



NSW POLICE FORCE

P190B

STATEMENT OF POLICE

In the matter of:	Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ Hate Crimes
Place:	Policy and Programs Team, Crime Prevention Command, Capability, Performance and Youth Command, NSW Police Force
Date:	28 October 2022

Name:	Shobha SHARMA	Tel. No:	[REDACTED]
Rank:	Administrative Employee		
Station/Unit:	Crime Prevention Command		

STATES:

1. My name is Shobha Sharma.
2. In making this statement I have been provided for reference a letter dated 20 September 2022 from the Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ Hate Crimes.
3. I have also been provided for reference a report I authored in 2001 providing advice on the permanent establishment of a Hate Crimes Unit within the New South Wales Police Service (D/2021/148753). That report is **annexed** to my statement and marked "A".
4. I am a permanent Grade 11/12 Manager of the Policy and Programs Team, Crime Prevention Command, Capability, Performance and Youth Command, NSWPF. I am currently on secondment from 11 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 at the NSW Department of Communities and Justice as Manager, in Funding and Systems Improvement (Relationships and Systems - Women, Family and Community Safety) at Strategy, Policy and Commissioning.
5. I have held two periods of employment with NSWPF. The first was between 4 January 2000 and 2006. The second was from 2012 to the current date.
6. The organisation was previously known as the New South Wales Police "Service" before being changed to "Force". For simplicity, at all times I have referred to the organisation as the New South Wales Police Force ("NSWPF").

Witness:

[REDACTED]
 Name *Darrin Gobbe*
 Position *Chief Inspector*
 Team *CRPC*
 Date 28 October 2022

Signature:

[REDACTED]
 Shobha SHARMA
 Manager, Policy and Programs
 Crime Prevention, Capability,
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FIRST PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT

7. My first role with NSWPF was as a temporary civilian employee was the Police and Community Training ("PACT") Program Coordinator within the Cultural Diversity Team in the Policy and Programs Unit at Police Headquarters.
8. In March 2001 I was successful in obtaining the permanent role of Ethnic Community Liaison Officer ("ECLO") Program Coordinator, also within the team and Unit at Police Headquarters.
9. The Team Leader of the Cultural Diversity Team at that time was Chitrita Mukerjee. Ms Mukerjee is no longer employed by the NSWPF.
10. The main focus of my role during 2001 – 2003 was the ECLO Program.
11. I was Acting Team Leader of the Cultural Diversity Team during a period of annual leave by Chitrita Mukerjee in 2001.
12. During this period of relieving in her role, I authored a brief (D/2001/148753) providing advice on a Memorandum by Dr Eric Heller-Wagner, School of Operational Policing, NSW Police Academy in which he recommended the establishment of a Hate Crimes Unit within NSWPF.
13. Generally, as a member of the Cultural Diversity Team, I would be aware of broader pieces of work handled by the Team whilst maintaining a focus on my specific role as ECLO Program Coordinator.
14. The team also supported the Police Ethnic Communities Advisory Council ("PECAC") chaired by the Commissioner of Police. NSWPF participation in the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau ("NPEAB") was a team responsibility, with the Cultural Diversity Team providing secretariat support for this Council, providing notes and advice for Assistant Commissioner Bruce Johnstone and other Corporate Spokespersons for Cultural Diversity's representation at NPEAB. I had an awareness of the Prejudice Related Crime Data Collection Project ("the Project") as an agenda item at PECAC.
15. When I first came into the Cultural Diversity Team in 2000, I was aware that the Prejudice Related Crime Data Collection Project (the Project) had very recently been launched (late 1999). I cannot claim to have any deeper knowledge of the Project beyond what I heard at Cultural Diversity Team meetings and by virtue of being seated next to colleagues who worked on it.
16. I have been asked to specifically address questions 2 and 3 of the letter dated 20 September 2022.

Witness:

Name *Darren Goble*
Position *Chief Inspector*
Team *CPIC*
Date 28 October 2022

Signature

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Collection of bias crimes data prior to 1999

17. I have limited knowledge of how bias crime data was collected prior to 1999 as I only commenced working in NSW Police in January 2000. I believe there may have been a separate database used to record bias crime data. Trials had been conducted at individual Commands to test approaches to data collection on incidents and allegations of racist violence and other violence motivated by prejudice, including recording such information in Information or Intelligence Reports.
18. The Project aimed to incorporate the data within the Police COPS system.

The Prejudice Related Crime Data Collection Project

Outline of what the project involved

19. I am aware that the Project aimed to have police record bias related crime on the COPS system and then analysis of the data would be sent to the Commissioner of Police and Corporate Spokesperson for Cultural Diversity to direct operational policing, education and training, and community engagement.

What kind of data was integrated from the project into COPS

20. The NSWPF COPS system is used for the recording of incidents attended or investigated by police. Those incidents have an associated factors field. The associated factors list was adapted as part of the project to include whether an incident was prejudice related. Selecting that option, further associated options were available for selection, to identify the type of prejudice. The four options were:
- Racial/Ethnic;
 - Sexual Preference;
 - Religious and Political; and
 - Other.
21. I recall this because the cultural diversity team had seen the screens and I have a vague recollection of communications to the field about the use of the new screens. I do not recall how these communications occurred but think it could have been the subject of a Police Weekly article.

Witness:

[Redacted]

Name *Darren Cookbe*
Position *Chief Inspector*
Team *CPMC*
Date 28 October 2022

Signature:

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How that data was collected by the NSWPF

22. The COPS system was the initial recording process for any prejudice factors. A report was then generated from COPS showing the number of incidents where prejudice factors were identified by reporting police. I recall that the reports could be broken down by each associated factor as well as geographical reporting. The report required further analysis from the raw data.
23. The briefing report is **annexed** in its entirety as part of my statement and marked "**B**".
24. This briefing report was authored by Chitrita Mukerjee, Senior Programs Officer, Ethnic Affairs at Policy and Program Unit on 22 December 2000.
25. In the briefing report, there is a reference to 'Attachment B', which contains a "*relatively basic analysis of the data recorded on racial prejudice motivated crime from October 1999 to June 2000*" and I refer to this report as the 'first report' in my statement.
26. It is a six-monthly report on the prejudice related crime data collection system on COPS that the Commissioner of Police committed to at the media launch of the 'Prejudice Related Crime Data Collection Project' in October 1999.
27. I recall some team discussions around the data in the first report. It was generally discussed that there was a need for internal training around the use or selection of those prejudice factors, as there was anecdotal evidence from early reports that some prejudice factors were not being correctly identified.

How the data was used by the NSWPF

28. As referred to above, I was aware that the Commissioner of Police had made a commitment at the launch of the Project in October 1999 to report on those prejudice factors every six months. The first report was delayed. I believe this was due to the analysis of data which also coincided with other commitments in relation to the Sydney Olympics in 2000 that was occurring at that time. The first report was published towards the end of 2000. I do not know how the first report was used.
29. There was an intention to coordinate a comprehensive internal education and information strategy to accompany the launch of the Project, with police training packages to follow. I am unable to recall the reasons for delays with the training package being finalised and rolled out.
30. Approximately two years after the launch of the Prejudice Related Crime Data Collection Project, in October 2001, Dr Eric Heller-Wagner who lectured at the NSW Police Academy, authored a memorandum articulating a rationale for the establishment of a Hate Crime Unit within NSWPS. This submission was sent to Organisational Policy & Development

Witness:

[Redacted]

Name *Darren Crook*
Position *Chief Inspector*
Team *CPYC*
Date 28 October 2022

Signature:

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("OP&D") the Command where I worked) for comment. OP&D played a critical role in crime prevention and housed many policy teams which worked at the interface between NSWPS and diverse communities.

31. As Acting Team Leader of the Cultural Diversity Team, I authored a brief in response to the above referral for advice.
32. At the time of Dr Heller-Wagner's submission, data retrieval from COPS for prejudice related Associated Factors was still very clunky and the accuracy of data entry by police still required major improvement. There was a report generated from the COPS data, but the report was returned from the Commissioner of Police for further review. The analysis of the data continued to show police were incorrectly flagging bias crime factors. The training on 'Dealing with Racist Violence' had still not been finalised, and a rhythm of six-monthly reports on the prejudice-related crime data had still not been established. There was, in my opinion insufficient evidence to determine if a dedicated hate crime unit would be beneficial to the organisation or to the community. However, as the recommendation addressed prejudice-related crime within the community, it could not be dismissed. Our Command was aware anecdotally that hate crimes and incidents were under reported, or reported to community organisations but perhaps not to police.
33. I formed the opinion that the organisation needed to prioritise improvement in data recording and analysis and re-visit the justification for a dedicated Hate Crimes Unit. My report expressed that view.

What arrangements are in place from 1999 to date with respect to such data

34. I am only able to provide comment from the date of my second period of employment with NSWPF from 2012, in my capacity as a permanent Grade 11/12 Manager in the same Command I had previously worked in.
35. When I took on the role of Manager, Policy & Programs Team, I recruited Sgt Geoffrey Steer as the Bias Crimes Coordinator in my team. That position resulted from commitments made by the Commissioner of Police at a PECAC meeting around 2006 or 2007, for the need to establish a Bias Crimes Coordinator role.
36. The Bias Crimes Coordinator was to support in-field investigators with advice based on the data collection of bias crime. As the role evolved from 2013, it was responsible for enhancing the intelligence capability of NSWPF, trend analysis and training for officers with the support of the Diversity Trainer (Judy Saba a current employee of NSWPF) at the Command.
37. In August 2012, then Deputy Commissioner Kaldas, Corporate Spokesperson for Cultural Diversity championed the re-establishment of the position of Bias Crimes Coordinator (which had earlier existed 2007-2009).

Witness:

[Redacted]

Name *Darren Hobbe*
Position *Chief Inspector*
Team *CPYC*
Date 28 October 2022

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38. Sgt Geoffrey Steer was recruited and commenced in September 2012 within my team. He was supported by a Senior Policy Officer, Yasmin Hunter. They drafted a Bias Crimes Strategic Plan.
39. With the recommencement of a Bias Crimes Coordinator, there was a renewed emphasis on police flagging incidents with the Bias Motivated Associated Factor in COPS, with communications going out to police officers in the field about it.
40. I recall that the relevant communications instructed police that they should flag incidents where they suspected that the offence was motivated by bias, and the final determination on whether that incident was a bias motivated one or a suspected bias motivated one would be made by the Bias Crimes Coordinator. The focus in the first two to three years was on educating staff about flagging incidents correctly.
41. The Bias Crimes Coordinator then reviewed all incidents flagged on COPS as bias-related and prepared summaries in relation to them.
42. Where members of the Bias Crimes Team identified incorrect flagging of incidents in COPS, they would liaise with the relevant officers/Command to ensure understanding of the Associated Factor. This was actively done to reduce the number of incorrect flagging.
43. In 2013, a Corporate Sponsor for Bias Motivated Crimes was also appointed (Superintendent Danny Sullivan) as well as Region Sponsors at Superintendent rank to support the portfolio.
44. In 2014, a Project Officer was provided on loan for 12 months to support the work of the Bias Crimes Coordinator, this being Senior Constable Nathan Corbett.
45. The Bias Crimes Standard Operating Procedures were endorsed in 2015, after being trialled in three Commands for a 3-month period. The SOPS provided guidance on how to identify bias crimes, the definition used by NSWPF and on relevant legislation and investigation.
46. In 2015, 'Reclaim Australia' Rallies were being organised in multiple locations and the staff in the Bias Crimes Unit had a leading response to them.
47. By October 2015, a civilian Intelligence Analyst, Elizabeth Blake, had also been recruited into the Bias Crimes Unit (all within my team).
48. By that time the expanded Bias Crimes Unit and the Bias Crimes Corporate and Region Sponsors together created a lot of momentum and awareness within the organisation about bias motivated crimes.

Witness:

[Redacted]

Name *Dawen Grobbe*
Position *Chief Inspector*
Team *CPMC*
Date 28 October 2022

Signature:

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49.



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