

Police Community Meeting – April 22, 2024

Pottsville Community Hall

Guest Speakers – Geoff Provest (MP)

Matt Zimmer (Acting Superintendent and Acting
Commander Tweed Heads Police District)

Matt Keogh (Byron Area Command)

Present - 86 as per attendance record

Meeting Chaired – Wendy Pluckrose (President, Pottsville Community Association)

Meeting opened at 6.30 pm

Wendy thanked everyone for their attendance at short notice and explained how and why the meeting had been called.

There has been an enormous amount of posts recently on Facebook of the communities anger and frustration with EScooters and EBikes, and the tone of the emails were starting to become a concern. Residents were also commenting on the increased number of stolen vehicles and recent break and enters.

The police were invited to speak to the community group and had a prior list of queries that the community deemed important to have them address.

- Police Station – update
- The importance of reporting all incidents to police for their statistics
- EScooters and EBikes – legality and dangers for drivers of both the bikes and cars
- Regular patrols in Pottsville and surrounds
- CCTV – adequate in the main street and entrances to Pottsville, do these images assist police in making arrests.

Geoff Provest reiterated the importance of phoning the police for all incidents as these statistics make up the decisions on policing numbers, patrol numbers, basically everything that requires a decision to be made.

Policing Numbers boils down to population versus crime rates. If the incidents aren't reported to the police then the crime rates are very low, hence when a decision needs to be made on funding/policing etc. the higher crime rate areas will be funded/looked at first.

Youth Crime seems to be the main issue, and this is across the Tweed Shire and more youth programs are being trialled and implemented.

Geoff advised that there will not be Police Station for Pottsville in the near future as the police cars are now fitted out as a mobile office, and it is deemed by the government that the community is better served by having as many police out and about that in an office.

Tweed area has the highest drink driving incidents in the state – most are locals not visitors.

Matt Zimmer and Matt Keogh then addressed the meeting

Reiterated the need to call in the incidents and that funding is based on population verses crime rates.

Confirmed that as far as they were aware there will not be a police station at Pottsville.

The Tweed has a 90% conviction rate

Confirmed that youth crime is a major issue and something they are putting a huge amount of resources into at the moment. Trialling a mentor program at the PCYC for first time offenders to try and stop the crime spiral. Also advised the youth crime rate is not as bad here as in Newcastle/Hunter area there he was previously based.

EScooters and EBikes – a huge problem in the Tweed as they are legal in Qld but not in NSW. EBikes have a speed limiter in NSW, but they cross the border to Qld to have these removed to enable them to go faster than permitted.

Discussion on the riders speeding, riding on footpaths, not wearing helmets. After a lot of debate it was decided that the first solution to the problem was education. The children needed to be educated on road and bike safety and the parents also needed to be reminded of the road rules and that not wearing a helmet was illegal.

Police advised that they would be attending all the primary and high schools in the area during the next school term, and speaking to the school assemblies about road and bike safety, helmets, and reinforcing E/Scooters are illegal in NSW.

Police would also be putting this information on Facebook and Tik Tok for the parents to read.

They promised that more regular patrols will be scheduled for Pottsville (after speaking at the schools) and will be stopping and talking to children and parents if there are any problems –

Not wearing helmets

Riding across the pedestrian crossings

Riding E/Scooters

CCTV Cameras - police are working with the owners of the Chemist so try and stop the break and enters happening there. Suggested the Chemist install shutters as a further deterrent.

Confirmed that CCTV cameras were a positive move, and definitely showed a decrease in crime, but also helped to identify criminals.

Suggested the PCA contact the federal member as they know the Federal Government has funds/grants available for communities to install cameras.

After the Meeting

Matt Zimmer suggested -

- we contact Justine Elliott to enquire about the CCTV grant conditions/process
- we contact TSC to get them to remove the two car parks outside IGA and one outside Baker and Farmer, get a stop sign on both sides of the crossing and “look” printed on the footpath at the crossing and sign advising no riding of bikes across
- Signs also should be placed at either end of “town shops” advising no riding of bikes on the footpaths. This to be big enough to be seen by all.