

Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squads

Since the early colonial years of Queensland, livestock theft has been a prominent crime in the pastoral industry, exemplified by the infamous cattle theft by Harry Redford in 1870. After the passing of the Brands Act 1872 and increased attention by troopers, stock offences appeared to be more under control by 1910. The Queensland Police Service (QPS) Stock Squad was officially formed in 1959, consisting of a Detective Sergeant and three plain clothes personnel. The squad was initially based at the Criminal Investigation Branch at Brisbane, but in 1964-65 was decentralised to Charters Towers, Rockhampton, Cloncurry, Roma and Blackall. After Blackall was replaced by Longreach, further squads were formed at Charleville, Toowoomba, Mareeba and Kingaroy.

Over 30 police officers are dedicated to investigations of stock and rural crime offences throughout the State. These offices are positioned at the ten mentioned statewide locations of Mareeba, Charters Towers, Cloncurry, Rockhampton, Longreach, Kingaroy, Charleville, Roma, Toowoomba and Forest Hill. A Detective Sergeant is in charge of each squad and staff numbers vary from two to five officers per squad.

In January 2006, the QPS formally approved the name change of stock squads in Queensland to the Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squads (SARCIS). At around this time, a specialised Intelligence Officer was also appointed to the State SARCIS.



A Detective Inspector is the State Coordinator for the QPS SARCIS, based in the Toowoomba area and two Area Coordinators, of the rank of Detective Senior Sergeants, coordinate the SARCIS in the northern (based at Rockhampton) and southern (based at Toowoomba) sectors of the State.

The primary function of the SARCIS is the investigation of stock-related crime. Their duties also encompass assisting other police throughout the State and the investigation of pertinent rural crime throughout Queensland, where they have the knowledge, resources and skills to carry out investigations. The QPS SARCIS is committed to problem-oriented policing and working in partnership with the community and other stakeholders, with such groups as AgForce and Rural Watch, to provide an efficient and effective service to the industry.

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SARCIS have strong networks with other law enforcement agencies, including the New South Wales Rural Crime Squads and work in partnership with external agencies such as the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPI&F), Customs, Stock and Station Agents, Safe Foods and National Parks and Wildlife.

Their work may consist of attending properties to ascertain complaints regarding livestock offences, conducting musters with a view of locating stolen livestock, monitoring livestock movements at abattoirs, sale yards and roadways to detect suspicious livestock.

Other duties are ensuring the provisions of statutes such as the Stock Act and Brands Act are enforced and participating in various types of operations including static transport interceptions and targeting offences including drugs and property.

Squads also assist in drug crop and missing persons searches. The squads are equipped for extended trips to remote parts of the State, with such items as laptop computers, video and digital cameras, satellite phones, UHF radios and camping equipment. Squads also have such resources as Troop Horses, saddlery and tack, trail bikes, floats, stock truck and 4WD vehicles to assist them in their varied functions.

A two-week SARCIS Course is held annually at Millmerran for police officers who may have a desire to join a SARCIS or, in their uniform or general criminal investigation roles in country areas, be able to provide confident assistance to SARCIS officers as required. The course consists of assessments in areas of legislation, horse and trailbike riding, mustering and carrying out animal husbandry practices. It also includes attending farms, saleyards and meatworks.

For more information about SARCIS contact your nearest local squad on the following numbers:

Charleville	4654 1200	Longreach	4652 5202
Charters Towers	4787 1333	Mareeba	4030 3321
Cloncurry	4742 8813	Rockhampton	4932 3681
Forest Hill	5465 4200	Toowoomba	4631 6710
Kingaroy	4160 4900	Roma	4622 9350

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