



DIRECTOR CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT

13 October 2009

**DCCS15 INVESTIGATION INTO NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH
FILE: 147 LY {Folio No. *}**

SUMMARY:

Reporting on Council's investigations concerning Neighbourhood Watch raised at the Council meeting on the 8 September 2009

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DESCRIPTION:

At the previous Council meeting of 8 September 2009 Councillor Sproule raised a question without notice regarding Neighbourhood Watch in the Kempsey Shire.

Councillor Sproule requested: -

“Could Council determine if this program is operating in other Councils and can it be looked at for areas in our Shire including South Kempsey?”

Background History

Investigations were made with previous committee members of Neighbourhood Watch to determine why this program ended. Ray Walkden, the past president advised: -

“That the Neighbourhood Watch program commenced in Kempsey about 25 years ago with approximately 25 to 30 people attending monthly meetings and numbers slowly dwindled down to 5 attending. This program folded approximately 6 years ago.

Typical committee members were representatives from Police, Council, Aboriginal Elders, youth and other local groups. The lack of support from Police was also a major issue and people's perception of this program was incorrect.

The concept behind Neighbourhood Watch was that if you witnessed a crime happening that you were to report it.”

NSW Police Service Perspective

Council corresponded with the Crime Prevention Officer of the NSW Police Local Area Command who stated that other measures were in place such as: -

- Crime Stoppers Hotline
- Police Assistance Hotline
- Community Safety Precinct Committee
- Report it Don't Ignore It pads

There are conflicting sentiments within the Local Area Command as to the currency of these types of programs.

Neighbouring Council's Perspective

Council did contact other Council's on the Mid North Coast regarding Neighbourhood Watch; all stated that it was a community project that worked well many years ago; however currently no Council's are facilitating this program.

Kempsey Shire Council is currently running a similar campaign in Report It Don't Ignore It pads; this is a Mid North Coast initiative. These 'pads' are being distributed to all households within the Shire by way of community consultations. To date 500 have been distributed.

Kempsey Shire Council

Council supports the crime prevention initiatives that are already in place such as: -

- Report it Don't Ignore it pads
- Emergency contacts fridge magnets
- Police Assistance Hotline
- Crime Stoppers Hotline

In addition Council's Community Safety Project Officer continually liaises with the community and Local Area Command by attending regular meetings for example: -

- Community Safety Precinct Committee meetings
- Community Safety and Crime Prevention meetings
- Local Liquor Accord

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

Nil

- ***Social***

Nil

- ***Economic (Financial)***

Nil

- ***Policy or Statutory***

Nil

- **Director's Review**

The effectiveness of such programs like Neighbourhood Watch can only be achieved through community and agency support.

RECOMMENDATION:

That consideration for re-establishing the Neighbourhood Watch program be referred to the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Working Party.

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K E Oliver
ACTING DIRECTOR CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES