



# Briefing: An overview of Police operations in Lower Hutt

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**25 July 2023 – 1.15pm**

## Attendees

Elected Members: Mayor Barry, Cr Barratt, Cr Briggs, Cr Brown, Cr Dyer, Cr Edwards, Deputy Mayor Lewis, Cr Mitchell, Cr Morgan, Cr Parkin, Cr Shaw, Cr Stallinger (via audio-visual link) and Cr Tupou.

**Staff:** A Blackshaw, Acting Chief Executive; K Puketapu-Dentice, Director Economy and Development; B Cato, Chief Legal Officer; C Parish, Head of Mayor's Office; C Ellis, Head of Chief Executive's Office; K Butler-Hare, Tumuaiki Māori; N Reddy, Acting Group Chief Financial Officer; M McKenzie, City Safety Manager (via audio-visual link); and J Randall, Democracy Advisor.

## Presenters

Robert Rutene, Relieving Area Commander NZ Police and Senior Sergeant Jason McCarthy

## Key Objectives of the Briefing

The purpose of the briefing is to provide an overview of the operational side of the Police and an update on anti-social vehicle use.

# **Presentation by Robert Rutene, Relieving Area Commander, NZ Police**

Police in Lower Hutt have good numbers on the front line. A recently appointed Communications Services Senior Sergeant and Iwi liaison officers will enhance front line work.

A new tactical response model will train and strengthen front-line police services for pre-planned operations and responses to high-risk offenders. This higher level of training will improve police safety.

Youth Aid and Family Harm teams have combined office space in Lower Hutt to share information and work more collaboratively. Police are trying to be less reactive and focus on prevention around youth issues.

Family harm incidences are high in Lower Hutt relative to the Wellington area and truancy rates are high. Mental health and the cost of living are key drivers.

The Wainuiomata Policing Centre has reopened. It has limited opening hours, but members of the public can use an intercom at the front door to log jobs. Police are looking at opening more policing centres in the Hutt Valley in areas where they are viable.

A regional Gang Harm Reduction team based in Petone has recently been established. Its aim is to de-escalate and reduce crime using a cultural approach and to foster a more whānau centred lifestyle for gang members. It is developing connections with gang leaders to build trust and confidence and is also working on youth initiatives.

Police are trying to build relationships and are using a more holistic approach to help break inter-generational crime. Initiatives include helping gang members get driver licences and identification and connecting them to drug reduction programmes. It is hoped these measures will assist in transitioning gang members into employment. A service provision hub would ideally be available to allow easy access to services.

## Questions and discussion points

- Police would be happy to attend hui at schools with perpetrators and victims to help find resolutions that do not include a punishable process.
- The work of Māori wardens is invaluable to the Police. Māori wardens are not funded but Police can offer other support such as training and resources.
- Te Pae Oranga is a police-iwi partnership to prevent re-offending. This is an alternative way of addressing offending outside the courts. It also helps offenders overcome problems like addiction, financial stress and difficulties getting employment or education. Te Atiawa run the programme in Waiwhetū.
- Police are trying to be more visible in Lower Hutt, particularly in the CBD, so that people feel safe. They are also being more proactive in the community by developing initiatives, working with schools and alternative education providers and working with gangs.

## Presentation by Senior Sergeant Jason

### McCarthy

Police are looking for a long-term solution to anti-social vehicle use. They are exploring various multi-pronged approaches ranging from education to enforcement. Responding to late night 'meets' is a band-aid approach, and it is not working. Police are aiming to stop this behaviour, not push it out further from the city centre.

## Questions and discussion points

- Police have been patrolling Bunny Street and its surrounding streets to stop anti-social vehicle use but this has simply displaced the activity. Police increase its presence in the Bunny Street area during school holidays when

there tends to be more illegal street racing activity in the area. Whānau-centric programmes can help – a recent marae-run programme helped reduce the offending of a group of perpetrators.

- Police are about to set key priorities for the wider district. They are willing to work with Councillors to establish some consistency between Council and Police in mitigating crime.
- Family harm is the biggest issue for Lower Hutt police along with youth issues. Road safety is also a significant issue. Mental health has become a larger issue over the last few years with the cost of living a key factor.
- Specialist services are available for risk offenders. School and community officers are available to respond to any community issues. Police are also providing extra training for its officers to enhance police safety.

## **Actions**

- Cr Shaw will send a resident's email to the Relieving Area Commander, NZ Police that details recent large scale anti-social vehicle uses on Harcourt Werry Drive.
- The Relieving Area Commander, NZ Police agreed Police would accompany Cr Shaw to a residents' meeting where the Harcourt Werry Drive problem would be discussed.

The briefing closed at 1.45pm