

Surry Hills Local Area Command – Strike Force Parrabell

SURRY HILLS LOCAL AREA COMMAND



STRIKE FORCE PARRABELL INDUCTION PACKAGE

Published April 2016

STRIKE FORCE PARRABELL

BACKGROUND

In 1988 Scott Johnson was located deceased at the base of a cliff in the Eastern Suburbs. In 1989, a Coroner ruled his death was suicide. A second inquest into his death was undertaken in order to review new information gathered by the JOHNSON family.

As a result of this second inquest, the Deputy State Coroner overturned the suicide finding from 1989 and recorded an open finding stating that there was a possibility that Mr. JOHNSON was either the victim of a gay hate crime similar to those that were occurring in Bondi at the time, or alternatively that he fell to his death.

Previous police investigations into gay hate crimes include Operation Taradale (2005), which re-investigated a number of deaths in the Bondi area during the 1980s and 1990s where gay men were specifically targeted, assaulted and forced off the cliffs by ‘gangs’ of youths. Some of these cases investigated were solved; however several remain unsolved.

In 2002, the then NSW Police Gay & Lesbian Consultant, Ms. Sue THOMPSON, identified a potential 88 cases between 1976 and 1999 that potentially involved anti gay bias (see attached list). The death of Scott JOHNSON and deaths subject to the Operation Taradale investigation are included in this list of 88 cases.

In recent years there has been significant media coverage on the ‘gay hate crime wave’ of the 1980s and 1990s in Sydney. Such articles have referred to cases identified by Ms. Sue THOMPSON and others, suggesting that an anti gay bias played a significant role in these deaths.

Allegations have been made that the NSWPF, at the time of these crimes, did not properly consider motives of bias in their investigations and therefore did not investigate these deaths adequately.

MISSION

The NSWPF has recognised that the community’s concerns may be addressed through a comprehensive review of the relevant cases from a bias crime perspective. Strike Force Parrabell has been established to review these previously reported deaths of persons between 1976 and 2000 to determine if a sexuality or gender bias was a contributing factor. In this way at least some degree of comfort might be provided by searching existing holdings for evidence of sexuality or gender bias.

Surry Hills Local Area Command – Strike Force Parrabell

EXECUTION

In August 2015, Investigators commenced a systematic review of the NSWPF individual case file holdings to identify evidence indicative of any bias crime.

Definition of a Bias Crime Indicators – *“Objective facts, circumstances, or patterns attending a criminal act or acts, which, standing alone or in conjunction with other facts or circumstances, suggest that the offender’s actions were motivated, in whole, or in part, by any form of bias.”* (Massachusetts Model – Protocol for Bias Crime Investigation)

The Strike Force is designed to review matters that have *already been investigated* by the NSWPF. The review is systematically assessing each individual case holdings entirely on its own merits. Holdings consist of the standard brief items that are collected in a criminal investigation, such as witness statements, crime scene evidence, records of interview, contemporaneous police notes etc.

The review is using a list of Bias Crime Indicators which consists of indicators published by the US Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime¹. These indicators assist investigators in systematically determining if a bias was a motivating factor in the incident leading to the death.

Investigators have created a ‘Bias Crimes Indicators Review Form’ (see attached Review Form), and use this form to systematically review each relevant case file item. As this approach is evidence bases, the Bias Crimes Identification Form is completed with reference to existing case file items only. For example, if the offender is recorded in police files as associating with persons known to have assaulted young gay men, then the investigator would mark Bias Crimes Indicator 4 (Organised Hate Group) as being relevant. In such instance, this fact would be recorded on the Bias Crimes Identification Form, along with the source of the evidence and a description of how the evidence relates to the indicator. For each indicator, the following 4 findings are available:

- There is evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death.
- It appears likely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death.
- It appears unlikely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death.
- There is no evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death.

¹ Indicator 1 through to 9 have been taken from ‘Responding to hate Crime – A multidisciplinary Curriculum of Law Enforcement & Victim Assistance Professions’, National Centre for Hate Crime Prevention, United States Department of Justice – Office for Victims of Crime, 2000. Indicator 10 has been developed by NSWFP Bias Crimes based on research and cases.

Surry Hills Local Area Command – Strike Force Parrabell

At the conclusion of each case review, an overall conclusion is made referring to each relevant indicator and the relevant evidence. Comments are recorded in order to clarify each finding. It should be noted that several findings may be available for each indicator and/or review conclusion. Furthermore, a bias indication does not have to establish that the bias was the only or main motivating factor behind the action. All conclusions in relation to the role of bias are made on the balance of probabilities.

Bias Crime Indicators Form

1. Differences	
Prompts	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Immutable characteristic differences between victim and POI's sexual orientation</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Victim is a member of a group which is outnumbered by members of another group in the area where the incident occurred</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Victim was engaged in activities promoting his/her group</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Incident coincided with a holiday or date of particular significance to the victim or POI's group</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Victim, although not a member of the targeted group is a member a member of an advocacy group that supports the victim, or the victim was in company of a member of the targeted group</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Historical animosity exists between the victim's group and the POI's group</i> 	
Indicators	(y/n)
There is evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
It appears likely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
There is no evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
GENERAL COMMENT	

Surry Hills Local Area Command – Strike Force Parrabell

2. Comments, Written Statements, Gestures	
Prompts	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Bias related comments, written statements or gestures were made by the POI</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Comments and gestures can occur before, during and after the incident</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Victims may not be aware of the significance of gestures made</i> 	
Indicators	(y/n)
There is evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
It appears likely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
There is no evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
GENERAL COMMENT	
3. Drawings, Markings, Symbols, Tattoos, Graffiti	
Prompts	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Bias related drawings, markings, symbols or graffiti were left at the scene or were seen on the POI</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Before discounting symbols, ensure that you understand the meaning of the symbol</i> 	
Indicators	(y/n)
There is evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
It appears likely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	

Surry Hills Local Area Command – Strike Force Parrabell

There is no evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
GENERAL COMMENT	
4. Organised Hate Groups (OHG)	
Prompts	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Objects or items that represent the work of an OHG were left at the scene, e.g. business cards, flyers, burning cross</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>An OHG claimed responsibility</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>There are indications that an OHG was involved or active in the area</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>MO is similar to known MO of an OHG</i> 	
Indicators	(y/n)
There is evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
It appears likely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
There is no evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
GENERAL COMMENT	
5. Previous existence of Bias Crime Incidents	
Prompts	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Victim was visiting a location where previous bias crimes had been committed against members of the victim's group</i> 	

Surry Hills Local Area Command – Strike Force Parrabell

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several incidents occurred in the same area and the victims were members of the same group 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victim has received previous harassing mail, email, social media posts or phone calls or has been the victim of verbal abuse (anti-gay) based on his/her affiliation with a targeted group 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent bias incidents or crimes may have sparked retaliatory bias crime 	
Indicators	(y/n)
There is evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
It appears likely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
There is no evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
GENERAL COMMENT	
6. Victim/Witness Perception	
Prompts	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Witnesses (actual) perceive that the incident was motivated by bias 	
Indicators	(y/n)
There is evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
It appears likely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
There is no evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
GENERAL COMMENT	

Surry Hills Local Area Command – Strike Force Parrabell

7. Motive of Offender/s	
Prompts	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>POI was previously involved in similar incident or is a member/associates with members of an OHG</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The victim was in company of a member of the targeted group</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The victim was perceived to be breaking from traditional conventions or working non-traditional employment</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The POI has a history of previous crimes with similar MO and involving other victims of the same group</i> 	
Indicators	(y/n)
There is evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
It appears likely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
There is no evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
GENERAL COMMENT	
8. Location of Incident	
Prompts	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The victim was in or near an area or place commonly associated with or frequented by members of a particular group e.g. beat</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The location of an incident has specific significance to the victim or POI group e.g. cemetery, religious building, historical landmark, etc</i> 	

Surry Hills Local Area Command – Strike Force Parrabell

Indicators	(y/n)
There is evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
It appears likely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
There is no evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	

GENERAL COMMENT

9. Lack of Motive

Prompts	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No clear economic or other motive for the incident exists</i> 	

Indicators	(y/n)
There is evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
It appears likely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
There is no evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	

GENERAL COMMENT

10. Level of Violence

Prompts	Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The level of violence and injuries sustained by the victim/s is greater than would be expected for a crime of that type</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Weapons of opportunity are used in the incident</i> 	

Surry Hills Local Area Command – Strike Force Parrabell

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The number of POI's is greater than the number of victims and all POI's take an active role in the assault</i> 	
Indicators	(y/n)
There is evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
It appears likely that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
There is no evidence that sexuality or other bias was involved in the death	
GENERAL COMMENT	

Group Details and Taskings:

- Detective Inspector Craig MIDDLETON (Surry Hills Crime Manager)
 - Detective Inspector MIDDLETON *is involved in the ongoing supervision of the Strike Force and the review of completed Bias Crime Indicator Forms.*
- Officer in Charge: Detective Sergeant Paul GRACE (Surry Hills Investigations Manager)
 - D/Sgt GRACE *is involved in the review of all e@gle.i products and completed Bias Crime Indicator Forms.*
- Case Officer: Detective Senior Constable Cameron BIGNELL
 - *Case officer will manage and account for the investigative process.*
 - *Case Officer is responsible for completing the final Bias Crime Indicator Forms.*
- Investigators:
 - *Review case files with a view to identifying evidence that is relevant to Bias Crime.*
 - *Create case overview/summary product on e@gle.i relating to each case (4 officers).*
- Product Creators:
 - *Review evidence collated by Investigators.*

Surry Hills Local Area Command – Strike Force Parrabell

- *Create e@gle.i products outlining relevant holdings. The Case Officer will input this evidence into the Bias Crime Indicators Form (2 officers)*
- Editing and logistics:
 - *Assist with editing completed Bias Crime Indicator Forms*
 - *Facilitate ordering and collecting relevant case file items*
- Final Review Team: Crime Manager, Investigations Manager, Case Officer – *All final conclusions will be reviewed in fortnightly meetings.*

Coordinating Instructions:

- Although individual roles may change, the review involves the management of information (NSWFP case file holdings). Such case files are contained on e@gle.i or available as hardcopy items that have been archived.
- There is a logistical component to the review as available holdings need to be located and collected.
- Investigators will review the case files and extract material that is relevant to the mission.
- Product creators will review and upload this material to e@gle.i in a format that can be utilised by the Case Officer.
- The Case Officer will complete the Bias Crime Indicator Forms.
- e@gle.i products will be reviewed and accepted on an ongoing basis.
- The Bias Crime Indicator Forms will be reviewed by an appropriate person in relation to issues of language, and where appropriate changes will be suggested.
- The Review Team will be responsible for maintain uniform standards in methodology and published products.
- The Review Team will meet on a regular basis to discuss the running of the Strike Force, and to review all completed Bias Crime Indicator Forms including the evidence relied upon and conclusions drawn.
- Bias Crime Indicator Forms be finalised following authorisation from The Review Team.
- Advice may be sought from other units/agencies (i.e. NSWPF Bias Crime Unit) in regards to issues raised by The Review Team.

Dress:

- All police officers will wear business attire as per standard criminal investigation duties.
- Casual clothing may be worn for specific duties such archiving.
- Alert Concept of Operations applies to all NSWPF employees. All officers are to comply with this document. In particular, ALL POLICE whilst on duty will maintain a high level of operation readiness including the wearing of arms and appointments at all times when on duty. The Strike Force is run from the Sydney Police Centre, a location that has a high public profile. Be mindful of

Surry Hills Local Area Command – Strike Force Parrabell

safety when coming and going from the building, and when attending nearby places of regular congregation of police staff, such as cafes. All staff are required to be familiar with Alert Concept of Operations.

Roster:

- The Strike Force Team will work Monday to Friday day shift.

Transport:

- There is no designated personal parking for employees in or around the SPC. The location is within walking distance to various bus stops and Central Train Station. There is a Wilson's car park on Goulburn Street. The NSW Police Force Association has organised a discounted rate of \$12 per day for members. In order to obtain this rate, officers must validate their ticket in the machine situated on a table to the left of the security access point of the SPC.

Firearms:

- 

Security Access:

- The Case Officer will assist you in completing the relevant paperwork for obtaining access to the SPC, the Surry Hills Police Station, and the Surry Hills Detective's office.
- Please remember to sign on and off with the G.D.s Supervisor at the front of the station at the start and finish of your shift. All staff must comply with Alert Concept of Operations.

Communications:

The local radio channel for the Surry Hills Local Area Command is Zone 2 channel 23.