

22/10

Issue

Prejudice Related Crime Data Collection Project (PRCDCP)

Background

In October 1995 the NSW Minister for Police announced the establishment of the Hate Crimes Data Collection Project. In the following years, the Service researched ways of collecting data on prejudice related crimes or hate crimes, to determine the most appropriate model for the project. A committee, consisting of key stakeholders representing the Police Service, Ethnic Affairs Commission, Privacy Commission and the Anti-Discrimination Board, was formed to consider strategies and to formulate an action plan.

In 1995 alterations were made to the COPS system to allow the recording of prejudice related crimes via the Associated Factor field. In 1998, these changes were modified and formalised with a pilot conducted at Newtown LAC. The new screens were introduced into the COPS training system in the first instance, to ensure that all police using the system were appropriately trained in managing the information.

In July 1998, an evaluation report was prepared by Newtown LAC and submitted to the Commissioner of Police, Minister of Police and the Premier of NSW (see Attachment A). The report recommended that, following the successful trial of the data collection project in Newtown, that the changes to COPS be implemented statewide via a public launch of the project. A media release, announcing these changes, was issued and is attached at Attachment C.

It was recommended that the Premier of NSW and the Minister for Police launch the project. However, the Minister's Office has suggested that the Commissioner launch the project.

Comment

Given that this project is the first one of its kind in Australia, it has a high profile at a state, national and international level. It also has clear links with other current issues, such as, the collection of ethnicity based data on alleged offenders and analysis of patterns in gay hate homicides. Hence, the statewide roll-out of this project needs to be prioritised.

A launch of the PRCDCP has been proposed for Friday, 22 October 1999 at 11.30 am at the Media Conference Room, Police Headquarters. The following aspects of the project are proposed for the launch:

in diary

- statewide implementation of the changes to COPS (see Attachment B)
- a staged education and information strategy
- first status report on the data collected to be available in June 1999

The Commissioner of Police is invited to launch the project. The Chair of the Ethnic Affairs Commission and the President of the Anti-Discrimination Board will be invited to present speeches at the launch.

Invitees to the launch will consist of mainstream, ethnic and gay media representatives, relevant corporate spokespersons, Anti-discrimination Commissioner from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Police Academy representatives, managers of Information Technology, Operational Programs and Police Media and representatives from each of these sections.

A comprehensive education and information strategy will be coordinated by Operational

Programs Branch, Police Media Unit and Information Technology. This will be implemented in three stages with stage one coinciding with the launch. Stage One will consist of media releases on the project, article in the Police Service Weekly, a feature on Police TV and information on the Police Intranet and Internet sites. Stages two and three will consist of more comprehensive information via police education and training programs. These stages will also include finalising a training package entitled *Dealing with Racist Violence*. This package has been in a developmental phase for a considerable period of time. It began several years ago as a joint project of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and the NSW Police Academy, with Ms Liz de Rome, of LdeR Consulting, as the author.

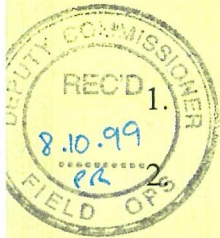
Information on the training package, *Dealing with Racist Violence*, will be included in the briefing and speech notes for the Commissioner to ensure that the agencies and the author receive recognition for their efforts. This package will compliment Police Service educational programs designed to raise awareness of prejudice-related issues, the importance of recording relevant information on COPS and how to provide effective support to victims of prejudice-related violence.

This brief has been endorsed by R/Commander Bruce Johnston, Corporate Spokesperson for Ethnic Affairs, Ms Sue Thompson, Gay/Lesbian Client Consultant and Ms Doreen Peters, Senior Programs Officer, Aboriginal Coordination Unit.

Recommendation

That the Commissioner of Police launch the Project at the proposed date, time and venue.

[Redacted]
Chitrita Mukerjee
Senior Programs Officer, Ethnic Affairs
Operational Programs Branch
E/N: 55061
29 September 1999



- 1. Director, Operational Programs Branch *Supported 25/10*
- 2. Deputy Commissioner, Field Operations *Noted. Agree.*
- 3. Commissioner *Agreed 21/10 - Speech required please.*
- 4. ~~Minister's Office~~ [Redacted]
- 5. *af* Director, Public Affairs [Redacted] *21/10/99*
- 6. Manager, Police Media Unit [Redacted] *21/10/99*
- 7. Senior Programs Officer, Ethnic Affairs

NSW Police Service
20 OCT 1999
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NSW Police Service
Unclassified
Operational Programs

NSWP/D/99/106981



INTELLIGENCE - PREJUDICE RELATED CRIME DATA
COLLECTION PROJECT (PRCDP) LAUNCH - PROPOSED
FOR FRIDAY 22 OCTOBER 1999

ATTACHMENT A

ISSUE:

7733246A=006

Prejudice Related Crime Project.

BACKGROUND:

In October, 1995 the Minister for Police announced the establishment of the Prejudice Related Crimes Data Collection Project. Since that time, the Police Service has examined different ways of collecting the data with a view to providing the most appropriate model for the project to proceed.

In December, 1997 the Region Commander, Endeavour was nominated as the sponsor for the "Evaluation Phase" and responsibility allocated to Newtown Local Area Command (LAC).

COMMENT:

The main focus has been on "Assaults" within the Newtown LAC and the collection of data commenced in March, 1998. The statistical findings are set out below:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>TOTAL ASSAULTS</u>	<u>PREJUDICE</u>
February	30	2 (6.66%) **
March	34	2 (5.88%)
April	28	1 (3.57%)
May	30	3 (10.0%)
June	32	2 (6.25%)
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>154</u>	<u>10 (6.49%)</u>

** One of the events has been recorded as 'doubtful' in terms of being a prejudice related incident. Doubt has also been expressed about the nature of the two related incidents which occurred in June.

An analysis has been made of those COPS events recorded as prejudice related incidents. The findings of the Evaluation Phase are set out in the attached report.

The LAC Working Party including representatives from Operational programs, Information Technology and Marketing & Media last met on 8 July, 1998. Consideration is being given to the finalisation of an education package on the new COPS Associated Factors Field. In this regard, the Ethnic Client Consultant has arranged to meet with representatives from the Jewish Board of Deputies and the Ethnic Affairs Commission.

In addition to the education packages being distributed to EDOs, it is proposed that publicity for the launch of the system will involve the Police Service Weekly, the MEMO System and possibly Police TV.

The timing of the launch will be subject to the concurrence of the Commissioner and the Minister for Police. As previously indicated, the Minister should brief the Premier prior to the

launch of the project. An appropriate release will also be required for the media, particularly the gay/lesbian and ethnic press.

It was noted early in the evaluation that there was an overlap with the corporate responsibilities of Commander Bruce Johnson (Ethnic Program). Given the continuing interest of the Ethnic Affairs Commission and the high political and media profile, the ongoing management and monitoring of the program will be critical. This responsibility should be vested in the Commander, South Eastern Region.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Report on the Evaluation Phase of the Prejudice Related Crime Project be submitted to the Minister for Police;
2. The Premier be advised of the proposed launch of the system on a statewide basis;
3. Operational Programs Branch to finalise the education package and publicity for the launch in consultation with Information Technology Services and the Media Unit; and
4. That the ongoing Corporate Sponsorship be vested in the vested in the Region Commander, South Eastern.

T O'Sullivan
Manager
NEWTOWN LAC
21 July, 1998

1. Commander
NEWTOWN LOCAL AREA COMMAND
2. Region Commander, ENDEAVOUR
3. Deputy Commissioner, FIELD OPERATIONS
4. Ministry for Police

PREJUDICE RELATED CRIME PROJECT

EVALUATION PHASE

FINAL REPORT

1. **Executive Summary**
2. **Recommendation**
3. **Background**
4. **Statistical Data**
5. **COPS Events**

21 JUL 1999

PREJUDICE RELATED CRIME PROJECT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In October, 1995 the Minister for Police announced the decision to establish the Prejudice Related Crimes Data Collection Project. Following that announcement, the NSW Police Service undertook an examination of various options for collecting the data with a view to providing the most appropriate model for the project.
- 1.2 In December, 1997 the Region Commander, Endeavour was nominated as the sponsor for the "Evaluation Phase"; and responsibility was allocated to Commander Kevin Curry, Newtown Local Area Command.
- 1.3 The main focus for the evaluation was on "Assaults" within the Newtown Local Area Command. In the period from 1 February, 1998 to 30 June, 1998 there were a total of ten (10) incidents which were recorded on the COPS Associated Factor Field as prejudice related incidents. This represented 6.49 percent of "Assault" incidents which occurred within the LAC and 5.26 percent of all incidents reported to Newtown Police Station.
- 1.4 Six incidents involved sexually related prejudice and the remaining four were recorded as racially related offences. One of these offences is recorded on COPS as doubtful, as it could well have been recorded as road rage. Doubt was also expressed in relation to the two incidents in June, which involved the same victim and offender.
- 1.5 There were three sexually related incidents which suggested extreme prejudice on the part of the offender. The reactions in these cases would suggest a predisposition to violence against homosexuals. One of the racially related incidents also demonstrated a high level of prejudice.
- 1.6 In launching the data collection system, the Service should avoid the use of the "hate" crime tag. In the main, it is considered that hate was not the motivating factor in the commission of the offences. The small number of incidents recorded in the five month period are more in the nature of indicators of latent prejudice within the community.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the NSW Police Service implement the Prejudice Related Crime Data Collection System to establish a database which can assist in the identification of repeat offenders.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The initial decision was that the evaluation should focus on "Assaults" within the Newtown Local Area Command. The collection of data commenced at the end of February, 1998.
- 3.2 With a view to promoting the profile of the evaluation process, media releases were issued in January and April, 1998. On 8 May, 1998 a memorandum was issued to police at Newtown to report on any type of crime which was thought to be prejudice related.
- 3.3 The relevant statistics are set out below:

MONTH	TOTAL ASSAULTS	PREJUDICE
February	30	2 (6.66%) **
March	34	2 (5.88%)
April	28	1 (3.57%)
May	30	3 (10.0%)
June	32	2 (6.25%)
TOTAL:	154	10 (6.49%)

** One of the events has been recorded as 'doubtful' in terms of being a prejudice related incident. Doubt has also been expressed about the nature of the two related incidents which occurred in June.

- 3.4 The statistics cover those incidents reported at Newtown which occurred within the boundaries of Newtown Local Area Command.
- 3.5 There were a further thirty six (36) incidents which have not been included in the statistics on the basis that they occurred outside the boundaries of Newtown Local Area Command eg. Campbelltown, Glabe, Green Valley, Redfern, Rozelle, The Rocks, Wagga Wagga. In this regard, none of these incidents were recorded by police as being prejudice related; and a subsequent examination of the COPS entries confirmed that there were no prejudice indicators.
- 3.6 An analysis of those incidents identified as "prejudice related" is set out in Section 4.

4. STATISTICAL DATA**4.1 Nature of prejudice**

- Sexually related incidents - six (60%).
- Racially related incidents - four (40%).
(Incident No 2 recorded as doubtful).
- No reports of religious incidents.
- No reports of politically related incidents.

4.2 Victim Profiles

VICTIM	DAY/TIME	NATURE OF MOTIVE
1. Male, 30 years	Sunday 22/2/98 (0610)	Sexually related
2. Male, 57 years	Saturday 28/2/98 (1800)	Racially related
3. Female, [REDACTED]	Tuesday 3/3/98 (1320)	Sexually related
4. Male, 30 years	Saturday 14/3/98 (2320)	Sexually related
5. Male, 30 years	Sunday 5/4/98 (0400)	Sexually related
6. Male, 29 years	Sunday 3/5/98 (0005)	Sexually related
7. Female, [REDACTED]	Tuesday 5/5/98 (0840)	Racially related
8. Male, 30 years	Saturday 23/5/98 (1845)	Sexually related
9. Male, 42 years	Sunday 21/6/98 (1130)	Racially related
10. Female, 37 years	Tuesday 23/6/98 (1520)	Racially related

4.3 Victims

Three incidents involving female victims (30%). Ages were [REDACTED] and 37 years.
Seven incidents involving male victims (70%). Ages were mainly around 29 - 30 years. One victim aged 42 years.

4.4 Timing

Day of Incident:	Saturday	- 30%
	Sunday	- 40%
	Tuesday	- 30%

4.5 Offender Profile

1. **Male, late 20's, brown hair cut very short, medium build, broad shoulders.
Male, late 20's, dark short hair.**
2. **Male, caucasian, 28 year old, 175 cm tall, muscular build, Czech accent, black short hair, bit balding in front.(silver stud earring in left ear).**
3. **Female, 16 year old.**
4. **Male, early 20s, 6' tall, thin build, European appearance, short dark hair, fair skin, dark eyes..**
5. **Male, 25 to 30 year old, possibly European in appearance, medium build, clean shaven.
Male, medium/heavy build, light brown hair, receding hairline.**
6. **Male, Mediterranean appearance, 25-30 years old, 5'8" - 5'9" tall, stocky build. clean shaven, dark short hair.**
7. **Female, Aboriginal, 14 Year Old.
Female, 15 Year Old.
Female, Aboriginal, 14 Year Old.**
8. **Male, caucasian, 5'10' tall, lean build, short mousy blonde/brown hair.**
9. **Male, caucasian, 25 Year Old, thin build, about 178 cm tall, blonde short hair.**
10. **Male, Aboriginal appearance, about 30 year Old, fullface beard, medium build, dark eyes, black short hair curly on top.**

4.6 Location

**Four incidents (40%) occurred in or near hotels.
(One other incident occurred in the vicinity of a known "unspecified" Gay & Lesbian location - likely hotel)**

PREJUDICE RELATED CRIME

EVALUATION PHASE

THE PROJECT:

The Prejudice Related Crime Data Collection Project has been developed by the New South Wales Police Service to assist in the identification of offenders who target specific sections of the community. These persons are often repeat offenders, who are motivated by personal prejudice to commit offences against the person or property of an identifiable group within the community. The most common forms of prejudice relate to:

- * Race/Ethnicity
- * Religion
- * Sexuality/Gender
- * Political Affiliation

In December, 1997 the Commander, Endeavour Region was nominated as the Corporate Sponsor for the Evaluation Phase of the Prejudice Related Crime Data Collection Project. The conduct of the evaluation was allocated to Newtown Local Area Command.

For the purpose of the evaluation, attention focused on reports of "Assaults" occurring within the boundaries of Newtown Local Area Command. The evaluation covered the period 1 February, 1998 to 30 June, 1998.

EVALUATION PHASE:

The aim of the evaluation phase was to:

- * Review the Test System of an Associated Factors screen on the COPS system and consider change management/training strategies.
- * Develop an appropriate education package for operational police.
- * Report to the Commissioner and Minister for Police with a view to the statewide launch of the data collection system.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Arrangements were made for Police Media Services to issue a press release about the Data Collection Project on 19 January, 1998. The "evaluation" of the Test System at Newtown commenced in February. The implementation involved ongoing consultation with the LAC Management Team, Duty Officers, Team Leaders, the Education & Development Officer, the Community Safety Officer and the Police Gay & Lesbian Liaison Officers.

Police at Newtown Local Area Command were briefed on the introduction of the Test System for the project. The Associated Factors Field was to be completed, where appropriate, when recording COPS entries for "Assaults". The Education & Development Officer reinforced the aims and objectives of the evaluation and reminders were issued to all staff at Newtown on the Police Service MEMO System. Arrangements were made for a Duty Officer to make follow-up contact with the assault victims for February and March to obtain any additional comments they may wish to make.

On 7 April, 1998 a further press release was issued highlighting the role of Newtown in the evaluation of the data collection system and inviting members of the community to come forward and report any prejudice related offences. Regular reports were submitted to the Commissioner and the Minister.

EVALUATION:

The progress of the evaluation was monitored by a working party comprising:

- * Newtown Local Area Command - Duty Officer
 - Local Area Manager
- * Operational Programs - Ethnic Liaison Consultant
 - Gay & Lesbian Liaison Consultant
- * Information Technology Services - Manager, COPS Improvements

OUTCOME:

The issues covered by the working party are summarised as follows:

- * The Prejudice Related Crime Data Collection System be launched on a statewide basis.
- * Prejudice related data be collected using the Associated Factor field.
- * The single COPS screen be retained for the data.
- * The wording of the screen be amended to avoid confusion.
- * An external focus group assist in the development of the education package.
- * Ongoing sponsorship be vested in the Region Commander, South Eastern.

The Final Report on the evaluation was submitted on 21 July, 1998. Action is presently being taken by Operational Programs and Information Technology Services to develop the education package for the launch of the project. The migration of the Test System to the live Production System is awaiting the finalisation of the education package and the official launch.

ASSAULTS - NEWTOWN LAC

For the purpose of the evaluation, attention focused on reports of "Assaults" occurring within the boundaries of Newtown Local Area Command. From 1 February, 1998 to 30 June, 1998 there were a total of ten incidents recorded on the COPS Associated Factor Field as prejudice related offences:

MONTH	TOTAL ASSAULTS	PREJUDICE RELATED INCIDENTS
February	30	2
March	34	2
April	28	1
May	30	3
June	32	2
TOTAL:	154	10 (6.49%)

*	Sexually related incidents	- six
*	Racially related incidents	- four
*	Religiously related incidents	- nil
*	Politically related incidents	- nil

A further thirty six (36) reports of Assault were received at Newtown, but these incidents occurred outside the boundaries of Newtown Local Area Command - e.g. Campbelltown, Glebe, Green Valley, Redfern, Rozelle, The Rocks, Wagga Wagga. None of these incidents were recorded by police as prejudice related. A subsequent examination of these COPS entries confirmed that there were no "prejudice" indicators.

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OFFENDERS

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9. Male, Caucasian, 25 Year Old, thin build, about 178 cm tall, blonde short hair.
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COPS NARRATIVES - SUMMARIES

1. **Sunday 22/2/98 - 0610. Man (30) assaulted by another man at corner of King & O'Connell Streets. Second POI watching. Listed as possible homosexual related incident as this occurred within view of a known Gay/Lesbian location. No statement was able to be obtained from the victim, but no money or wallet was taken from the victim.**

2. **Saturday 28/2/98 - 1800. Man (57) abused and then assaulted by another man arising from the movement of his vehicle while attempting to park. Incident reported 18/3/98 re victim compensation claim. COPS entry refers to Racial Related incident, but Event Classification is "Doubtful".**

3. **Tuesday 3/3/98 - 1320. Girl [REDACTED] assaulted at Stanmore Public School after kissing another girl [REDACTED] on the cheek. The POI objected saying "Are you a Lesbian?". POI was spoken to informally as requested by the victim's family.**

4. **Saturday 14/3/98 - 2320. Man (30) grabbed by the arm by POI who called out "Hey poof". Chased down King Street and ran in Babble On Restaurant. POI called "Wait till you get outside poofster" and left the scene. Victim taken home to Devine Street by police, stated that he was homosexual.**

5. **Sunday 5/4/98 - 0400. Man (30) hit in the face with a schooner glass at the Imperial Hotel after he said "hi, how a you" to another male. The victim stated that the POI was probably "straight" and that it appeared to be a homosexual hate related assault.**

6. **Sunday 3/5/98 - 0005. Man (29) sustained lacerated finger when jabbed with a broken beer glass in the Marlborough Hotel. The POI had been talking to the victim's friends before they left the hotel and the victim had then tickled the POI in the torso region.**

7. **Tuesday 5/5/98 - 0840. Girl [REDACTED] assaulted by three other 14 year old girls outside the Enmore Hotel. The instigator said "Why did you call me a black bitch?" The Hotel Manager intervened twice before they left.**

8. **Saturday 23/5/98 - 1845. Man (30) assaulted after verbal altercation with a motorist and giving him the finger. The POI parked his car and returned to punch the man about the head. The event was listed as possible homosexual hate as it occurred within view of a known Gay/Lesbian location.**

9. **Sunday 22/6/98 - 1130. Man (42) working in Red Pepper Cafe when three males and one female walked past the door and shouted words to the effect of "fucking wog". The main POI had also confronted the victim on 8 June, 1998.**

10. **Tuesday 23/6/98 - 1535. Female (37) attacked on train by POI who joined the train at Redfern. Victim punched to the head and then kicked and stomped. No provocation. POI said words to the effect of "you are a slut, you bitch, I don't like you white guys. I am going to kill you". Mr Wong, a witness, pushed the attacker away. The POI said "You Chinese guy, if you try and stop me I will kill you too". The POI left at Sydenham.**

NEWTOWN LOCAL AREA COMMAND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

TOTAL RESIDENTIAL POPULATION: 35818

Males 18489

Females 17329

AGE GROUPS:

AGE	MALE	FEMALE	PERSONS	PROP %
0-4	984	899	1883	1.4
5-9	624	678	1302	3.6
10-14	705	662	1367	3.8
15-19	1240	1287	2527	7.1
20-24	2255	2292	4547	12.7
25-29	2452	2314	4766	13.3
30-34	2293	999	4292	12.0
35-39	1745	1484	3229	9.0
40-44	1371	1167	2538	7.1
45-49	1027	861	1888	5.3
50-54	857	788	1645	4.6
55-59	803	607	1410	3.9
60-64	750	596	1356	3.8
65-69	532	520	1052	2.9
70-74	380	438	818	2.3
75-79	257	355	612	1.7
80+	204	382	586	1.7
TOTAL	18489	17329	35818	100.0

BIRTHPLACE:

	MALE	FEMALE	PERSONS	PROP %
Australia	10342	10309	20645	57.6
Other Oceania	498	500	998	2.8
U.K. & Ireland	1112	860	2072	5.8
Southern Europe	2799	2532	5331	14.0
Other Europe & USSR	1816	1678	3494	9.1
East Asia	327	328	655	1.8
South East Asia	1318	1254	2572	7.2
Western Asia (Middle East)	189	132	321	0.9

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME:

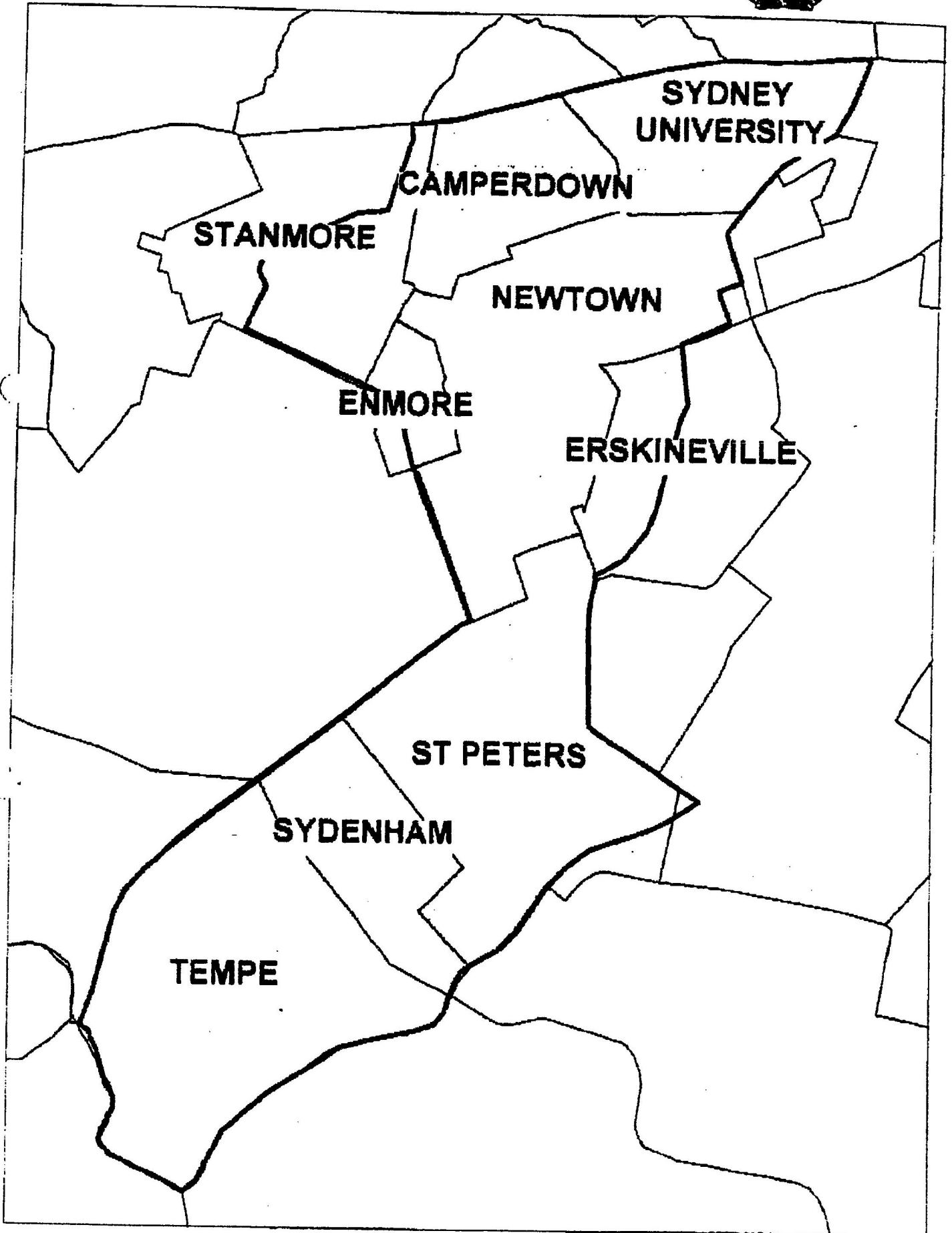
	PERSONS	PROP %
English Only	20926	58.4
Southern European	3723	10.4
Other European	1238	3.4
Western Asia	2287	6.4

NEWTOWN LAC:

- * **Contains a diverse multicultural grouping.**
- * **Over forty percent of the population born outside Australia.**
- * **Population largely within the 20 to 44 year age bracket - 54.1%.**
- * **Contains a large gay and lesbian population.**

NEWTOWN LAC

Suburbs



Attachment B

COPS Screens:

Sel	Description	Associated Factor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic Violence Related	<input type="checkbox"/> Organised Crime Related
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol Related	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural Crime Related
<input type="checkbox"/>	Drug Related	<input type="checkbox"/> In Custody
<input type="checkbox"/>	Secual Abuse Related	<input type="checkbox"/> No Associated Factor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Child Abuse Related	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elder Abuse Related	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal Violence Related	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Prejudice Related	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fraud Related	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gang Related	

Selections Complete? (y) Y/N

If 'Possible Prejudice Related' is selected then the following screen appears:

Do you consider the Offender's actions were prejudice related?	
Victim/s:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Officer/s:	<input type="checkbox"/>
What type of prejudice was involved?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Racial/Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Preference	<input type="checkbox"/> Political
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Victim's Comments/Observations:	
<input type="checkbox"/>)
<input type="checkbox"/>)
<input type="checkbox"/>)
Officer's Comments/Observations:	
<input type="checkbox"/>)
<input type="checkbox"/>)
<input type="checkbox"/>)

27/10/98
15/10/98

08:56 NEWTOWN LAC → 55905
15:56 61 2 3395905
15-10-98 ; 15:38 ;

NSW POLICE- NO.873 005
61295508192:#11/13

ATTACHMENT C (2)

ENT
MEDIA INFORMATION



NSW POLICE SERVICE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

POLICE TARGET 'HATE' CRIME

April 7, 1998

Newtown Local Area Command will carry out evaluations within the next few months as part of a project to gather statistics on the incidence of Prejudice Related Crime, otherwise known as 'hate crime'

Crime motivated by prejudice, 'hate crime', is being targeted by the NSW Police Service. The project is believed to be an Australian-first.

Newtown Local Area Commander, Kevin Curry said the scheme aimed to identify better ways of recording data about specific crimes motivated by prejudice. Four areas of specific interest include sex-related, race/ethnicity, religious affiliation and political orientation.

"This is in line with the Police Service's commitment to improving customer service," he said.

"Through the COPS computer system, police will be able to record appropriate information by flagging an event as 'prejudice-related'. Perceptions of both the victim and police officer may be entered.

"Crime motivated by prejudice is particularly distressing for victims. This information will alert police for the need to offer additional support, and the possibility of recommending specialist counselling services," Commander Curry said.

"The system has been designed to collect information about a particular crime, rather than the person involved - it targets an offender's motives and not the victim's personal preferences or characteristics

"The data would be particularly valuable at a local patrol level. It will help determine local crime trends and patterns to assist in developing proactive policing strategies."

Commander Curry said there were important in-built safeguards to protect individual's privacy. The data obtained would not be linked to the victim or any other person outside the crime report

"The overall objective is to provide easier identification on repeat offenders who continually target specific groups within the community," Commander Curry said.

Commander Curry said the program, with support from the community, would help police apprehend offenders.

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NSW POLICE SERVICE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

POLICE TARGET 'HATE' CRIME

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Crime motivated by prejudice - commonly called 'hate crime' - is being targeted in a new scheme by the NSW Police Service.

The concept, which will begin this month is believed to be an Australian-first, means police can now identify prejudice-motivated factors within crimes, the same way as other associated factors including alcohol and drug related crimes. The concept has been developed after five years research and consultation with the NSW Privacy Commission, Anti Discrimination Board, Ethnic Affairs Commission and various victim support groups.

NSW Police Service Gay and Lesbian Client Consultant, Sue Thompson said the scheme was aimed at identifying better ways of recording data about specific crimes motivated by prejudice.

"Specific interest categories cover four areas - sexuality-related, race/ethnicity, religious affiliation and political," she said.

"Through the COPS computer system, police will be able to record useful information, such as the victim's perception of a crime and whether the offender's actions were motivated by prejudice. It will be up to the victim whether they specify the type of prejudice. The police officer's perception will also be recorded.

"Crime motivated by prejudice is particularly distressing for victims. The flagging of an event as 'prejudice related' will signal to police the need to offer a victim additional support and possibly specialist counselling services.

"This is in line with the Police Service's commitment to improving customer service.

"It also means that police have more useful information about prejudice related crime which in the final outcome means it is easier to identify repeat offenders who target groups within the community for prejudice related crime."

But, she said, there were important inbuilt safeguards to protect individuals' privacy.

"The system has been designed to collect information about a particular crime incident, rather than the person involved - it targets an offender's motives and not a victim's personal preferences and characteristics

"Data about prejudice, although optional and subjective, will form part of the crime report. But the data will not be linked to the victim and any other person's involvement outside the crime report.

"For instance, if someone reported their car stolen some time later, information in the earlier crime report would not be known to the police officer taking the stolen vehicle report.

"The prejudice-related data in the crime report will have added security safeguards that will be only accessible to police with a higher degree of security clearance," Ms Thompson said.

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