Unit (which is responsible for supporting the OCR process) has also attended Region meetings to allow Local Area Commanders to discuss OCR indicators.

OCR review

Improvements to the OCR process continue. The Minister for Police announced a review of the OCR process, as part of a major announcement concerning NSW Police restructuring on 12 February 2002. The purpose of the review is to: reduce the number of participants to key individuals, focus OCRs on a more rigorous analysis of local crime trends, and increase accountability through agreed action plans.

■ recommendation 14

■ drug law enforcement indicators

The Committee recommends that the Government make public the set of indicators to be adopted in relation to drug law enforcement, and that performance against these indicators be publicly reported upon on a regular basis.

Response & Action

The Government endorses the recommendation, which was also a recommendation of the NSW Drug Summit.

Performance indicators have been developed. There are a wide range of indicators, grouped according to six key strategies for effective drug law enforcement:

- limiting supply
- limiting demand

- incapacitating those involved in drug related crime, violence and corruption
- reducing drug related community problems
- forming effective partnerships
- monitoring and assessing efforts

The indicators are in a range of forms including: statistical information about numbers of arrests and prosecutions, case studies on major enforcement operations, and community views on the effect of drugs on the local community.

The drug law enforcement performance indicators are measurable and are publicly available. It is expected that the first report measuring progress on the indicators will cover the full 2002/03 financial year, and will be released in the second half of 2003.

▪ **recommendation 15**

▪ **community surveys**

The Committee recommends that the NSW Police Service use Cabramatta LAC to trial a process that will enable the community to have a role in the assessment on the performance of the LAC. This should include a mechanism whereby the community is surveyed for its views on the performance of the Cabramatta LAC in (a) reducing crime, especially drug related crime; (b) quality of service in responding to community concerns; (c) the quality of the strategic partnerships being built between the Police and the community. The Committee recommends that the outcomes of this process of performance assessment including community satisfaction surveys be the subject of ongoing evaluation by an organisation independent of the Police Service (such as the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research) and that the results of this evaluation be considered in the future development of the OCR process statewide.

Response & Action

The Government endorses the recommendation.

On 22 March 2002, the Community Quality of Service survey was launched as a trial in Cabramatta and Green Valley Local Area Commands, as part of the Greater Hume Region's seven point plan and its commitment to community and business partnership. The survey will cover victims and witnesses who have had recent contact with the police.

At a broader level, the Minister for Police has announced the proposal to create Police Accountability Community Teams (PACTs) in each Local Area Command. While work is being done on the precise form of the PACTs, it is envisaged that the local PACT will consist of the Local Area Commander, the

local Member of Parliament, a business representative and a community representative. The PACT's proposed role will be to discuss crime hotspots and problem areas and agree plans, which will be made public. As part of this initiative, community perceptions of crime will be surveyed and tracked.

Also relevant to this recommendation is the direct contact between Cabramatta Local Area Command and the community through the City Watch Council (see recommendation 17 below). This process represents a significant opportunity for direct community expressions of views about the performance of local police.

Finally, as noted under recommendation 7, the Community Relations Commission advises that it intends to run a telephone survey to assess community dealings with police and any difficulties arising from language ability, perceptions, knowledge of interpreter services, or depth of understanding of the reporting process. This survey is also likely to give information about community views on policing in Cabramatta.

■ recommendation 16

■ community function

The Committee recommends the Cabramatta community initiate and invite representatives of the Local Area Command to a community function to signify an intention to begin improving police community relations in the area. The event needs to be a joint effort and conclusive, but the community needs to be the major organiser, rather than government agencies, Fairfield City Council or the local member, although all these should be invited to attend.

Response & Action

The Government endorses the recommendation.

The recommendation is addressed to the Cabramatta community, rather than to the Government or NSW Police.

Involvement in the community and in community based events is encouraged in the Cabramatta Local Area Command (and other Local Area Commands) as one way of building and sustaining important relationships.

The Cabramatta community holds a number of community events and has invited local police to participate. For example, officers from the Cabramatta Local Area Command have been involved in major cultural and community events such as the September Moon festival, the Vietnamese food festival in October 2001, and the Youth Cultural Festival in March 2002.

Local Area Commander Superintendent Frank Hansen attends, on average, one official community function each week.

Events detailed below under the umbrella of City Watch Council are also relevant to this recommendation.

■ **recommendation 17**

■ city watch council

The Committee recommends that the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW consult and discuss with representative organisations of the Cabramatta community how the City Watch initiative can be used to facilitate communication between residents, businesses, community workers, community leaders, senior police management and front line police. City Watch should be a forum and a channel for complaints about any aspects of the Relationships involved. The expectation is that those making complaints are prepared to work with those complained about to achieve progress in their area. City Watch needs to be a partnership, with mutual respect between participants.

Response & Action

The Government endorses the recommendation.

The NSW Community Relations Commission established and facilitates the Cabramatta City Watch initiative. Cabramatta Local Area Commander, Superintendent Frank Hansen, chairs the City Watch Council.

City Watch is designed to provide channels of communication between the Cabramatta community and the police and other Local and State Government agencies operating there. It is intended to foster a coordinated approach to resolution of issues of community safety and policing.

The City Watch Council has held five meetings since establishment in July 2001. The minutes of these meetings are published on the internet on the CRC site (www.crc.nsw.gov.au). These meetings have provided a forum for community members to raise their community safety and crime prevention concerns in a direct dialogue with the local police and council. The City Watch Council Meetings also provide community members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as ages and concerns, with an opportunity to meet and discuss issues amongst themselves.

The City Watch Council is in the process of setting up a number of link groups through which community members are able to raise community safety concerns. These groups are composed of members of particular interest groups and appropriate representatives of the Local Area Command. The link

groups are intended to enable direct discussion of areas of particular interest. Six link groups have now been established: the Neighborhood Watch, Educators', Youth, Khmer Elderly, Media and Public Relations, and Senior Citizens Link Groups.

City Watch held a major Community Workshop in December 2001. This provided an opportunity for members of the community to discuss key concerns. The results of this forum were analysed and a set of outcomes were distributed to the Cabramatta Local Area Command, Fairfield Council and the Premier's Department. Over half of these outcomes have been completed, with other media, youth, elderly and parenting initiatives currently being implemented.

The City Watch Street Arts Factory was also run in December 2001 raising the profile of the City Watch initiative.

The CRC is also undertaking some basic information collection to enable a better understanding the community and its concerns. This includes a Cabramatta City Watch Whole-of-Community Mapping exercise, community safety audits and a City Watch Survey to gain further information about community concerns and safety needs, perceptions of policing and community-police relations to produce effective crime prevention strategies.

■ recommendation 18

■ crime report form

The Committee recommends that the Cabramatta LAC introduce a local crime report form, translated into ethnic languages, to enable local residents to make reports of crime when no interpreter is immediately available at the LAC. The NSW Police Service should examine the potential for the application of third party reporting, as used in the United Kingdom, to make it easier for victims of crime who face language or cultural barriers to report crime.

Response & Action

Written report forms

NSW Police advises that it does not use any written forms for the public to report crime. Reports of crime are taken orally at police stations or over the telephone, including through the emergency number, crimestoppers, and the Police Assistance Line. Oral reports mean that questions can be asked and information clarified. NSW Police advise that this is a more effective way of obtaining full, clear and accurate information.

The NSW Police, therefore, prefers to rely on interpreting services where a complainant is not proficient in English. Both telephone or, if necessary, in-person interpreting services can be accessed.

A recent brochure distributed by the Fairfield City Council's Crime Prevention Program in partnership with the Fairfield Local Area Command explains how to report crime to the Police. The brochure was launched on 25 February 2002 and distributed to Fairfield City – including the Cabramatta area. The brochure is written in English, Vietnamese, Chinese, Spanish, Khmer, and Arabic and gives details of the police emergency telephone service, the Police Assistance Line and Crimestoppers

Third party reporting

NSW Police practice does not preclude third party involvement in reporting crime. Police would make use of any available third party assistance where there are barriers due to language difficulties, fear, lack of confidence or any other reason.

NSW Police advises that third party reporting in the United Kingdom is part of a multi-agency approach to "hate" crimes, the specific class of crime motivated by racial, religious or other prejudice. Reports can be made to a number of agencies and are intended to provide information about crime levels. However, NSW Police advise they are not complaints of crime that are used for evidentiary purposes.

■ Recommendation 19

■ sharing knowledge of the community

The Committee recommends that the Cabramatta Local Area Commander organise a series of talks or discussions for officers at the LAC at which officers who formerly served at Cabramatta can speak about their successes and failures in establishing links with the Cabramatta community. The purpose of these talks would be to regain some of the lost collective knowledge about policing in Cabramatta and to assist junior police in understanding the area.

Response & Action

NSW Police advises that new officers moving into Cabramatta undergo an induction program. The purpose of the program is to familiarise new staff with local issues. The induction program is led by experienced staff from the Local Area Command who share their experience and knowledge and ensure that junior officers are well informed.

NSW Police also advises that there is no policy for moving any officer away from a command after a period of time. On the contrary, officers with

experience are encouraged to stay in Cabramatta. Officers may, of course, request a transfer in line with force wide policy.

- **recommendation 20**
- senior police in Cabramatta

The Committee recommends that future appointments to senior management at Cabramatta LAC, including the Local Area Commander, be those who have voluntarily applied to serve in Cabramatta and won their position in a competitive interview process.

Response & Action

NSW Police advises that it has a commitment to merit based selection. However, the Commissioner of Police has responsibility for the good management of NSW Police and has the statutory power to transfer officers according to the needs of the Police.

The Commissioner considers that there will be occasions when filling a vacancy, including vacancies in Cabramatta, may be best done by transferring an officer, rather than undergoing a merit based selection process.

- **recommendation 21**
- procedures for youth

The Committee recommends that the Police Service develop a youth protocol on the treatment of young people in arrest or interview situations. This should be developed in consultation with local youth workers and all front line officers should be trained in its use.

Response & Action

The Government supports the purpose of the recommendation. NSW Police advises that it already has in place sufficient processes and protocols to meet the concerns of the recommendation. These resources include:

- The CRIME Code of Practice which covers the requirements for dealing with young people

- The Police Service Handbook which includes considerable material on the *Young Offenders Act 1997*, as well as standing instructions to Police dealing with young people
- The Police intranet which has information for police officers in the form of "frequently asked questions", including flowcharts

Taken together, this information provides considerable guidance to officers of the requirements of the law.

In addition, the Organisational Policy and Development Directorate is continually developing resources to assist police training for dealing with young people and generic youth issues.

At a more general level, NSW Police recently updated its Youth Policy in consultation with young people and youth workers from Cabramatta Community Centre and Fairfield Council.

The Youth Policy seeks to reduce and prevent youth crime, divert young offenders, build partnerships and enhance relationships between police and young people.

▪ **recommendation 22**

▪ interviews with young people

The Committee recommends that the Government, in consultation with the Police Service and youth advocates, develop a protocol for para-legally trained local community volunteers to be present at police interviews of young people.

Response & Action

The Government supports the intent of the recommendation. However, the Government has taken alternative action.

Youth Legal Aid Hotline extension

From 8 March 2002, the Youth Legal Aid Hotline, that provides telephone legal advice for young people in police custody, has been extended to provide 24 hour coverage over the weekend and on public holidays.

The Government has approved funding of over \$400,000 this financial year and \$480,000 from 2002/2003 to enable this extension to occur.

Until 8 March 2002, the Hotline operated only from 9 am to 12 midnight Monday to Friday and 12 noon to midnight at the weekends. The extension means that it now operates 24 hours Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. Weekend nights are times when there are significant numbers of young people taken into custody.

The under 18s Hotline is a legal advice line operated by NSW Legal Aid. Qualified, experienced criminal lawyers with expertise in juvenile justice and the *Young Offenders Act 1997* are available to provide advice to all young people who have committed, or are suspected of committing, a criminal offence.

Under the *Young Offenders Act 1997*, young people have the right to legal advice before they make an admission or a statement to the police.

The Hotline has proved very successful in providing timely advice to young people, and others in the criminal justice system. It has provided a vital adjunct to the operation of the *Young Offenders Act 1997* in diverting young people from the courts, in appropriate cases, by the use of cautions and youth justice conferencing. Use of the Hotline has continued to grow since its inception in October 1998, with over 13,000 calls being made to it in 2000/2001.

The extension of the service over the weekend will also mean that the Hotline is accessible to more young people across the whole state, including rural and regional areas.

In taking this action, the Government is consolidating appropriate support and safeguards for young people being interviewed by police. Other safeguards already exist, such as the rights to a support person at police interviews, under s 13 of the *Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987*, and Part 10A of the *Crimes Act 1900* and the *Crime (Detention after Arrest) Regulation 1998*.

The Government was concerned that the Committee's recommendation may have caused young people to be given legal advice by people who are not trained lawyers. This is undesirable for the young person concerned, who may receive substandard or misleading advice. It is also undesirable from the community's perspective, since police interviews proceed best when practical, sound legal advice is given to those being interviewed.

In addition, there does not appear to be a group of volunteer trained paralegals currently in the local community. Identification, selection, screening, training, supervising and coordinating suitable people would be costly and complex. There is no guarantee that such a system would prove sustainable.

■ recommendation 23

■ youth liaison officers

The Committee recommends that a senior manager at the LAC, who is willing to undertake the position, be appointed as a mentor for the youth liaison officer at Cabramatta LAC, and that both officers report to the Local Area Commander on progress in the following areas:

- Progressively increasing the training of officers in use of the Young Offenders Act, with assistance from the Department of Juvenile Justice
- Training officers, particularly those new to the area, in appropriate interactions with young people including offenders
- Liaison with officers from outside the area such as TAG squads to ensure they are aware of services for young people in the area
- Building upon links with youth agencies and schools in the area, particularly
- encouraging officers other than the youth liaison officer to establish these links

The Committee further recommends that the youth liaison officer remain a full time dedicated position at the LAC, and that any future vacancies be promptly filled.

Response & Action

The Government endorses the recommendation.

NSW Police advises that the Youth Liaison Officer (YLO) position at Cabramatta was filled on a permanent basis in September 2001.

A second YLO position has been established in the Cabramatta Local Area Command and a person was appointed to it in December 2001. The second YLO has a teaching background and will be responsible, with the support of the Education and Development Officer, for the development of a training strategy for police on youth issues.

As recommended by the Committee, the Crime Manager for the Cabramatta Local Area Command acts as a mentor for the YLOs of the Cabramatta Command. The Local Area Commander monitors progress on all issues through reports on the YLOs' activity.

At a broader level, NSW Police has force wide support mechanisms for YLOs. These include:

- a central Youth Policy Area, to which YLOs have access
- a YLO State Executive Group chaired by the Corporate Spokesperson on Youth Issues
- an annual YLO Forum to foster peer support and encourage sharing of ideas and developments amongst YLOs.

YLOs are responsible for establishing networks with key government agencies, and community based groups.

Actions undertaken by the YLOs include running crime prevention and drug education workshops at local schools, class visits, building relationships with school counsellors and community service workers, being involved in committees and organisations, and attending community events.

NSW Police advises that the training in the *Young Offenders Act 1997* was delivered throughout NSW Police by the local Education and Development Officers.

The addition of the second YLOs position provides an additional resource to ensure that youth justice conferencing is used where appropriate.

■ **recommendation 24**

■ **police and community youth clubs**

The Committee recommends that the Cabramatta LAC make a renewed commitment to the Cabramatta PCYC, and that the Local Area Commander encourage greater involvement by officers in the centre.

Response & Action

The Government endorses the recommendation.

At the Cabramatta Local Area Command, the Youth Liaison Officers are actively involved with the local PCYC, and other agencies and community groups involved with young people.

In addition, local PCYC representatives advise on youth issues at the Command's regular crime management meetings, that discuss crime hotspots, trends, risks and operational issues.

The commitment to the PCYC movement is broader than Cabramatta.

In February 2002, the Minister for Police announced a package for revitalising the PCYC movement and ensuring its ongoing viability that includes:

- new civilian managers
- a \$5 million cash injection
- mobile PCYCs for country areas
- computers for PCYCs
- enabling PCYCs to offer learning opportunities, as well as recreational and sporting facilities
- establishing links between youth justice conferences and the PCYCs.

■ **recommendation 25**

- reporting to parliament

The Committee recommends that the Premier report to Parliament on, or around, 27 March 2002 on the outcomes of the implementation of the package of initiatives for Cabramatta announced on 27 March 2001, together with the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

It is the intention of the Committee to then consult with the Cabramatta community, to enable the community to have an opportunity to comment on the changes that have occurred as a result of the implementation of the Premier's initiatives and the implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

Response & Action

This report implements recommendation 25.

Appendix A

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

NSW Attorney General's Department



DR. DON WEATHERBURN
DIRECTOR

In reply please quote:

File 8.11

Mr Roger B. Wilkins,
Director-General, The Cabinet Office
Level 39, Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
Sydney 2000 NSW

Dear Roger

As requested, I enclose a briefing note on recent trends in recorded crime in Cabramatta, compared with the rest of the State. I am pleased to say the trends are quite favourable. There are significant downward trends in four offences in Cabramatta, with most of the remaining categories of crime now stable. There are significant upward trends in just two categories of crime: the recorded rate of possession/use of cocaine and the rate of dealing/trafficking in cocaine. These trends are probably due to a combination of increased drug law enforcement activity in Cabramatta over the past 12 months and a shift on the part of some heroin users (in response to the heroin shortage) from heroin to cocaine.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Don Weatherburn
Director
19/3/02

Summary of trends in recorded crime in Cabramatta (postcode 2166): January 2000 to December 2001

This paper summarises trends in recorded crime statistics over the 24-month period January 2000 to December 2001 for Cabramatta (postcode 2166) with reference to the data previously provided to you by BOCSAR. These data are based on the numbers of criminal incidents recorded by NSW Police each month, and represent trends in reported crime rather than trends in victimisation. In examining these trends, it is important to note that changes in recorded crime are affected by factors other than changes in victimisation, such as the willingness of the public to report crimes to police, and shifts in policing policy and practice. Police practice especially affects trends in recorded drug and weapons offences, and trends in offensive behaviour, so changes in the number of incidents for these offences may reflect shifts in policing, rather than in actual crime rates. The availability of particular drug types in the community may also be reflected in recorded crime statistics for drug offences.

For the purposes of this summary, it is useful to separate the offences under consideration into two categories: (1) those which primarily reflect underlying crime trends and public willingness to report crime ('Group A') and (2) those where policing activity significantly affects the observed trend ('Group B'). Note that this distinction is not rigid, nor is it used in official crime statistics publications; it is presented here for convenience.

Table 1 below shows the results of statistical tests for a sustained upward or downward monthly trend over the two years from January 2000 to December 2001 in Cabramatta (postcode 2166) and NSW overall. Where a statistically significant monthly trend is detected, the annual percentage change in crime incidents is calculated between successive 12-month periods (ie between January-December 2000, and January-December 2001).

Trends in Group A offences

Although affected by the willingness of people to report crime, trends in this group of offences generally reflect trends in underlying crime rates.

For all of the Group A offence categories shown in Table 1, the two-year trend for each offence in Cabramatta was either stable or downward. Between January 2000 and December 2001 there was no statistically significant upward or downward trend for the offence categories of *assault (non-domestic)*, *robbery with a firearm*, *break and enter (dwelling and non-dwelling)*, *stealing (from retail store, from dwelling and from persons)* and *malicious damage to property*.

Over the same time period, four of these offences were also stable in NSW overall (*break and enter - non-dwelling*, *steal from retail store and from dwelling*, and *malicious damage to property*). One offence, *break and enter - dwelling*, showed a contrasting downward trend in NSW, while three offence categories showed a significant upward Statewide trend (*assault*, *robbery with a firearm*, and *steal from person*), compared with stability in Cabramatta between 2000 and 2001.

It should be noted, however, that while there was no upward trend in Cabramatta for any of the three offences of *assault*, *robbery with a firearm*, and *steal from person*, for two of

them the rate of the offence (per 100,000 resident population) in 2001 was higher in Cabramatta than the average NSW rate. In 2001, Cabramatta recorded a rate of *robbery with a firearm* of 48.0 per 100,000 (compared with the NSW rate of 13.5), and a rate of *steal from person* of 387.5 per 100,000 (compared with 253.7 in NSW).

There were four offence categories for which a statistically significant downward trend was detected in Cabramatta between January 2000 and December 2001. The incidence of *robbery without a weapon* offences decreased by 4.9 per cent between 2000 and 2001; *robbery with a weapon not a firearm* offences decreased by 7.1 per cent between 2000 and 2001; *motor vehicle theft* offences decreased by 37.0 per cent, and *steal from motor vehicle* offences decreased by 24.8 per cent. Each of these downward trends contrasts favourably with the overall NSW trend of stability. However, for three of these four offence categories, the crime rate is worse in Cabramatta in 2001 compared with the average NSW rate in the same period. In particular, the rates of *robbery without a weapon* and of *robbery with a weapon not a firearm* were considerably higher in Cabramatta than the NSW average.

Table 1: Recorded crime statistics in Cabramatta and NSW: Comparison of 24-month trends and annual percentage changes in 2000-2001, and 2001 crime rates per 100,000 population

Offence categories	Cabramatta trend 2000-01	NSW trend 2000-01	Cabramatta rate 2001*	NSW rate 2001
<i>Group A offences:</i>				
Assault - not domestic violence related	Stable	Up by 6.4%	642.1	690.9
Robbery without a weapon	Down by -4.9%	Stable	356.1	122.3
Robbery with a firearm	Stable	Up by 34.1%	48.0	13.5
Robbery with a weapon not a firearm	Down by -7.1%	Stable	239.9	65.7
Break and enter – dwelling	Stable	Down by -3.2%	1363.5	1221.6
Break and enter – non-dwelling	Stable	Stable	564.6	796.9
Motor vehicle theft	Down by -37.0%	Stable	893.0	822.5
Steal from motor vehicle	Down by -24.8%	Stable	878.3	1384.9
Steal from retail store	Stable	Stable	138.4	316.1
Steal from dwelling	Stable	Stable	234.3	481.5
Steal from person	Stable	Up by 27.8%	387.5	253.7
Malicious damage to property	Stable	Stable	819.2	1471.8
<i>Group B offences:</i>				
Possession and/or use of cocaine	Up by 384.2%	Up by 121.2%	169.8	7.0
Possession and/or use of narcotics	Down by -63.9%	Down by -55.9%	435.4	16.7
Possession and/or use of cannabis	Stable	Up by 29.4%	234.3	219.3
Possession and/or use of amphetamines	Stable	Stable	29.5	32.4
Dealing, trafficking in cocaine	Up by 1366.7%	Up by 146.0%	81.2	3.8
Dealing, trafficking in narcotics	Stable	Down by -45.9%	293.4	7.1
Dealing, trafficking in cannabis	Stable	Stable	14.8	15.1
Dealing, trafficking in amphetamines	Stable	Up by 36.0%	20.3	11.9
Offensive conduct	Stable	Stable	20.3	64.7
Offensive language	Stable	Stable	118.1	91.1
Weapons offences (all)	Down by -19.2%	Up by 12.5%	341.3	160.2
Weapons offences involving firearms	Stable	Stable	25.8	26.7

* Rate calculations for 2001 in Cabramatta are based on 1996 population.

Trends in Group B offences

As noted above, trends in these offences may reflect significant changes in policing. Furthermore, changes in the availability of heroin (narcotics) in 2000/2001 should be taken into account when examining trends in recorded drug offences (see BOCSAR publication by Weatherburn et al. *The Australian Heroin Drought and its Implication for Drug Policy*, Crime and Justice Bulletin No. 59).

Over the two-year period January 2000 to December 2001, the recorded number of incidents of cocaine offences (both possession and dealing offences) showed a significant upward trend in Cabramatta. The number of recorded incidents in Cabramatta of *possession and/or use of cocaine* increased from 19 incidents in 2000, to 92 incidents in 2001. Similarly, there was a substantial increase in the number of recorded incidents of *dealing and trafficking in cocaine* in Cabramatta - from 3 incidents in 2000, to 44 incidents in 2001. There were corresponding upward trends for each of these offences in NSW over the same time period.

In contrast there was a significant downward trend in the incidence of *possession and/or use of narcotics* in Cabramatta, and a similarly downward trend in NSW overall. While the number of recorded incidents of *dealing and trafficking in narcotics* also decreased across NSW, this did not occur in Cabramatta, where the incidence of *dealing and trafficking in narcotics* remained stable between 2000 and 2001. It should be noted that for each of these four drug offences, the rate of the offence is considerably higher in Cabramatta than the NSW average.

Offensive behaviour offences - both *offensive conduct* and *offensive language* - were stable over the two-year period in both Cabramatta and NSW overall. Similarly, the incidence of *weapons offences involving firearms* was stable both Statewide and in Cabramatta.

If you would like more information on the NSW Government's programs and policies on drugs:
www.druginfo.nsw.gov.au

If you would like more information about drugs and community action in NSW:
www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/drugs_action