

SPECIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO LGBTIQ HATE CRIMES

BRIEF WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF SERGEANT GEOFFREY STEER

1. Sergeant Steer provided the Commission with two statements for the Commission.
2. Senior Counsel assisting the Commission prepared submissions that run to 291 pages. In that submission there are numerous references to Sergeant Steer and the submission comprehensively sets out Sergeant Steer's involvement from the time that he was appointed Hate Crime Coordinator up until the time that he permanently left during Strike Force Parrabell.
3. Given the thoroughness of Senior Counsel's submissions; the submissions on behalf of Sergeant Steer are brief – we say that particularly in view of the fact that no criticism is made by Senior Counsel Assisting in relation to Sergeant Steer.
4. Sergeant Steer gave evidence at the Commission on 12 and 13 December 2022.
5. In December 2005 there were riots at Cronulla. As a consequence of the riots, Sergeant Steer submitted a report setting out his concern that the NSW Police Force (NSWPF) did not have the capability to recognise and adequately address hate crimes in the community. Sergeant Steer proposed that a hate crime capability within the NSWPF should be established.

6. Consequently, the NSWPF established the role of Hate Crime Coordinator (on a trial basis) which would sit within the Community Contact Unit at the Counter Terrorism and Special Tactics Command. Between 2007 and 2009 Sergeant Steer was assigned the position of Hate Crime Coordinator. He performed that duty between 2007 and 2009 as a single unit with no resources allocated in terms of any other sworn or unsworn member of the NSWPF.
7. As set out in his statement, Sergeant Steer reported to the Commander, Community Contact Unit (whilst it was attached to the Counter Terrorism Command) and then to the Manager, Cultural Diversity, Policy and Programs when the position was moved in 2008. At no time was there any formal interaction with the Homicide Squad or the Unsolved Homicide Team during that period.
8. In 2009, Sergeant Steer's position was "de-established" and remained so until 2012.
9. The position was re-established in 2012 as the Bias Crime Coordinator and it sat within the Operational Programs Command, Major Events and Incidents Group. Sergeant Steer again filled the position and he did so from 2012 to 2017, and he had the assistance of a Senior Policy Officer who had responsibilities both in respect to "bias crime" and "vulnerable communities".
10. Sergeant Steer's education and qualifications are:
 - 1992-1994 – Bachelor of Science Degree (University of Wollongong)
 - 1996 – Sworn in as a member of the NSW Police Force at the NSW Police Academy

- 2001 – Completed the Associate Diploma of Policing (Charles Sturt University)
- 2001 – Completed the Hate and Bias Crimes training program run by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centre (USA) in conjunction with Auburn University Montgomery (USA) and the Southern Poverty Law Centre (USA)
- 2005 – Completed the Advanced Hate Crimes course run by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centre in conjunction with the Centre for Hate and Extremism, California State University, San Bernadino and the Southern Poverty Law Centre
- 2012 – Successfully completed the Statement Analysis Interviewing Techniques course through Advanced Interviewing Concepts
- 2014 – Completed the Certified Cyber Intelligence Professional course through McAfee Institute
- 2014 – Completed the Forensic and Applied Victimology course through Forensic Analytics and Charles Sturt University
- 2015 – Completed the Advanced Threat Assessment and Management Academy (Session 41) through Gavin de Becker and Associates (USA)
- 2017 – Completed the Master Class – Criminal Threat Management through Australian Security Research Centre
- 2017 – Completed the Master Class – Threat Assessment through Australian Security Research Centre
- 2019 – Completed the Tactical Analysis Program (Behavioural Analysis) – Basic Course through the CP Journal
- 2019 – Completed the Tactical Analysis Program (Behavioural Analysis) Advanced Course through CJ Journal

11. Sergeant Steer is a member of the Australian Hate Crime Network and the Skinhead Intelligence Network.
12. Sergeant Steer has presented on hate crimes and extreme right wing at numerous conferences both nationally and internationally.
13. In 2015 Sergeant Steer spent a week with the New York Police Department Hate Crimes Task Force, Suffolk County Police Department (New York) Hate Crimes Unit and the Nassau County Police Department (New York) Community Affairs Unit (Hate Crimes).
14. Through his contacts overseas, Sergeant Steer was "mentored" by now retired Inspector G Shapiro of the Nassau County Police Department from 2006 to 2007. Inspector Shapiro was a member of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centre Hate Crime Advisory Board.
15. Sergeant Steer also established a strong network of subject matter (with experts in relation to hate crimes and right wing extremism in the USA, Canada, New Zealand and the UK).
16. Through the above referred networks, Sergeant Steer was able to "seek advice and guidance and develop an approach based on international best practice models". The assistance that he obtained through the network Sergeant Steer relied on to "develop a robust approach to hate crime investigations and a plan for the development of an effective hate crime capability in the NSWPF".
17. The 291 page submission by Senior Counsel assisting the Inquiry sets out, in detail, the tasks that Sergeant Steer undertook from the time that he commenced as Hate Crime Coordinator until the time he left in 2017. It is not proposed in these brief submissions (and they are brief because of the detail of Mr Gray SC's submissions) to set out herein all the dynamics of

the task that initially Sergeant Steer was expected to undertake, likewise, his task with Operation Parrabell, and finally his returning to general duties after he was transferred.

18. King's Counsel for the Commissioner of Police put to Sergeant Steer on a number of occasions that Sergeant Steer was "peeved" about the way he "had been treated" by Strike Force Parrabell.
19. Sergeant Steer rejected that he was "peeved" and it is submitted that the Commission would regard Sergeant Steer as an impressive witness who gave a frank account of his time performing duty involved with bias and hate crimes. Sergeant Steer presented as a man who performed his duties objectively and would not, and did not become "peeved" about Strike Force Parrabell and the way that they were classifying gay or hate crime.
20. From the time that Sergeant Steer submitted a report after the Cronulla race riots, until the time that he transferred back to his current location, his rationale for being interested in the victimology of hate and gay crimes is best exemplified by the reason that he proposed for the setting up of Operation Parrabell, namely, to enhance the standing of the NSWPF in the eyes of the LGBTIQ community, and other types of hate crime which he perceived that the NSWPF did not have an adequate mechanism for responding to such crimes.
21. Sergeant Steer's motivation was always driven with the view to achieving two things. First, to bring the NSWPF up to speed in relation to gay and hate crime, and secondly, to instil confidence in the LGBTIQ community and the community at large in relation to how the NSWPF assessed, investigated and responded to hate crimes – irrespective of what type of hate crime was detected.

22. In conclusion, it is submitted that the Commission would find that Sergeant Steer was an officer to be commended for the work that he did, and he was a witness in whom the Commission could place confidence as to his honesty and frankness.



KJ Madden
Solicitor for Sergeant Geoffrey Steer

27 June 2023