

KNOX INTERFAITH NETWORK PRESENTATION
7:30pm to 9:00pm - 3rd June 2013
Knox Council Chambers, 511 Burwood Highway

OVERVIEW OF VICPOL ROLE / BACKGROUND - Inspector Stephen Noy

1. Policing in a multicultural / multi faith society
 - a. Community Engagement Unit
 - i. Structure
 - ii. Areas of responsibility
 - b. Overview of challenges facing policing of vulnerable groups
 - i. Elderly
 - ii. CALD communities
 - iii. Indigenous
 - iv. Social isolation / racism
 - v. Muslim community – community fear / education
 - vi. Mental Health
 - vii. Emergency management

2. Youth – Leading Senior Constable Stuart Sorrell
(Youth resource officer – Knox / Maroondah area)
 - a. Disengagement / overrepresentation in crime
 - b. Values
 - c. Programs

3. Domestic Violence – Sergeant Michele Clooney
(Family violence – area covered: Eastern Metropolitan Region – 7 Councils)
 - a. Cultural / Religious Diversity
 - b. Reporting

4. WHAT CAN YOU DO / HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE (open discussion)
 - a. Education programs
 - b. Youth engagement programs
 - c. Support service networks
 - d. Religious leadership (teaching of understanding of legal intervention)
 - e. Creation of networks

5. HOW CAN VICPOL HELP YOU? (open discussion)

Notes:

1. Policing in a multicultural / multi faith society
 - a. The Community Engagement Unit has a very broad responsibility and Inspector Noy's responsibilities cover a wide area of Victoria. In his opening comments he emphasised:
 - i. The importance of partnering with community and community groups such as KIN to achieve a 'policing' function.
 - ii. The police are part of the community and should reflect community values and beliefs but hold itself to a higher standard.
 - b. Issues with policing of vulnerable groups and where faith / multi-faith interfaith groups could assist
 - i. Elderly:
 1. Mobility / transport
 2. Evacuation in case of emergency, e.g., bushfire
 - ii. CALD communities
 1. Feelings of isolation, e.g., local Burmese community – however, they have a very strong bond to their local church community
 2. Helping people to integrate into the local community – particularly when coming from very different societies, e.g., rural Indonesia. Simple examples include, how to catch public transport, how to engage with Federal and State Government agencies, how to use basic amenities in housing
 - iii. Muslim community
 1. How to engage with the Muslim youth?
 2. The potential conflict between respect for the religious concept of marriage being inseparable (before Allah) and the demands of the police to take action under the law.
2. Youth (48% of crime in Knox has youth as either victims or initiators of crime – but the initiators are only 3% of our youth)
 - a. Focus is on at risk people – through e.g., Eastern Community Health, DEECD where relevant
 - b. There are common themes in those facing risk factors
 - i. often they are in dysfunctional families → policing often needs to undo years of being exposed to these risk factors;
 - ii. lack of role models;
 - iii. self-esteem issues;
 - iv. peer pressure;
 - v. substance abuse
 - c. Seek to engage them outside the situations which create risk; but they face issues when coming back to those situations – so a focus now is on resilience and how to handle the return to those situations
 - d. Remember that the vast majority of our youth are outstanding people

- e. Many of the communities are also outstanding, e.g., Sudanese, Burmese – however some clashes between younger and older members of the community are emerging as the younger people seek to integrate with ‘Australian’ society
- f. Questions / Challenges:
 - i. How do we market community engagement and make it relevant to them in an environment where there are many outside (negative) influences – even distractions?
 - ii. How do we engage young people who are not in communities (such as faith communities) where the right values are being demonstrated?
 - iii. How do we help them take violence out of the environment – particularly as many of them want to do this?

3. Domestic Violence

- a. Michele defined it per the Family Violence Protection Act 2008
- b. Includes: physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or economic abuse
- c. Church/faith communities can provide an outlet as people are usually allowed to go – however look out for people who sign to events but regularly cancel
- d. Elderly are often open to abuse from children, but unable or unwilling to report domestic violence.
- e. CALD communities: Members may feel shame which prevents them reporting. There may be expectations that a marriage must be made to work irrespective of circumstances. In some cases, separation may also lead to social or familial isolation.
 - i. → Applicant can be police – removes shame/blame.
- f. Protection options include:
 - i. Ringwood Court has a protected persons room policed by Protective Services Officers – this is open also to supporters of the protected person
 - ii. Remote witness facility possible
- g. How to work together:
 - i. Know the services within the area – especially Anglicare and Eastern Victims Assistance
 - ii. Put information into sermons and presentations the value and importance of equal relationships – don’t be a bystander
 - iii. Elderly Register

Discussion points:

- 1) How do we create a leadership group / program for young people?
 - a. Ideas – La Trobe University; Anti-Discrimination League
 - b. Leveraging KMAC and / or KIN
 - c. Involvement in organising events like the Knox Multicultural Festival
- 2) How to provide spiritual support for people at court?

- a. Create a register of people from different faiths or spiritual background willing to provide such support; particularly someone from the same faith/spiritual background but from a different community.
 - b. Gwenda recommended we leverage the emergency and hospital chaplains – Stephen responded that the police chaplains should also be contacted.
- 3) Why are young adults no longer remaining in the faith – and what are the consequences for societal structure?
- 4) Need to reinforce and strengthen families.
- 5) *Media coverage – how to get good news out? A shared issue?*
- 6) Emile Durkheim quote – “When social mores are sufficient, laws are unnecessary; when social mores are insufficient, laws are unenforceable.”