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NSW Police Force
www.police.nsw.gov.au

Mr Gary Burns
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr Burns

I refer to our recent meeting at Surry Hills Police Station on 9 October 2008, where we discussed a range of issues associated with 'beats'.

Firstly, thank you for your feedback and input on this issue. I acknowledge your concerns about the potential for anti-gay assaults occurring at beat locations, and would like to assure you that the NSW Police Force is committed to ensuring all public spaces are safe for members of the community.

Firstly, I would like to summarise how the NSW Police Force has responded to four recommendations made by Magistrate Milledge in 2005 following an inquest into the deaths of John Alan Russell, Ross Bradley Warren and Gilles Jacques Mattaini.

The first calls for a 'reintroduction' of the GLLO training program. The NSW Police Force has never 'ceased' GLLO training. GLLO training has been delivered since 1990 and will continue to be delivered. Following a comprehensive review of the syllabus in 2005, three GLLO courses have been conducted for regional and metropolitan officers. In addition, we have trained other specialist police such as School Liaison Police Officers, Youth Liaison Officers, Domestic Violence Liaison Officers and a number of staff working in the Surry Hills Local Area Command on gay, lesbian and transgender issues to build their capacity to respond to members of these communities affected by crime. In most of this training, and certainly in the GLLO course, there is significant coverage of beats usage, safety and crime prevention issues.

The second recommendation calls for all Local Area Commanders to be aware of beats in their areas and promote the need for crime prevention strategies to minimise risk. The NSW Police Force is continuing to develop a comprehensive intranet site covering a range of gay, lesbian and transgender issues relevant to policing. The beats section on this site contains information guiding police in their effective policing of beats. The primary role for police is to enforce the law and to improve the security of all public spaces for all users. The NSW Police Force will continue to advise and support officers to employ a wide range of strategies in beat locations to achieve this. At the same time police are encouraged to gain an understanding of beats in order to police these particular public spaces most effectively.

Policy and Programs Command

Level 8A NSW Police Headquarters 1 Charles Street Parramatta NSW 2150

Telephone 02 8835 9150 Facsimile 02 8835 9488 ENet 29150 EFax 29488 TTY 02 9211 3776 (Hearing/Speech impaired)

ABN 43 408 613 180

In response to the third recommendation to promote the use of 'Standard Operating Procedures for Policing Beats', the NSW Police Force continues to provide guidance in the form of a policy within the NSW Police Force Handbook section on beats and a complementary set of guidelines available on the intranet. As previously mentioned, training courses include coverage of recommended policing approaches to beats. As you would be aware, each 'beat' location and context is different and the information and guidance provided to police are in addition to any other strategies they may have developed locally given their operating and crime environment. Proactive policing strategies remain consistent, aimed at promoting the safety and well being of all users of public spaces.

The fourth recommendation refers to a 'Beat Usage Reduction and Safety Improvement Project'. This project was originally conceived in 2003 to develop and implement a comprehensive organisational response to policing beats, consisting of a new beats policy and guidelines and related training and support material. Whilst no longer under this project title, this work has been ongoing culminating in the recent review and enhancement of the NSW Police Force policy on beats and the development of supporting guidelines to assist officers to effectively 'police' beats. The policy includes specific reference to the need for high visibility policing in these areas to promote safety; encourages Local Area Commanders to be aware of beats in their LAC and ensure an appropriate level of police response is provided. It also encourages police to liaise with the local Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer (GLLO) and/or the Senior Programs Officer, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender (GLT), for advice on the particular issues (sensitivities) officers may face at beats.

In addition, our Senior Programs Officer GLT is a member of a multi-agency working group focussed on a collaborative approach to beats management issues. It is the exact purpose of this working group to develop and implement strategies to promote safety and reduce harms associated with beats usage, including resource development.

Whilst I am confident that the above reflects a great deal of work being undertaken in this area, at our recent meeting in October, a proposed beats mapping project was briefly discussed. My Command is currently working toward developing this concept further to facilitate greater awareness among Local Area Commanders of beats in their LAC, and types of strategies that might be considered in policing those areas.

During this process, we will consult with a range of stakeholders (including yourself and other community members) seeking feedback that might assist in the identification of beat locations to include as content of any database that may eventuate as a final product.

Once again, thank you for your feedback. We will be in touch regarding the project in coming months. If you require any further information in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the Senior Programs Officer, GLT, Ms Jackie Braw on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

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Superintendent Adam Whyte
Policy and Programs Command