

# PoliceBulletin

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE ISSUE NO. 287 OCTOBER 2004

**PREVENT THEFT**  
*it starts with you*



**Advertisement**



## Building a safer community through partnerships

Crime Prevention Week epitomises the Queensland Police Service's vision of working together with the community, business and other government departments to create a safer and more secure environment.

Prevent theft - it starts with you is the theme of this year's awareness week highlighting a variety of initiatives and projects designed to promote theft prevention. It reflects raising community awareness, getting involved and taking simple precautions to secure property and prevent theft.

In days gone by, there was greater trust within our community, householders left their doors unlocked - rates of offending and the associated fear of crime were low.

With changing times has come a change in cultures and values. The community looks to police officers for their safety and the protection of property.

While it is clearly the role of the Queensland Police Service to protect and serve the community, all members of our community have a role to play in upholding both the laws and the social expectations of the society in which we live.

We must all take personal responsibility for securing our safety, the safety of those around us, and the sanctity of our own homes.

Combating crime needs co-operation and commitment between the police and the community. The best problem solving solutions emerge from the police forming partnerships with their local community being involved in the community in the process, either from the outset in identifying the problem, or in devising and implementing strategies for overcoming it.

Preventing and solving crime can be enhanced by the efforts of police and the community working together.

That partnership reinforces the potential for issues and particularly local issues, to be clearly identified in terms of causal factors and effectively addressed.

In line with developing partnerships in crime prevention it is encouraging to see the commitment of Crime Prevention Week's major supporter NRMA Insurance towards preventing crime and reducing the risk in the community.

It is through partnerships such as those with NRMA Insurance and the Queensland Department of Communities that the QPS is able to embrace the whole of government approach towards building safer communities and the need to work closely with our communities in both crime detection and prevention.

Crime prevention is one of the three approaches the Queensland Police Service is adopting through the Operational Performance Review Program. The other two being traditional reactive investigative policing and problem solving.

Crime Prevention Week has also been designed to promote a range of initiatives and even small steps towards safety and security can make a big difference.

Each day of the week will focus on specific preventative strategies including motor and marine theft; property theft; fraud and identity theft; tourist oriented policing, personal safety in particular seniors and retail theft.

I extend my thanks to all members and our supporters who have or will be involved in planning and holding Crime Prevention Week and ask all members of the Service to be supportive of it.



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**Page 24** Putting crime out of business...

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### Statement of purpose

*Police Bulletin* is a free bi-annual public information document intended to provide a record of initiatives and achievements, an insight into the operations of the Queensland Police Service and base research to interested members of the community. Each edition is available from police stations, district and regional offices, and Police Headquarters, Brisbane.

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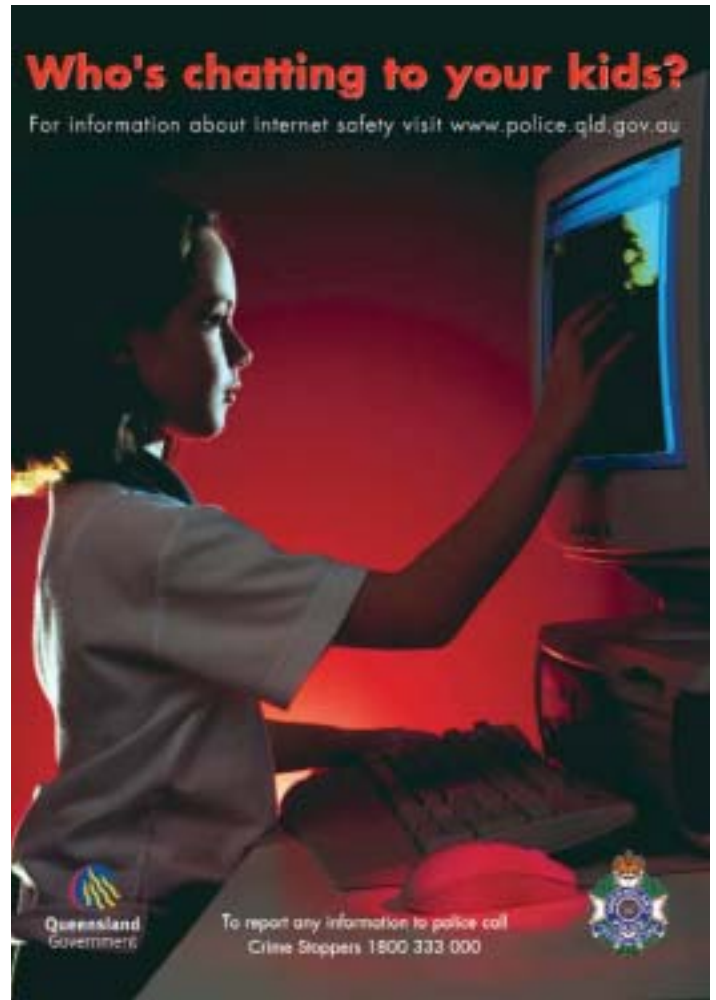
Community members may have been the victims of 'sneak breaks' which is a burglary where offenders enter the dwelling through unlocked doors and open windows when the occupant is home. There have also been many instances where offenders simply enter through these access points when the resident is not at home. In this issue of the *Police Bulletin* prevention tips are offered in a bid to reduce the incidence of 'sneak breaks', with police appealing to the community to ensure they secure their premises properly, even when they are home.

The front cover photo is a dramatisation and not a real depiction of events. Thank you to Kevin O'Dwyer for appearing in this dramatisation and to both Mr O'Dwyer and Craig Wood for the use of their premises.

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FROM DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CONDER

## Problem-Oriented and Partnership Policing and the District Officer's Conference

The release of this *Police Bulletin* coincides with Crime Prevention Week 2004. Through Crime Prevention Week the Queensland Police Service aims to raise community awareness of crime prevention strategies and partnerships and to encourage community participation in crime prevention.

The Police Service has long promoted to its members and the community, that participation in crime prevention strategies is essential to increasing the effectiveness of police in reducing crime.

One of the major partnership initiatives introduced in recent years is the Problem-Oriented and Partnership Policing (POPP). There have recently been some changes to the oversight and management of POPP and given the focus of this issue of the *Police Bulletin* it is timely to provide advice on these changes.

Recently the QPS Board of Management approved changes to the way in which funds are to be approved for expenditure on problem solving (POPP) initiatives. Responsibility for the approval of this funding now lies with the QPS Operational Performance Review Unit (OPR) who are currently developing protocols for both the identification of suitable initiatives and also for the granting of monies to progress those initiatives. The change in the management of POPP funding will allow the OPR process to not only further expand its emphasis on problem solving, but importantly, give promising initiatives a greater chance of progressing to the point where they can be more effectively disseminated across the State.

To this end, the identification and development of suitable problem solving projects was considered in some depth by delegates at the recent District Officers' and Command Managers' Conference hosted by the OPR Unit at Police Headquarters in Brisbane. Delegates were asked to consider how they would identify initiatives within their area of responsibility which would benefit from the allocation of funds, in order to progress their development.

Additionally, this conference delivered an outstanding opportunity for delegates to discuss emerging issues of both a strategic and operational nature, while at the same time gain valuable briefings on a number of initiatives underway across the Police Service including the Operational Policing Program, Counter Terrorism, Police Communications, Human Resources Management and an array of other equally important issues.

The opportunity for managers to share their experiences and learning with each other in this environment is also invaluable given the critical role that District Officers and Command Managers play in terms of front line policing service delivery.

I would like to thank the District Officers for their participation in this forum and the members of the Operational Performance Review Unit for its facilitation. I would also like to commend Crime Prevention Week and the Problem-Oriented and Partnership Policing program to you and encourage you - whether a member of the QPS or community - to participate in these initiatives.



# PREVENT THEFT

## *it starts with you*

by Sergeant Steve Keeling, QPS Media and Public Relations Branch

Crime Prevention Week aims to raise community awareness of crime prevention strategies and partnerships designed to promote and protect our daily living environment, and to further encourage community participation in crime prevention.

Launched on October 3, Crime Prevention Week will run until Friday, October 8 and this year focuses on theft, with the slogan of 'Prevent theft – it starts with you' designed to make people more aware of their own responsibilities in relation to crime prevention.

Crime prevention is as much a community responsibility, as it is the job of police. The week highlights how the community and police can work together to help reduce the risk of becoming a victim of theft.

Throughout the State during Crime Prevention Week, police and community groups will work together to promote different initiatives designed to keep our communities safer.

During the week a variety of initiatives and projects designed to promote community engagement and partnership, particularly at a regional and district level are on show. Following the regional success of Crime Prevention Week 2003, this year's activities will further emphasise regional crime prevention initiatives that relate to theft.

Crime Prevention Week was officially launched on Sunday, October 3, 2004 at the Moreton Bay Trailer Boating Club, Manly, focusing on motor vehicle and marine theft.

Throughout the week, each day will focus on a different area relating to theft including:

- Monday, October 4:* theft from seniors and youth and personal safety
- Tuesday, October 5:* retail theft and fraud
- Wednesday, October 6:* Internet and identity theft
- Thursday, October 7:* theft from tourists and tourist oriented policing
- Friday, October 8:* location theft including stealing from building sites and homes.

Crime Prevention Week is supported by NRMA Insurance as part of its commitment to reduce risk and promote safety in the community.

For further information on Crime Prevention Week, please contact Senior Constable Henry Kochelak, Crime Prevention Unit on 3234 2111.

## Working in partnership for



Insurance Australia Group (IAG) and its brands, NRMA Insurance and CGU, have been working with the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to help make the Sunshine State the Safe State.

Earlier this year, Australia's largest insurance group (insuring one in three cars and one in three homes nationally), became the first corporate partner under a new State Government initiative, *Smart State, Safe State: Partnerships for a Safer Queensland*. The agreement opens the door for IAG and Government agencies to work more closely on programs to reduce risk in the community.

Crime prevention was the first winner under the agreement, with NRMA Business Insurance, QPS and the Department of Communities joining forces to deliver a pilot of *BizSafe*, a

workshop program to equip small business owners to recognise and reduce crime risks.

IAG Queensland State Manager Dan Musson said small businesses were often exposed to crime because many operators did not have the time or resources to evaluate and reduce security risks.

"Research by NRMA Insurance has shown small businesses are working hard at just running their businesses day-to-day and don't feel capable of proactively preventing crime.

"*BizSafe* gives them first hand help from police and risk experts and helps them take simple and positive steps to reduce the risk of being a victim of crime," he said.



Rockhampton Senior Constable Angus Kerr encourages new and existing bicycle owners to record the serial number on a registration card that is lodged with the police. The registration program was funded by the NRMA Insurance CrimeSafe program.

Photo courtesy of: The Morning Bulletin.

QPS District Crime Prevention Co-ordinators and NRMA Business Insurance risk specialists have so far delivered introductory *BizSafe* seminars to nearly 500 small business operators across Ipswich, Toowoomba, the Sunshine Coast, Bundaberg and Redcliffe.

The *BizSafe* team is now reviewing the pilot for consideration for statewide rollout.

Mr Musson said IAG had a role, as the leading insurer, to work with the community, including police, to reduce risk and promote safety.

"It's our purpose, as an insurer, to pay claims.

"But we also work to keep insurance accessible and affordable, so it makes sense for us to help deliver initiatives that

reduce the likelihood of incidents happening in the first place," he said.

This pro-active approach has included the CGU sponsorship of Neighbourhood Watch (nearing its 20th year) and NRMA Insurance support for Crime Prevention Week.

At a more grassroots level, *NRMA Insurance Community Help* grants of up to \$5,000 have been awarded to groups who are being pro-active in the fight against crime.

Over the past two years, *NRMA Insurance Community Help* grant recipients have included:

- Rockhampton Police for a bicycle registration program to prevent theft
- Logan City Council for a multilingual crime prevention awareness campaign
- Cairns AFL KickStart for coaching training for local police
- The Anti-Graffiti Group in Brisbane's west to

help buy equipment to remove graffiti as quickly as possible.

"Our experience and research indicates the most effective crime prevention initiatives involve people who are close to the issues, and are proud of their local area and care for the people in it," Mr Musson said.

Over the past two years, IAG has invested nearly \$300,000 in crime prevention initiatives throughout Queensland.

"The ongoing challenge is measuring outcomes, especially when you are providing support for a range of community groups," Mr Musson said.

"Those organisations that can demonstrate a need to reduce risk, and how our support will help them meet that need, are more likely to gain our support."

# Designing for crime prevention

by Peta-Ann Wood, QPS Media and Public Relations Branch

*The notion of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) goes beyond bolts on doors and locks on windows.*

*In the Year of the Built Environment it was timely for Brisbane to once again host the International CPTED Conference, showing that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement of the quality of life.*

Accolades from throughout the international crime prevention through environmental design community have been streaming in over the Queensland Police Service's involvement in staging the 9th Annual International CPTED Conference (CPTED-2004) held in Brisbane during early September.

Normally held in North America, CPTED-2004 has further developed strong working partnerships between the Queensland Police Service (QPS), the International CPTED Association (ICA) and International Security Management and Crime Prevention Institute (ISM CPI).

CPTED aims to highlight how proper design and effective use of the environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence of crime and also of the fear of crime, thereby improving quality of life and the profitability for businesses.

Widely recognised as a leader in CPTED development in the Asia-Pacific region, ISM CPI's Executive Director Rick Draper said this year's conference, themed *People and Safer Communities: The CPTED Advantage*, recognised the wide range of professional disciplines from architecture to urban design that apply CPTED concepts.

"Regardless of the professional discipline, the goal to reduce fear and the incidence of crime is constant. However, as those who have worked in the field will attest, crime and behaviour problems are very rarely one-dimensional.

"CPTED is a concept which by its very nature invites multi-disciplinary approaches to crime prevention. Social planners, urban designers, community workers, administrators and managers, architects, landscape architects, criminologists, psychologists, law enforcement, security,

horticulturalists, developers, elected officials, and many others have roles to play in macro and micro application of CPTED principles," Mr Draper said.

ISM CPI, supported by the QPS, hosted the CPTED-2001 conference and through the provision of a fulltime QPS Project Manager, Inspector Tony Lake, QPS Office of the Commissioner, the ISM CPI were able to build on the firm foundations laid previously to ensure that the conference was an outstanding success.

Inspector Lake said that the QPS has gained a number of benefits from being involved in another successful CPTED conference.

"This included opportunities for networking with other agencies from Australia and internationally; opportunity to present QPS initiatives and experiences; valuable professional development; and drawing on the experiences of others in order to support the implementation of QPS crime prevention strategies.

"Benefits to the Service were not the only successful aspect of the Conference. Participant evaluations and anecdotal evidence heralded CPTED-2004 as a great success for reasons such as: the variety of papers presented and workshops offered; and the access to international expert advice through the open forums.

"For example, the variety of papers presented indicated the depth and breadth of applications where CPTED principles may be utilised and considered. Workshops then followed, which delved deeper into the practical application of CPTED in the built environment.

"This time round Ipswich City Council offered the River Heart development as the case study for the practical sessions held. Participants, including internationally recognised criminologists, Professors Ronald V. Clarke and Marcus Felson, from the USA along with

leading researchers and practitioners from around the globe were then able to inform ICC representatives of their views of the development, and offer suggestions for improvement.

"The QPS now has the opportunity to build on the positive momentum gained through CPTED-2004 to further establish the reputation of the Service as a frontrunner in CPTED promotion, training, application and advice," Inspector Lake said.

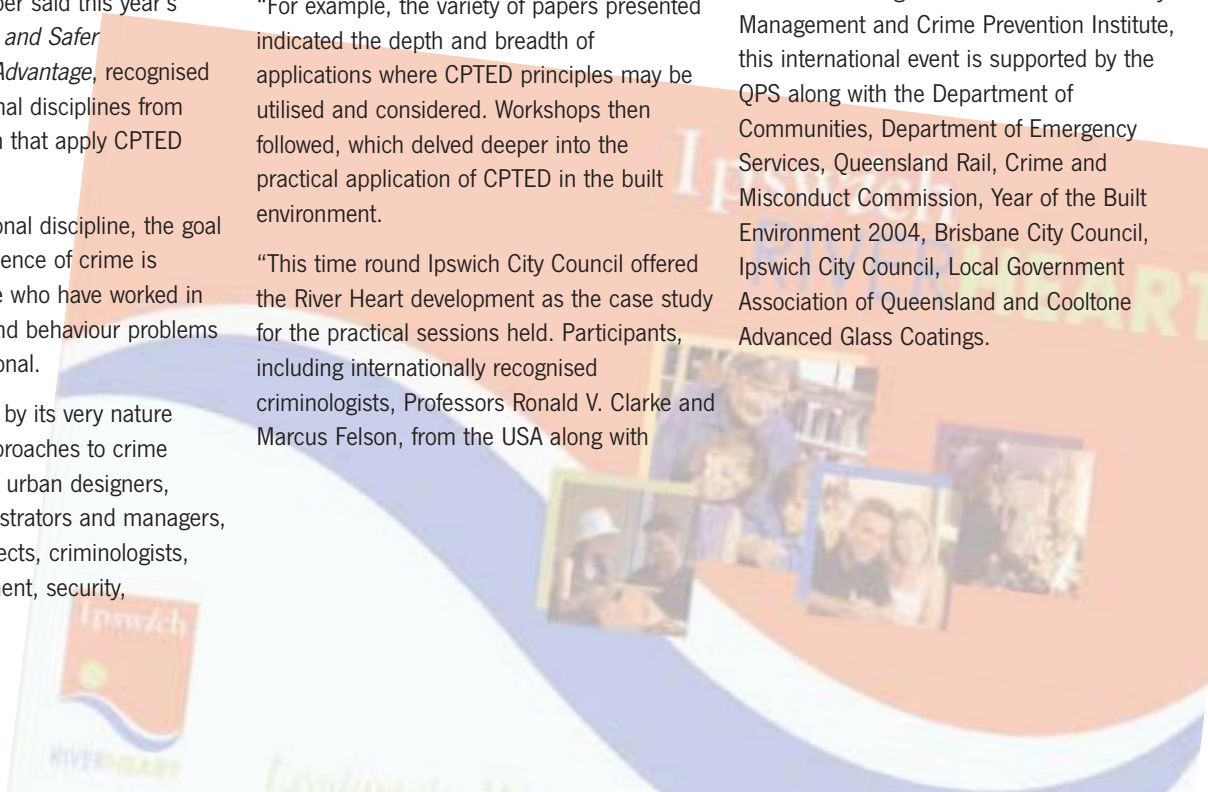
For many years the QPS has been committed to promoting the concepts and principles of CPTED. QPS Commissioner, Bob Atkinson commended the conference.

"This conference provided a forum for international and local authorities to discuss and explore issues relating to crime prevention," Mr Atkinson said.

"This year's conference highlighted the fact that other professional disciplines can play a crucial part in applying the concepts central to CPTED.

"It was a unique opportunity to bring together and hear from many of the leaders and innovators in CPTED. The program is designed to provide maximum benefit for delegates and speakers alike, with the perfect balance of learning, knowledge sharing and networking," he said.

Presented through the International Security Management and Crime Prevention Institute, this international event is supported by the QPS along with the Department of Communities, Department of Emergency Services, Queensland Rail, Crime and Misconduct Commission, Year of the Built Environment 2004, Brisbane City Council, Ipswich City Council, Local Government Association of Queensland and Cooltone Advanced Glass Coatings.



# Advertisement

# Safe and confident living for Queensland Seniors

by Inspector Tony Lake, QPS Office of the Commissioner

All Queenslanders have the right to feel safe and secure, whether in their own home or while participating in community activities.

Yet a fear of crime is preventing some seniors from living life to the full.

Contrary to common belief, seniors are relatively safe compared to other age groups. Young people are more likely to be victims of crime than other members of the community, and seniors are the least likely age group to be victimised.



The lifestyle of seniors helps make their lives safer - they are less likely to go out at night, tend to spend more time at home, and are generally wiser and more likely to take precautions.

However, emotive statements by public figures and the media's tendency to highlight offences against older people can result in a disproportionate fear of crime among seniors.

This unnecessary fear can lead to a lack of confidence about going out alone, whether it's on public transport or walking in the neighbourhood. It can also result in a decrease in quality of life, deterioration in health and social isolation.

People who are actively involved in their communities, however, tend to be more confident about their safety, have less fear of crime, and live longer.

In February 2004 the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, Judy Spence formed the Seniors Task Force in an effort to combat crime against seniors.

The first initiative of the Task Force is a seniors safety handbook, entitled "Confident, Safe and Secure – Living in Queensland. A Handbook on Safety for Seniors".

Ms Spence said the aim of the handbook was to dispel myths about crime and seniors, and provide practical, easy ways for seniors to help keep themselves safe when at home and out and about.

"This is the first initiative of the Seniors Task Force, which I set up when I became Minister for Police and Corrective Services," Ms Spence said.

"It is also the first time a crime prevention and safety handbook specifically for seniors has been produced in Queensland.

"The handbook includes tips on safety and security when out and about, safety and security at home, safety when on holidays, and information about services available to seniors.

"Elder abuse is also covered in the handbook, as is fraud awareness and some strategies to avoid becoming a victim of scams or shonky traders.

"Checklists feature throughout the handbook, covering such things as a home security assessment, property inventory, personal safety strategy and a checklist to ensure your property is secure while you are on holidays," Ms Spence said.

Some of the practical tips provided throughout the handbook include:

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY AT HOME**

### **Securing Your Home**

You don't need to spend lots of money on security. Simple and low-cost changes can make your

house look occupied and deter intruders.

The following suggestions are a guide to what can be done.

### **Outside security**

- Make sure your house number is easy to see from the street.
- Trim bushes and trees that obscure windows.
- Consider removing bushes or trees that could be used as hiding places by intruders.
- Ensure that doorway and outside lighting will illuminate your yard.
- Consider installing sensor lights that turn on when you come home at night, and will deter prowlers.
- Keep ladders and tools locked in your garage, garden shed or under the house.

### **Doors**

- External doors should be of solid core construction and fitted with deadlocks that can be opened from the inside without a key.
- A peephole in all external doors and a light outside allow you to see who is there, day and night, without having to open the door.
- A security chain between the door and the wall will help you

check who's at the door.

- Security doors offer valuable protection when your main door is open for ventilation.
- Keep security doors locked at all times.
- If your front door has glass panels, hang the key near the door, but out of reach of anyone who could smash a panel.

### **Windows**

- Install quality key-operated window locks to all windows.
- Make sure all your window locks can be unlocked with the same key.
- If possible, replace louvre windows with sliding windows, or install security grilles over your louvres.
- Install security grilles to deter intruders so you can leave your windows open in hot weather.

### **Other tips**

- When you buy new electrical goods, don't leave the packaging outside so burglars will know you have new products.
- Don't keep lots of money in your house unless it's in a good-quality safe.
- Don't leave keys hidden outside.



### Property inventory

- Compile a detailed inventory of your property
- Record the serial numbers, makes, models, colour and size of your specific items.
- Keep the inventory in a safe place and update it when you get new property.

### Property marking

- Marking your items clearly identifies them as your property.
- Property marking will deter burglars by making it difficult for them to dispose of your goods and help police return them to you.

### Here are a few tips on how to identify your property

- Use an engraver to mark items on your inventory list. Engravers are available for loan from your nearest Neighbourhood Watch group, or contact your local police station.
- Some items can't be engraved, so take photographs or videotape items such as jewellery, watches, silverware, collectables, stamp and coin collections, furs, antiques, paintings and furniture.
- Mark your property with your driver's licence number with the letter 'Q' (for Queensland). If your driver's licence number is 12 345 678, mark your property with the code 'Q12345678'.
- Or mark your property with your initials, date of birth and the letter 'Q', eg, John Richard Smith was born on 01-02-65, so his personal code would be JRS010265Q.
- If you have marked property stolen, tell the police the code you have used.
- Stickers are available from Neighbourhood Watch to show your property has been marked - display these stickers

on your property and in prominent places.

### Being safe at home

By using some of the following simple personal safety precautions, you can help minimise your risks at home.

### When a visitor arrives

- Use your peephole, door chain or a window to see who's at the door before opening it.
- Check the credentials of charity workers and don't let them into your home.
- Always check the credentials of service repair people and sales people.
- Talk to these people through a locked security door. If you are unsure about a person's motives, ask for the name of their company and their identification card, then telephone the company to check their credentials.
- Ring your local police if their actions seem suspicious.

- If someone is at the door and you are alone and feeling insecure, pretend there is someone else in the house.
- Be discreet if you live alone. It is better not to indicate on unit or flat directories or nameplates whether you are Ms, Miss, Mrs or Mr. Just use your surname. In the phone book, use initials and surname only.

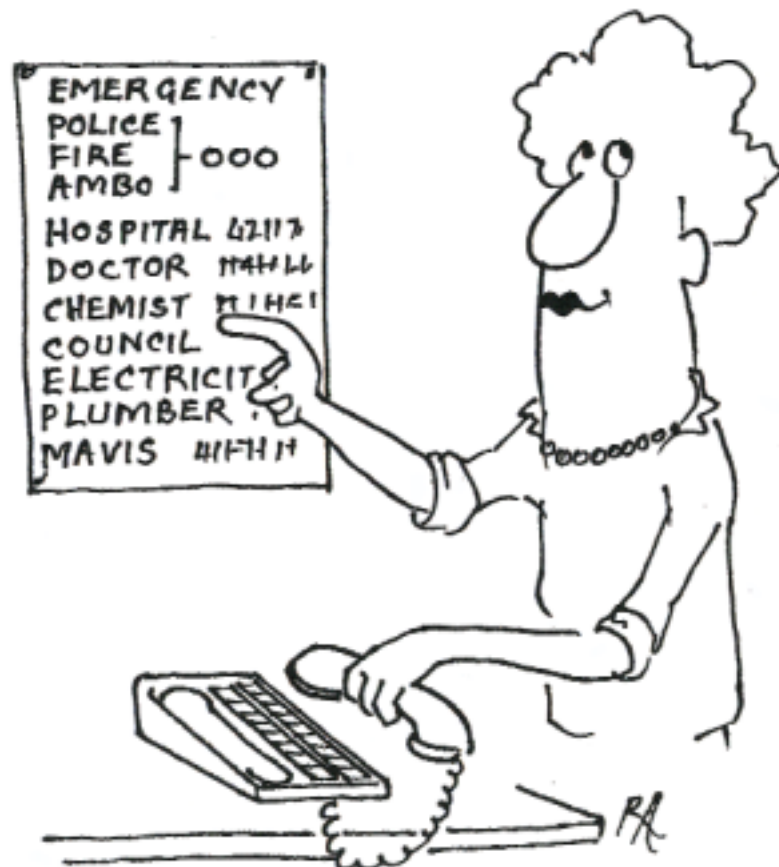
### If there's an intruder

- If you arrive home and suspect an intruder is inside, DO NOT ENTER THE HOUSE. Go to a neighbour's house and call the police on triple zero (000). Keep out of sight and a safe distance from the house.
- If you see anyone leaving, try to remember what they look like and take a description of their car and its registration number.
- If you are at home and find an intruder on your property, you could:

- activate the burglar alarm
- get to the nearest phone (bedroom) and quietly call the police
- switch on lights and make a lot of noise moving about, but don't confront the intruder.
- If the intruder confronts you, try to stay calm, but shout and scream, especially if you believe this noise might be heard by a neighbour.

Launched during Crime Prevention Week 2004, *Confident, Safe and Secure* provides seniors with practical information and handy hints on personal and property security and will assist seniors to live life to the full and – most importantly – without fear.

The seniors safety handbook will be available through the Queensland Police Service, other government departments, seniors organisations and community groups.



# Marine Watch and jet skis boost policing our waterways

by Cassandra Glanville, QPS Media and Public Relations Branch

Yeppoon Water Police protecting the local waterways are (from left) Senior Constable Randall Gawne, Constable Andrew Simpson and Sergeant Shaun Halson.



Community marina living is fast becoming the preference for many boat loving Queensland residents, although the lifestyle is ideal for relaxed living, the necessary equipment involved with indulging this passion for the water is often an easy target for thieves.

A novel idea was born from an apparent rising number of thefts from marina communities and boat ramps - Neighbourhood Watch for our waterways, Marine Watch.

Marine Watch is about observation and reporting and has been invaluable in bringing the police and community together in an effort to fend off would-be thieves attracted to marinas and boat ramps.

Popular items for thieves range from fishing rods to outboard motors and rubber duckies, however large or small; if the opportunity arises a thief would not think twice about stealing your belongings.

Members of the Queensland Police Service (QPS) Water Police often act as Marine Watch liaison officers between the QPS and the community.

Sergeant Shaun Halson, Officer in Charge of Yeppoon Water Police said it was about building relationships to aid in crime prevention.

“Liaison officers work closely with Marine Watch Area Coordinators to provide tips on how to secure belongings, updates on current

problem areas and highlight the need for members to keep an eye out for each other and to report any suspicious behaviour,” said Sergeant Halson.

Mr Geoff Willis, Area Coordinator for the Moreton Bay Trailer Boat Club Marine Watch said since the introduction of Marine Watch in his area there had been a noticeable decline in security breaches within the marina.

“Our local Water Police have taken a great interest in the program and their presence has brought the community together with one goal, to actively take steps to prevent theft within and around the marina,” said Mr Willis.

During the summer months, due to a greater number of vessels in Moreton Bay, there appears to be more offences and an increased number of complaints.

To compliment Marine Watch during summer, the QPS Wave Runner jet skis are in peak demand and are most commonly

used to patrol canals, boat ramps and swimming areas within Moreton Bay.

Utilised as quick response vessels, the jet skis have proven invaluable in fast vessel intercepts, shallow water intercepts and search and rescue activities.

The value of the Wave Runners is most evident in their manoeuvrability, which aids in the successful apprehension of fast vessels as they work in tandem to assist with the interception of the alleged offender’s vessel.

Initiatives such as Marine Watch and an increased police presence on the water have brought members of the public and local police closer. Police and the community must work together for the security of their belongings at marinas and for their general safety on the water.

Marine Watch and the use of jet skis are innovative ways for the QPS to take steps to reduce crime on or around our waterways.

### Tips for keeping your belongings safe:

- be aware of your surroundings and report any suspicious behaviour
- don't leave items in your boat if it will be unattended for long periods
- check your boat regularly when it's not in use
- engrave your licence number on portable equipment
- keep a record of model and serial numbers
- chain your outboard motor and rubber duckies to your boat
- fit a locking device to the wheels of your trailer.



# Advertisement

*Stressed, hot and already running late, he parked at the shopping centre to pick up a few last minute items for the camping trip. He hustled his two young sons out of the car and, as the hot sun beat down, left the windows down a few inches before rushing into the store. Fifteen minutes later he emerged, juggling children and groceries, and headed towards the car. After just a few steps he slowed, and then came to a stop, staring at the spot where the car had been. The vehicle, along with the expensive camping gear and his hopes for a relaxing week with his boys, had vanished.*

While this case seems extreme, anybody who has had their car stolen will agree that it can be devastating. The figures are disturbing: a car is stolen every four minutes across Australia. Shopping centres, railway car parks and suburban street parking areas are some of the favoured spots for opportunistic thieves. Not only are vehicles stolen, but items left inside such as wallets, purses, cash, CDs and cassettes, laptop computers, sunglasses and mobile phones are also targeted by thieves.

But by taking a few simple precautions we can all help reduce the high cost of motor vehicle and content theft.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) continues to work with the community to lessen the chances of becoming a victim of crime. Detective Senior Sergeant Murray Ryan of the Auto Theft Unit offered the following advice to motorists.

### **Prevention is the key**

One of the simplest forms of security is to remove the ignition key, wind up all the windows and lock the vehicle - even if you intend to be away from it for only a few minutes. This includes short trips away from your car, such as at the petrol station.

Detective Senior Sergeant Ryan said that while this seemed simple enough, many drivers did not do it.

"Drivers and passengers need to be vigilant in checking their cars are locked, whether they are parking for five minutes or five hours.

"With the weather getting hotter, some people are more likely to leave windows down when they park, especially if they don't have air-conditioning. But motorists need to take care not to create easy targets for thieves," Senior Sergeant Ryan said.

"When parking, if possible, try to park off the street, either in a garage, in a yard or in a staffed parking centre. If you must park on the street, choose a well-lit or busy area if possible.

# Technology used to prevent auto theft

by Paula Hedemann, QPS Media and Public Relations Branch

“Remember to lock your vehicle when parked in your driveway, carport or garage. Also lock the garage or gate of the yard.

“Never hide spare keys in or on the vehicle. This is equivalent to hiding a key under a doormat and gives offenders an invitation to use your property,” he said.

More than 80% of motor vehicle thefts are random, opportunistic and committed by young offenders who use them for joyriding or to commit another crime. Unlike professional car thieves, they are generally unskilled and will be deterred by an effective security device. Vehicle owners should consider installing anti-theft devices, particularly in older cars, which may not have engine immobilisers fitted as standard equipment.

Some examples of effective devices are:

- ignition cut-out switch
- fuel cut-off switch
- ultrasonic motion sensor which detects movement inside the vehicle
- glass breakage detector
- high powered audible alarm, which is not susceptible to accidental activation
- battery isolator
- steering wheel lock
- handbrake lock
- transmission lock.

Do not invite thieves by leaving valuable items on display in your vehicle. Secure the stereo system and speakers, and remove chequebooks, credit cards and your driver’s licence from the glove box. Ensure the luggage space is effectively secured in a way that is proportionate to the value of stored items. If you must leave

valuables in your motor vehicle, keep them out of sight.

## Re-birthing of vehicles

Motor vehicle theft is unique because the item being stolen has an individual and official identity. Professional thieves strip vehicles of parts for sale on the illegal market or use a variety of methods to alter a car’s identity, a process known as re-birthing.

Every car has four points of identification: the vehicle identification number, safety compliance plate, body identification plate and the engine number. Re-birthing involves changing one or more of these numbers by either cutting out the numbered section and welding new pieces in, grinding numbers off and restamping, or altering a character by over-stamping.

The Queensland Police Service’s Scientific Unit carries out tests on stolen cars to determine if any of these techniques have been used.

Sergeant Darren Smith of the QPS Scientific Unit said forensic technology could detect even minor alterations that were not visible to the naked eye.

“Different physical and chemical treatments can reveal changes to a number, or a weld that has been resprayed.

“The introduction of computerised systems to provide instantaneous access to information has also helped to uncover re-birthed vehicles. Sharing information with other states and the establishment of the National Vehicles of Interest database has been a boon to

policing organisations in tracing stolen vehicles,” he said.

In a recent example, a motorist legitimately purchased a car interstate and drove it to Queensland. When they went to change over the car’s registration, the transport inspector noticed some inconsistencies. Tests revealed the original identification numbers had been changed, and the car was identified from the database as one that had been stolen in Victoria the previous year.

## The application of technology

While the best way is through prevention, advances in technology are aiding the fight against motor vehicle theft. The QPS’s Fingerprint Bureau is using the latest techniques to catch thieves.

While many surfaces in a car are unable to be dusted with traditional black or white powders, enhancement by chemical procedures can reveal latent prints not visible to the naked eye. Once uncovered, digital mobile technology can be used to send images to QPS Headquarters in Brisbane for identification using the National Automotive Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS).

Officer in Charge of the QPS Fingerprint Bureau, Inspector Brendan Keleher explained the benefit of this technology.

“Fingerprint experts can develop fingerprints from a car in the field and deliver directly to the Fingerprint Bureau from anywhere in the State.

“We are optimising the use of technology to catch offenders in real-time.

“We often observe trends in regional areas where a group of offenders will target specific towns. If there is a sudden increase in car thefts in a particular area, fingerprint identifications are fast-tracked to identify the culprits and stop them in their tracks,” he said.

In a recent case, an armed offender hijacked a car with two occupants. After the two escaped, the hijacker drove away and used the car to commit another crime. When the car was located later that day, fingerprint experts developed latent prints and used a digital camera and a mobile phone to download the image to the Fingerprint Bureau.

The NAFIS database was searched, a match was found and the offender, who had fled interstate, was arrested within hours. In this case, technology was used to stop a dangerous criminal from continuing to offend.

Despite the advanced technology employed by the Queensland Police Service, preventing motor vehicle theft starts with you.

Members of the public can also ring Crime Stoppers anonymously on 1800 333 000 if they have any information about motor vehicle theft or notice suspicious activity in their area.

# Shut the door on sneak breaks

by Cassandra Glanville, QPS Media and Public Relations Branch

*You are enjoying a leisurely Sunday morning reading the paper, savouring your first cup of coffee and enjoying the view of your garden. Meanwhile intruders could be in your bedroom going through your jewellery for some 'quick sale' items, grabbing your wallet from the kitchen bench or walking out the front door with your laptop under their arm.*

What started off as a relaxing end to the weekend is ruined by the realisation that you have just been the victim of a 'sneak break'.

Sneak breaks differ from break and enters because during a sneak break, the offender enters the premises through unlocked doors or open windows. Even going so far as to enter through an open door while the resident is in the backyard, perhaps hanging out the washing, rather than smashing a window or door to gain access.

The incidence of reported sneak breaks in the Brisbane metropolitan area is on the rise and the Queensland Police Service (QPS) has seized the opportunity to remind residents to be vigilant when at home or away.

More often than not residents are becoming the victims of opportunistic thieves who enter homes with easy access enabling them to enter and flee the scene quickly. Unfortunately some householders are helping thieves enter their homes by leaving items such as ladders and wheelie bins out, providing easier access into the house.

Acting Inspector Anthony Graham, Patrol Services, North Brisbane Police District said offenders were looking for an easy way into houses, units and apartments.

"They are using ladders from nearby garages, climbing on wheelie bins or climbing onto

verandahs to gain entry to open windows.

"Recently Brisbane's northern suburbs such as Aspley, Stafford, Stafford Heights, Wavell Heights and Nundah have been targeted.

"In a bid to rid our community of sneak breaks the QPS are coming together as a team at all levels to attack the problem head on.

"Crime Prevention Units are flagging occurrences and providing statistics to Neighbourhood Watch groups and supplying comfits of people to look out for when available.

"The Tactical Crime Units are informed of particular problem areas and in turn create a presence in that community in the hope of discouraging any budding thieves.

"Take a look around your house and take measures to stop someone gaining easy entry to your home," he said.

Preventing theft starts with everyone doing their bit.

Acting Inspector Graham urged community members to continue to be observant, as police investigating reports of theft still needed input from residents and neighbours.

"Come together as a community, be aware of and report any suspicious behaviour or vehicles in the area and investigate why local dogs are barking.

"Keep an eye out for your neighbour and report all suspicious behaviour around your house or theirs.

"Don't become a victim by being complacent and saying it won't happen to me. Take a look around your house and take measures to stop someone gaining easy entry to your home," Acting Inspector Graham said.



Dramatisation only



Community members can assist police to reduce the occurrence of sneak breaks by using the following tips to secure their home.

Tips to prevent the 'sneak break' are:

- Do not leave external doors open when out in the yard or in the back room.
- Lock all doors and windows when you are out.
- Place items such as cash, wallets, laptops and mobile phones in cupboards and drawers as these are the most targeted and easy to remove items.
- Never put yourself in a dangerous situation, try to put something between yourself and the intruder and don't be afraid to ask questions. Ask them who they are and what they are doing there.
- Store ladders and wheelie bins securely under the house or chained to fences away from windows.

In the event that you are robbed, taking the following steps may make the recovery of your goods and possible insurance claim easier to deal with:

- Keep photographic records of jewellery, heirlooms and other items of value.
- Engrave property to make it more difficult for thieves to sell goods through reputable dealers.
- If you have disturbed the intruder do not be a hero, call police immediately.
- If you saw the intruder, write down a full description as soon as you get off the phone to the police. The quicker you write it all down, the more detail you will be able to provide which will assist police in finding the offender as quickly as possible.
- Be prepared to talk with the attending police. They will require a description of the offender and a list of what is missing. The attending police will also need to talk with your neighbours as they can often provide valuable information regarding time and direction of travel.

# Singing in the festive season

by Paula Hedemann, QPS Media and Public Relations Branch

*Children of all ages will sing along with Santa and his elves at the annual Police Commissioner's Carols by Candlelight on Saturday, December 4 at Suncorp Piazza, South Bank, Brisbane from 6pm.*

Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson invites community members to join him and Queensland Police Service (QPS) officers and staff in celebrating this joyous occasion.

Many talented and generous people have donated their time and services for the Carols and members of the QPS are looking forward to sharing this very special evening with colleagues and the local community.

This year's Carols will be a fun-filled event, featuring the talents of QPS members, community groups, friends and supporters, with the added bonus of guaranteed dry seating in the covered Piazza.

Performers on the night will include the award winning Queensland Police Pipes & Drums, the Queensland Youth Choir, featuring members of the Vivace Voices and Voiceworks ensembles, and the Brisbane Regional Youth Orchestra, comprising 65 talented people aged between 9 and 25.

Always a crowd favourite, the fun-loving Band of Blue will set toes a-tapping with their hilarious and rocking rendition of some favourite Christmas tunes. This five-piece band includes four musically talented young police officers and guarantees to bring a smile to young and old.

Other performers at the Carols will include QPS choir Melody in Blue and a selection of solo vocalists from within the police service and family members. Santa and his elves will also make a special appearance for the young at heart in the audience.

The event is a free public concert and fundraiser. Donations collected on the night will benefit the Queensland Police Legacy Scheme and the Queensland Youth Choir. Glow sticks will be available for purchase at the event.

For further information please contact the QPS Media and Public Relations Branch on 3364 6256 or Paula Hedemann, Assistant Public Relations Officer, on 3364 4856.

Screened photo: Brisbane Regional Youth Orchestra members (from left) Charlotte Rashleigh and Teresa Yu enchanted the audience at the 2003 Police Commissioner's Carols by Candlelight.



Queensland Police Pipes & Drums members (from left) Drum Sergeant Sam McPherson and Piper Michael Redmond led a contingent of players into the Piazza in 2003.

# Advertisement

# Putting crime out of business

by Peta-Ann Wood and Simon Kelly, QPS Media and Public Relations Branch

**F**aced with a robber or thief at your place of work, a weapon in your face or personal threats, safety should always be your first priority.

That is why remembering that, no amount of money or goods is worth a life, could be the most important thing you do if a robber ever confronts you.

The best way to deal with the threat of robbery at your work is to do all you can to prevent placing yourself in a vulnerable position in the first place.

In an effort to further tackle the business of crime, Queensland Police have been trialing education seminars for business owners and operators throughout the North Coast and Southern Police Regions since May this year.

*BizSafe* is an initiative of the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and NRMA Business Insurance, which is supported by the Queensland Department of Communities.

An innovative new education program designed to help small to medium-sized business operators, *BizSafe* aims to reduce the risk of crime against their businesses, reiterating the QPS commitment to crime prevention, and reflecting the emphasis of developing partnerships with the community.

The education seminars provide participants with accurate information about the types and prevalence of crime affecting their local business community and more importantly, it provides them the skills to assess crime risks to their business and implement strategies to combat them.

*BizSafe* project coordinator, Senior Constable Megan Williams, QPS Crime Prevention Unit said the program had been developed to encourage business owners and operators to take an active role in preventing crime.

“Crime prevention is as much a community responsibility as it is the job of police and through the *BizSafe* program small to

medium size businesses can work together with police to help reduce the risk of crime. Working together, we can put crime out of business,” Senior Constable Williams said.

“During the seminars local QPS District Crime Prevention Coordinators provide the facts on business crime in the local community, including its prevalence and cost.

“But more than that, the seminars include an introduction to risk management and is an excellent opportunity for business operators to learn about the simple ways they can make their business even more resistant to crime,” Senior Constable Williams said.

Queensland Premier, Peter Beattie, launched *BizSafe* earlier this year, with the initiative being piloted in the police districts of Toowoomba, Ipswich, Bundaberg, Sunshine Coast, Maryborough, Gympie and Redcliffe.

# BizSafe

*BizSafe* is the first program to be rolled out under a new Queensland Government initiative, *Smart State, Safe State: Partnerships for a Safer Queensland*.

This new strategy urges corporations, community groups and academic institutions to work with the Queensland Government on new ways to create safer communities

NRMA Insurance, a part of Insurance Australia Group, is the first corporate entity to partner with the Queensland Government under this agreement, which aims to reduce risk, promote community safety and prevent crime.

NRMA Insurance State Manager Dan Musson said small businesses were often exposed to crime because many operators did not have the time or resources to evaluate and reduce security risks.

"The *BizSafe* seminars primarily target businesses that have less than 20 employees

and are less likely to have the capacity to combat crime effectively.

"*BizSafe* gives them first hand help from police and risk experts and helps them take simple and positive steps to reduce the risk of being a victim of crime," Mr Musson said.

The 90-minute workshops, presented by local police, are designed to get small business operators thinking about some of the simple steps they can take to make their businesses more secure.

For example, *BizSafe* explores the best options for dealing with the threat of robbery at work and how to prevent being placed in a vulnerable position in the first place.

*BizSafe* shows how to address potential security weaknesses in the workplace such as limiting the amount of cash kept on premises, having just one entrance which the attendant can easily watch and isolating staff behind a high counter.

Other preventative strategies discussed include:

- Never publicly discuss your security arrangements, even with friends, and do not provide information about your work to anyone you have concerns about.
- You should also be on the lookout for people acting suspiciously around your workplace.
- Be alert for people who hang around outside your business and watch what you are doing, people you do not know who ask questions about how the business is run, customers whose actions are out of character (such as spending time in a retail outlet without buying anything) and people in your business whose clothing is out of place (such as wearing winter clothes on a hot day or sunglasses at night).
- If you have to do the banking, keep the money close to your body, carry a mobile telephone with pre-programmed numbers



Photo courtesy of The Bundaberg News-Mail

Bundaberg Volunteers in Policing who assisted local businesses while undertaking security assessments are (from left) Roslyn Turner, Wendy Irwin, Maurie Wilson and Wendy Byrne.

for emergency calls, advise someone of your planned movements and estimated time of return, and vary the time and route you use to get to the bank.

- If you are unfortunate enough for a robber or thief to target you, put your safety first.
- Your life is not worth risking for any amount of money or goods so there is no point in putting your life on the line to be a hero.
- The best way you can help yourself and police is to try to remain calm, obey the robber's instructions and remain observant because information you provide could be crucial in catching the offender.
- Do not invade the personal space of the offender and activate the alarm only if you can do so safely.
- Obey instructions but do not provide any money or goods which are not asked for.
- Advise the offender of any movements you may have to make to comply with their

instructions. The offender will be nervous and tense so do not make any sudden or unexpected movements.

Speak only when spoken to because talking to the offender will only prolong the incident.

Try to make a mental note of the offender's features including clothing, scars, tattoos, unusual features, height, hair colour, odours, accent, speech, nicknames and a weapon if used.

- Activate the alarm or call police only when it is safe to do so.
- Do not discuss with anyone the amount of money or goods stolen.

Employees can help police by hypothetically going through a possible offence and considering what they would do in case a robber ever targets them. This helps prevent your mind from going blank and gives you more control if a robbery ever happens.

After activating an alarm, call police with the following information: your name, the address of the premises including the nearest cross

streets, the number of offenders and a description plus details of their vehicle and the direction in which they travelled.

You might not be able to save the day by out-muscling your offender but you can protect yourself and have the last laugh by remaining calm and observant throughout the ordeal.

The *BizSafe* program will be expanded throughout the major metropolitan and regional areas of Queensland in the remainder of 2004 and 2005. For further information contact your local QPS District Crime Prevention Coordinator.

*BizSafe* is based on a Western Australian Police project, which was first conducted in 2002-2003 by the New South Wales Police Service in conjunction with NRMA Business Insurance and the NSW State Chambers of Commerce.

# Theft by fraud

by the QPS Major Fraud Investigative Group

An example of a credit card skimming device installed over the card vent at a bank automatic teller machine. Once inserted over the card area, the victim inserts a card into the automatic teller, believing it is being read only by the automatic teller machine. As the card passes the skimmer, the card is read before entering the automatic teller machine. Usually a secreted camera is recording the key strokes on the auto teller machine to read the pin number.



**A**ccording to the Australian Government, fraud is currently the most expensive category of crime in Australia.

Standards Australia has suggested that the cost to the Australian economy is three billion dollars per year. It warns that both the incidence and the financial impact of fraud is increasing year by year, as is the average financial loss associated with fraudulent conduct.

It is also noted in Standards Australia 2003 publication *2003 Fraud and Corruption Control* that a significant portion of cases of detected fraud are not reported to police for investigation.

Their research indicates that:

- identity theft is becoming the most important fraud related threat within the Australian economy
- Australian organisations are ill prepared to detect and prevent fraud.

Detective Superintendent Kev Robinson from the Queensland Police Service (QPS), Major Fraud Investigation Group said business and the community needed to be better informed about the current trends of fraud to develop strategies to minimise the risk of becoming a victim.

“Globalisation and the advancements in computer technology present ever increasing challenges to law enforcement. Identity theft and computer fraud utilising techniques such as ‘Phishing’ and ‘Trojan Virus’ can be devastating to business and individuals,” he said.

### **General fraud**

Fraud is generally described as gaining a benefit by deception and usually results in financial or material loss to the victim.

There are numerous types of fraud that can be perpetrated on an individual or business. Such frauds include:

- fraudulent investment schemes
- fraudulent property and real estate schemes
- misuse of trust funds by lawyers and accountants
- criminal or unethical behaviour by directors of companies

- insurance fraud
- share market/prospectus fraud
- misuse of power of attorney
- significant employee or employer theft or fraud
- government sector fraud
- arson for financial gain
- cheque fraud
- impersonation
- misappropriation through a variety of representations
- ‘too good to be true’ scams

### **Identity fraud**

Identity theft refers to the theft and use of personal information of an actual person as opposed to the use of a fictitious identity. This can include the theft and use of identifying personal information of someone who is dead or alive.

Identity theft happens in a multitude of ways. It can range from someone using credit cards illegally to make purchases over the Internet or telephone, through to having someone’s entire identity assumed by another person to open bank accounts, take out loans, make a tax return and conduct other business illegally in their name.

In many cases the victim will not know that they have been defrauded for some time. At that point they may have suffered considerable financial loss and their personal credit ratings can be destroyed.

### **Internet theft**

‘Phishing’ is a technique used by criminals to gain personal information for the purposes of identity theft and fraudulent activity. It is most commonly achieved by an email message that appears to come from a legitimate financial institution and in some cases replicates the home page of that business.

These authentic looking messages are designed to lure recipients into divulging personal data such as account numbers, passwords, or credit card details.

“No legitimate financial institution would ever ask you to divulge account and password details in an email message,” said Detective Superintendent Robinson.

“Anyone who receives such a request should not reply to the email or click on any link contained within the message. They should immediately contact the institution by telephone.”

‘Trojan viruses’ are covert computer programs placed on a victim’s computer without their knowledge to enable the perpetrator to access details on the computer from a remote location.

It allows the remote users unrestricted access to the programs, data and security features of that computer. This enables the remote user to control someone’s personal computer and extract and use that information for personal gain.

This invasion of privacy can have a devastating effect on a person’s reputation, business and financial affairs.

“Those businesses or individuals who have effective risk management processes or audit practices in place greatly reduce the risk of becoming a victim of fraud,” Detective Superintendent Robinson said.

“People should ensure that they have an up-to-date antivirus program and a firewall installed on their computer, which protects the computer while on-line.”

To obtain more information about further preventing Internet or identity fraud or need to report suspected fraudulent activities visit [www.police.qld.gov.au](http://www.police.qld.gov.au) and search under ‘programmes’ then ‘crime prevention’; attend your local police station to report offences or make an inquiry or report all suspected fraudulent activity to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Other useful Internet sites include:

- Australian Securities and Investments Commission <http://www.asic.gov.au>
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission <http://www.accc.gov.au>
- Queensland Office of Fair Trading <http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au>

For further information on how the Major Fraud Investigation Group can help you or your business, please contact: Major Fraud Investigation Group on telephone 3364 6622.



# How to prevent becoming a victim of fraud

## General Fraud

- Develop a healthy trust relationship with your professional financial or legal advisor.
- Store valuable personal documents i.e. Wills, Powers of Attorney, Securities, and Bonds etc in secure places.
- Seek alternate additional professional advice concerning any financial investments.
- Beware of financial investment and taxation minimisation schemes that seem 'too good to be true'.
- Store your chequebooks in a secure location within your residence or business premises.

## Identity Crime

- Check your credit record or banking statements frequently.
- Place passwords on all your important accounts and records.
- Memorise passwords; do not keep the password in your possession.
- Secure your personal information (Passport, birth certificate, etc).
- Don't carry personal information with you unless you need to.
- Destroy personal information before disposal (i.e. shred, cut up expired cards).
- Avoid giving personal information over the telephone, by mail or the Internet.
- Secure your mailbox with a lock. Check contents regularly.
- Check billing and account records carefully for unfamiliar entries.
- Limit the amount of credit you have in your Internet bank accounts.
- Treat with caution any request for your email details for mailing accounts.
- When paying with a credit card at restaurants and general businesses using credit or electronic banking facilities (EFTPOS) always keep the credit card in your sight. (To avoid unlawful skimming).
- When banking at an ATM, familiarise yourself with the ATM and inspect any unusual card reading slots attached to the machine.
- Avoid shoulder surfing (observing you type your password) by other people in the proximity of you at an auto-teller machine.
- When undertaking transactions of people using a credit card, be mindful of the common design and security features. Ensure that the card being used is authentic to the best of your knowledge.

## Computer 'Phishing' and 'Trojan Viruses'

- Always use passwords.
- Update and change your password regularly.
- Do not use automatic log on features that save your user name and password.
- Always log off your computer when you have finished using it.
- Use the latest protection software eg anti virus protection and encryption.
- Use a personal firewall to secure your PC when online.
- Beware of unsolicited emails. Do not follow up or reply. Delete without opening.
- Only conduct business transactions with secure websites eg banks, financial institutions and reputable business institutions.
- Regularly back up the information in your computer. Wipe the hard drive if you sell or dispose of your computer, ensuring that all files you created are rendered unrecoverable.
- Avoid using computers that are available to the general public to access your private personal information as your password and credit card details may be compromised.



# Advertisement

# Commitment to protecting Queensland children

by Sergeant Gavin Marsh, QPS Media and Public Relations Branch

## *Protecting children in Queensland is a high priority for the Queensland Police Service.*

Recently members of the Queensland Police Service (QPS) have launched new education campaigns and been presented with awards recognising the QPS commitment to the safety and protection of children.

Queensland Police Service Sexual Crime Investigation Unit's Task Force Argos recently produced a booklet, web page and poster to educate parents as part of their campaign to protect children from the threat of Internet paedophilia.

The education pack provides advice to parents on Internet safety in an effort to prevent children from becoming victims of Internet predators.

Detective Senior Sergeant Jon Rouse, Operations Leader, Task Force Argos, said the Queensland Police Service (QPS) was leading Australian law enforcement in the investigation of on-line child sex offenders, with the development and implementation of proactive initiatives to reduce the crime.

"This project was the result of research conducted by Task Force Argos and from frontline experience gained through on-line covert operations and from interviewing child victims.

"The reality is that there are so many chat rooms available to children. Providing a law enforcement presence in all of them is unrealistic.

"The best alternative is to raise the parental awareness about the dangers of allowing children unsupervised Internet access.

"Since 2001, when Task Force Argos began conducting covert operations in chat rooms, 44 people have been arrested for using the Internet to either procure children for sexual acts, exposing children to indecent material, or distributing child pornography," he said.

"These offences will continue to be investigated and prosecuted however parents and children need to be aware of some basic strategies they can implement to minimise the risks.

"Parents should be aware of what programs are on their computer, talk to children about the dangers and keep the lines of communication open.

"They should spend time exploring the Internet with their children and let the child teach their parents about their favourite web sites. As a fundamental, parents should keep the computer in a room the whole family accesses, not in a child's bedroom.

"There is now an increased awareness by Internet sex offenders that police are patrolling chat rooms. However, our detectives continue to be inundated by paedophiles sending offensive images and seeking to meet the covert operatives, believing they are children," Senior Sergeant Rouse said.

At the launch of a new booklet for parents, Minister for Police and Corrective Services Judy Spence and Assistant Commissioner Peter Swindells, State Crime Operations Command congratulated detectives from Task Force Argos - Sexual Crime Investigation Unit - for developing the educational material.

Assistant Commissioner Swindells said the guide drew on Task Force Argos' experience in investigating child sex offenders operating within chat rooms, and from research conducted with international law enforcement agencies involved in Internet investigations.

"Intelligence gathered from the investigations in Queensland has been shared with both national and international law enforcement agencies.

# Who's chatting to your kids?

For information about internet safety visit [www.police.qld.gov.au](http://www.police.qld.gov.au)

"All parents should be frightened to learn that Internet paedophilia appears to be on the increase, with sex offenders using this technology to contact, exploit and harm our children.

"I urge all parents to obtain a copy of the guide, which will teach them about the dangers of online chat rooms and give them the information they need to reduce the risk to their children," Assistant Commissioner Swindells said.

Ms Spence said: "The Task Force Argos detectives are a very dedicated group of people who are to be commended for proactively policing the Internet chat rooms and catching sex offenders.

"Paedophiles are being caught in this way and they are going to jail.

"However, it is impossible to catch every offender, so police need the help of parents in decreasing the risk to children by stopping the problem at the frontline – the home," she said.

The Task Force Argos booklet teaches parents about how to identify whether children are at risk, and encouraging them to educate their children about the dangers associated with the Internet, in particular with chat rooms.

Tips include:

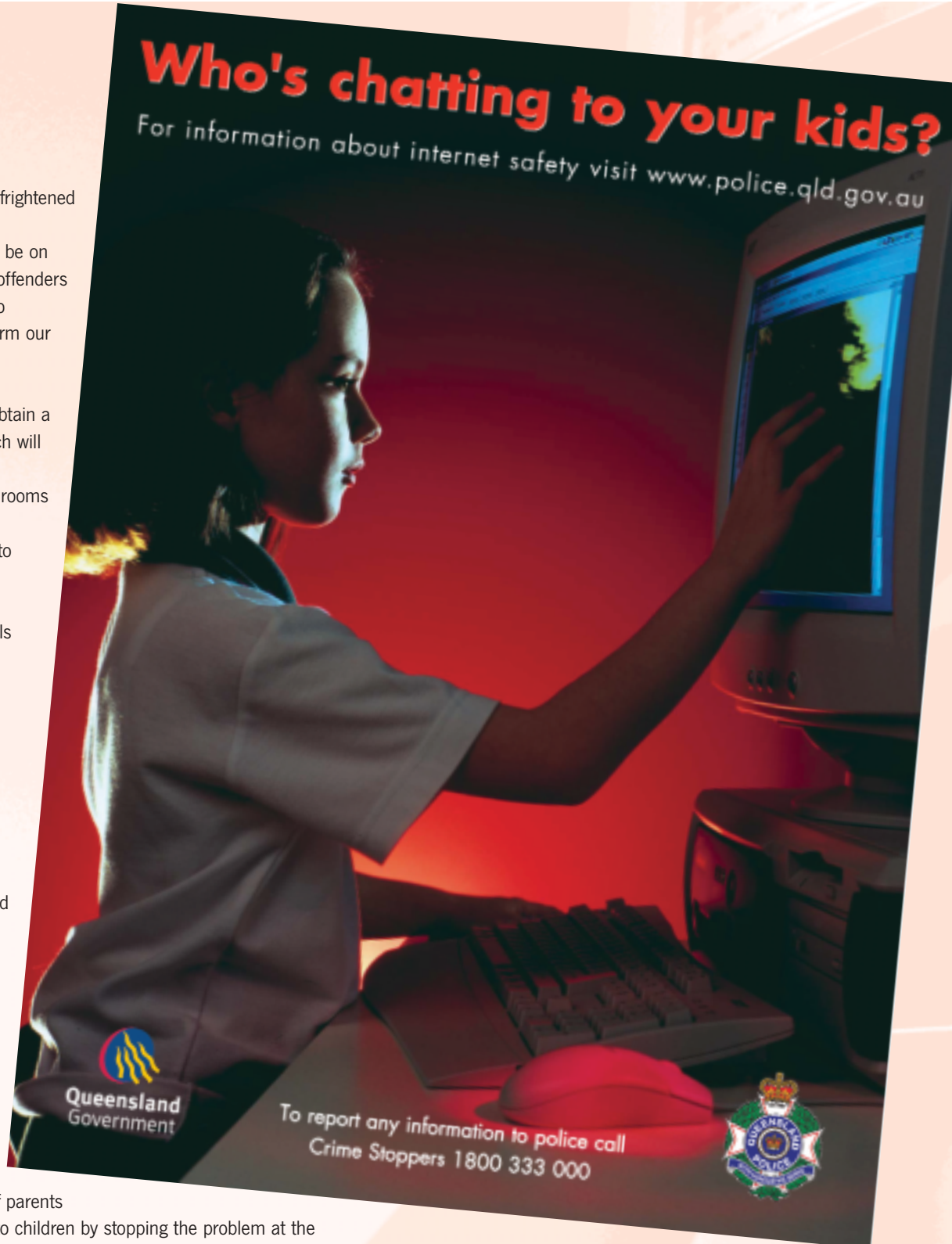
- consider installing filtering software
- ensure you are able to access your child's email and randomly check the contents
- keep the computer in a room the whole family accesses, not the child's bedroom
- check your telephone bill for outgoing calls
- check with your child's school on what safety measures they have in place

- tell children not to send pictures of themselves to someone they don't know
  - not to give out personal information on the web
  - not to arrange face-to-face meetings through the web

Parents are encouraged to keep the computer turned off and immediately contact police if a child has:

- received child pornography
- been sexually solicited
- received sexually explicit images.

The guide – titled *Who's Chatting to Your Kids?* - and accompanying poster will be available at all Queensland police stations or electronically at [www.police.qld.gov.au](http://www.police.qld.gov.au).



# Child protection efforts recognised

by Sergeant Gavin Marsh, QPS Media and Public Relations Branch

Photo courtesy of The Courier-Mail.



Child Protection Award recipient Detective Acting Inspector Peter Crawford, Deputy State Juvenile Aid Bureau Coordinator is congratulated by his daughter, Megan.

The efforts of the Queensland Police Service to protect children were further recognised in early September with Detective Acting Inspector Peter Crawford, Deputy State Juvenile Aid Bureau Coordinator, being presented with a Child Protection Award.

The annual awards, presented by the Minister for Child Safety Mike Reynolds, recognise commitment to the safety and protection of children.

Acting Inspector Crawford said this award acknowledged the strong and increasing commitment shown by the Police Service to child protection.

“The award acknowledges all the QPS members, in particular the excellent work of Juvenile Aid Bureaus (JABs) throughout the state, who work in a difficult and demanding area attempting to help children get their lives back on track and sometimes having to assist families in dealing with extremely traumatic situations.

“Police officers within the JABs work in partnership with other agencies to develop and improve service delivery so that those affected by abuse can receive the assistance they deserve.

“Increases in funding to train police and child safety officers in areas such as the upgraded ICARE (Interviewing of Children and Recording of Evidence) program, is a significant step forward,” Acting Inspector Crawford said.

ICARE is a joint training initiative with the Department of Child Safety and was a finalist in the 2004 State Government training awards.

The program was designed to ensure that interviews to collect evidence from children who had experienced significant harm would be carried out in such a way that further trauma to the child would be minimal, and evidence obtained would meet legislative and judicial requirements.

Since its inception, the ICARE course has been an essential training and development opportunity for officers involved in child protection investigations.

**Advertisement**

# Clan laboratory safety awareness protecting the community

by Adelle O'Donnell, QPS Media and Public Relations Branch

Queensland Police will become better equipped to manage the dangers presented by clandestine drug laboratories thanks to the development of an innovative safety awareness initiative recently launched by Minister for Police and Corrective Services, Judy Spence and Assistant Commissioner Peter Swindells of the State Crime Operations Command.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) Illicit Laboratory Investigation Task Force (ILIT) devised the Clandestine Drug Laboratory Safety Awareness package to inform and educate first response officers about the dangers presented by clandestine drug laboratories. It clearly outlines the processes that are to be followed if one is uncovered in order to maximise safety to themselves and the general public.

A clandestine drug laboratory, commonly referred to as a 'clan lab', is an illicit operation involving a combination of apparatus and chemicals that either has been or could be used in the manufacture of drugs, poisons and other controlled substances.

The Clandestine Drug Laboratory Safety Awareness initiative includes an interactive CD-ROM and video that enables police officers to increase and assess their knowledge about clandestine drug laboratory issues and provides guidelines on what action is to be followed if a lab is discovered. A quick-reference Z-card is also available for police officers to have on hand at all times.

Assistant Commissioner Swindells said the police service was also examining the possibility of expanding the Clandestine Laboratory Safety Awareness initiative to people who worked in locations where clan labs were often found.

"It is also hoped that it will be possible to develop a similar safety awareness program for members of the public who may also come across a clan lab such as hotel cleaners and property managers," he said.

Over recent times, the majority of clan labs located are what police describe as box labs, which usually consist of glassware, chemicals and apparatus and has been used but packed away or stored. These types of labs as well as the traditional larger clan

labs are often located in hotel rooms, rented premises, self-storage units, vehicles, rural premises, commercial buildings and private dwellings.

Clan labs produce a range of illicit drugs including amphetamines, methyl amphetamines, cocaine, GHB, heroin, LSD, ecstasy and other chemically based drugs.

Signs of clan lab activity may include but are not limited to strong unusual odours, traffic at extremely late hours, covered windows and reinforced doors, exhaust fans and pipes on windows, high security measures such as bars on windows and an accumulation of chemical containers and waste.

People should be particularly suspicious if they notice trip wires or other devices, chemical containers such as flasks and funnels, heating pots and a significant number of unmarked chemical containers.

Clan labs produce substances that are toxic, corrosive, explosive and carcinogenic. They can pose a significant threat to the health and safety of officers, the general public and the environment and hazards include:

- flammable and/or explosive atmosphere
- acutely toxic atmospheres
- leaking or damaged compressed gas cylinders
- clan labs located in confined spaces
- water reactive and spontaneous explosive chemicals
- damaged and leaking chemical containers
- electrical hazards and sources of ignition
- reactions – in progress, hot, under pressure
- incompatible chemical reactions
- bombs and booby traps.

Assistant Commissioner Swindells said the general rule if anyone locates a clan lab, assume the worst - and get out.

“It is important for anyone coming across items they suspect may be connected with a clan lab is to not touch anything, get out of the area where it is located and immediately notify police. The Illicit Laboratory Investigation Task Force will then be assigned to deal with the situation,” he said.



Clan labs pose a significant health and safety risk to police officers, the community and are hazardous to the environment.

# Officer struck by rare illness

by Peta-Ann Wood, QPS Media and Public Relations Branch

The Pierce family, Senior Constable Melissa Pierce and Detective Senior Constable Jason Pierce holding Callum (right) and Brayden (left) spirits are soaring despite the illness that has struck Melissa and left the mother of two paralysed.

Photo supplied by the Pierce Family, courtesy of The Courier-Mail

Members of the Queensland Police Service (QPS) have joined together with prominent Gold Coast business identities to raise funds for the financial burdens faced by a young police officer struck down by a rare illness.

Senior Constable Melissa Pierce, 32 and mother of two young children, was stationed in Longreach last August when what started as a simple cold left her fighting for her life.

Only 48-hours after being diagnosed with what was thought to be an ear infection, Melissa's condition deteriorated drastically, and she was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit of the Royal Brisbane Hospital.

Since that time Senior Constable Pierce has remained critically ill as a result of a suspected viral bacterial infection to her brain stem. The illness has taken some sinister turns and Melissa has been left paralysed with doctors diagnosing her as a tetraplegic (no movement or feeling from her neck down) for the foreseeable future. Currently she can move her lips but cannot speak and has lost sight in one eye.

As a result of the illness suffered by Senior Constable Pierce, her doctors have indicated

that she will be bedridden for a significant period into the future, and that her recovery will be long-term and fraught with numerous obstacles and challenges.

In an effort to diminish the financial burdens these tragic circumstances have placed on the entire Pierce family, Assistant Commissioner Ron Vincent, Crime and Misconduct Commission, Lester Hughes of Hughes Holdings and other prominent Gold Coast business identities are organising a lunch and auction to raise funds to modify a vehicle to transport Melissa.

"Currently a number of Gold Coast business identities will be in attendance at the fundraising lunch and auction along with the Commissioner of Police, Bob Atkinson and Minister for Police, Judy Spence.

"We have also invited a few high profile sporting people to join us at this important fundraising event.

"Police officers give a great deal to the community and it is heartwarming to have business people step forward and offer to work together in raising vital funds for the ongoing care of this young police officer.

"Everyone who heard Melissa's story wanted to give something and the goodness of people continues to surprise me," Assistant Commissioner Vincent said.

Senior Constable Pierce's husband, Detective Senior Constable Jason Pierce and their children Callum 3, and Brayden 2, have moved to Brisbane to be closer to her in hospital.

She is currently still in intensive care, but hopes to go home in November.

## Melissa Pierce Fundraising Lunch and Auction

**When:** Friday, October 29, 2004  
**Where:** Southport Australian Football Club, corner Musgrave Street and Olsen Avenue, Southport, Gold Coast.  
**Cost:** \$80 all inclusive

All are welcome to attend. Tickets are available from Assistant Commissioner Ron Vincent, Crime and Misconduct Commission by contacting Katrina Welk on 3360 6218.

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