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Subject: Comments in the Australian [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
Date: Saturday, 9 June 2018 09:52:15

Sir,

It is with sadness I find myself sending this email. I took the umpire's decision when I was forced out of the BCU (yes I was forced out, it was confirmed by multiple sources at different levels of government, not just the NSWPF). despite ongoing attacks and harassment by the NSWPF with respect to my work in the hate crimes field. I have tried to move on only to have my work attacked constantly by those who do not understand the subject and want to make it personal. I have had my ability to continue my study in this field constantly blocked and questioned. My father taught me that if you don't stand up for your beliefs then you stand for nothing. The influential people in my life and career have reinforced this to me, including former Deputy Commissioner KALDAS. This has lead me to write this email. I have read the article published in the Australian and I am saddened by the comments made. The concerns that I have relate to the statements attributed to you where you are quoted as stating, "Our current bias assessment tools are not practical for everyday police officers on the frontline." I believe this statement is ill informed. From the context of the article it appears that the comments made in the article relate primarily to the work I did for Unsolved Homicide in regards to Scott JOHNSON. I believe that the work that was undertaken by S/Sgt KENWORTHY and myself have been taken out of context. For the record the work we did was not determine if the death of Scott JOHNSON was a hate crime, it was to assist Unsolved Homicide in understanding the location as a potential hate crime hot spot. The report that I compiled, if read in the correct context clearly states that our assessment was not determine if Scott JOHNSON was a victim of a hate crime. The report further states that the assessment was based on available information and if new information came to light the assessment may change. In coming to the conclusions that were made S/Sgt KENWORTHY and I assessed the information from the perspective of trying to prove hate crime activity at the location and we couldn't. Ever piece of information we had did not support the area as being a likely hot spot. The findings of the inquest do not relate to our work they relate to death of Scott JOHNSON, could the location not be a viable location for hate crimes and a hate crime happened, absolutely. I stand by the assessment. Based on the available information the assessment is valid. I don't know what information was presented at the Inquest, but I know the work I did was thorough and complete and there was no evidence to suggest the area was a hot spot for hate crimes. I find it interesting that those who are externally critical of the work a) have connections to the JOHNSON family, in that they worked for them at one stage or another and b) they have clearly not the read the report in context and objectively. The critics, and it's no surprise, are those with an agenda. I didn't have an agenda. I assessed the information objectively. I accept the Judges decision. But I stand by my work and I would be interested to hear where I went wrong, it is how we learn and grow, I am not precious and if it can be shown that my assessment was flawed I will accept that and learn from it.

I am aware that there is a perception that as the proponent of the NSWPF hate crime capability and the former team leader of the BCU that I made up the processes that were approved from CET.

Further I am aware that there is a belief that as a non designated officer I have no clue what I was doing. I think the facts need to be made clear.

1. I am the NSWPF subject matter expert, even after leaving. I have spent 17 years studying and researching hate crimes and hate groups and still to this day I am passionate about this field and continue my education, study and research in the field. Despite the attacks on me by senior officers, the claims of empire building and the active attempts to undermine the work we did, all I ever wanted to do was my job and to improve the safety of the people of NSW. I know I am naive, even after all the attacks, bullying and harassment that has been levelled at me by senior officers, I still show up and do my job to the best of my ability. I am not perfect, I never claimed to be. I put into place a system that was designed to grow and change but based on facts not political considerations. I hope that another officer with the passion I had is found to continue the

work, but at this stage it would be fair to say that my knowledge and expertise is the most complete in the NSWPF.

2. Despite the belief that I made up the processes, the truth is that it was a long process consulting with the leading experts in the hate crime field. In 2001 and again in 2005 I undertook the FLETC hate crime training where I had the privilege to engage with the Hate Crime Studies board, a panel of experts in hate crime investigations. I had the privilege to engage Inspector (Roughly equivalent to Assistant Commissioner) Gary SHAPIRO of the Nassau County Police Department Hate Crime Unit. Gary became my mentor and greatly influenced the development of the NSWPF hate crime response. Gary is a world leading expert in police response to hate crimes, including being personally invited by the President of the United States to attend the Hate Crimes Conference at the White House. In addition to Gary I have engaged with and had input from the Inspector McGRONE of the NYPD Hate Crimes Taskforce and Sgt Jim BRIERTON the Suffolk County Police Department Hate Crimes Unit. In addition to the assistance by these individuals I was also assisted by the Southern Poverty Law Centre and the Anti-Defamation League in developing the NSWPF response. The response that was developed was based on best practice and years of investigative experience. As Gary was fond of telling me, "Don't re-invent the wheel, we have learnt the hard way, learn from our mistakes and make it better." I am aware that the usual response at this point is that we adopted a US model and it doesn't reflect the Australian context. Well that is wrong, although we used the experience from overseas it was tailored for NSW and Australia. In addition the SOPS were sent out to regions for comment (none was received) and were reviewed by a highly qualified NSWPF investigator. His input was adopted into the process. Sir I would be cautious to attack the process that was developed as it was developed with the assistance of experts in the field. I have been the subject of attacks by the NSWPF since I started the hate crime capability, it has gotten to be rain of a ducks back, but those who assisted me will not be so forgiving and given their standing and their positions it may be very embarrassing for the NSWPF to call into question the work of these experts.
3. I do not know where the belief that we used the FBI system came from. As I told you on several occasions, the FBI does not have a system they created. As highlighted in the article there is clear confusion because the comments from the outside commentators clearly show a lack of understanding of the model we use as they refer to the Hate Crimes Statistics Act that mandates the FBI to collect data on hate crimes, not to investigate them. In fact that it was only recently that US Federal Hate Crime laws came into existence.
4. Your comments indicate that the current approach is not practicable for frontline police. I strongly reject this statement. The current Bias Crimes SOPS were written by 2 operational police (S/C CORBETT and I). We took great pains in making it as operationally friendly as possible for frontline police. I have spent over half my career working the truck and supervising first response police I am acutely aware of the pressures on them and ensured that the approach was as simple as possible for an extremely complicated area of study. There are only 2 models in existence the UK and the US. No matter which one you choose, the investigative process is the same, it requires asking the right questions. This gets me to the 10 indicators. I cannot explain this any simpler, they are not a checklist. They have never been a checklist. They were designed by experts in investigation and victims to assist police to ask the right questions and investigate the matter. If the belief exists that you can just take the victims/witness word and you have no more investigation to do then it is wrong, unless you want numbers that are way out of proportion to reality. No matter what you do you need to investigate. After 7 years of trying to get the NSWPF to take hate crimes seriously and to give the resources to upskill police it was met by the destruction of the NSWPF capability and attacks of the work done. It is with all respect when I ask this question sir, but how well do you understand the SOPS and the processes that were developed? Is your knowledge limited to the 10 indicators (which seem to cop the brunt of the attacks) or have you examined the SOPS in details and understand the process clearly?
5. It is all well and good for external voices to comment and criticise, but the reality is that political and personal motivations are at play and not a clear understanding of the investigative process that are required to determine hate crimes. The experts have no understanding of the NSWPF processes, and for you to give their ill informed criticisms support is disappointing. I have always

been open about what the BCU did and processes, all anyone had to do was ask and we would explain it., no one ever asked or wanted to know. I was told once by one of the supervisors with the NYPD Hate Crime Taskforce that "Hate crimes policing is political policing at it's best." I laughed when he told me, but after my experience with the NSWPF I have to agree. Why we let individuals who are not police to tell us how we must investigate is mind blowing. I understand the politics and the motivations, but that should not influence how we do the job.

6. Sir you state that you want to change the current process. I would be interested in knowing how you will make it easier. The changes that were made, made it so only 1 associated factor field was required to be completed, not an onerous task. In fact the senior ranks of the NSWPF increased the difficulty in recording with the return to the flawed system we replaced. The heavy lifting was in the investigation and I don't understand how you will make that easier. If you wish to adopt the UK method, feel free but you need to understand the UK model is about reporting only, not investigation. Sir if you come up with an easier process that is in fact easier I will be the first to support it and promote it.
7. As the Corporate Spokeperson for Sexuality & Gender Diversity, you have a stake in this without a doubt, but what about the other categories. Hate crimes is more than the LGBTI community. Despite the belief that I spent all my time working on the right wing, the reality was much different. The unit engaged all the other protected categories and I wonder if those communities and those who have corporate sponsorship for those communities will have a say in the changes? The communities we engaged and explained the process seemed happy with what we were doing, they understood the difficulty with hate crimes.
8. It has been nearly 12 months since I was forced out and NSWPF has done nothing with bias crimes. In the last 12 months there has been nothing printed, disseminated or undertaken to improve the response by police with respect to hate crimes. The actions taken by the NSWPF with respect to the BCU effectively crippled the NSWPF capability, changing processes does not fix the fundamental issue that hate crimes are not a priority for the NSWPF.
9. I see from the article that the results from Parrabell are to be released shortly. I can only hope that they will be seen in context and not used to bash the BCU and the hate crime work that was undertaken by a dedicated team that spent more time defending themselves than doing their work. I can only hope that you recall the conversations that I had with you, that you recall changing the definition so that it fitted with the investigation outcomes, that Parrabell cut out the organisational experts from the process (in contradiction to the very SOPS you wish to replace) and that you were told on multiple occasions that the indicators were not a checklist and the PARRABELL used them incorrectly.
10. Finally sir, the BCU was leading ground breaking research and response to hate crimes. We were the first agency in the world to incorporate a threat management approach. All that work came to a sudden end with the effective destruction of the BCU.
- 11.

Sir I will apologise if the above may seem disrespectful, that is not my intention. I understand the position you are in and the role you have, but my concern is that the process is being made the scapegoat, when in reality the issue has always been that hate crimes have never been accepted by the NSWPF and has never had organisation support. It raises uncomfortable feelings on many levels and people want it to go away. My experience with hate crimes in the NSWPF fully supports the concept of organisational cognitive dissonance. If the information supplied differs from the core belief then all information, no matter how relevant or accurate will be disregarded to avoid conflict with core belief systems. As the NSWPF clearly has fought every attempt to integrate a hate crimes response into every day policing, I am not surprised by the way it has ended. The sad fact is that hate crimes will not go away and given the current global environment they will get worse. I hope that one day the NSWPF can see past the anxiety hate crimes has caused and embrace them for what they are, an opportunity. An opportunity to engage with communities, prevent violent extremism and make society more cohesive and hopefully reduce crime and the fear of crime. Sir as the head of Education and Training I will always fully support meaningful hate crime training and education, but I will not be scapegoated by an organisation that spent more time fighting the concept than taking the time to understand and objectively assessing it's impact.

Sir I don't expect a response, I have said my piece, but if you wish to discuss anything with me I will be more than willing to discuss.



Sergeant Geoff STEER
General Duties Team Leader
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