

QPS/Muslim Community Meeting

Tuesday 6 October 2015

Islamic College of Brisbane - 45 Acacia Road Karawatha

Welcome and Introductions

Apologies noted

Sultan Deen [Chair]

Outlined that the meeting provided an opportunity for community members to be unified with senior members of QPS and partner agencies in a demonstration of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all community members and that the meeting had been called due to the pending anti-Islam demonstrations and recent events in Sydney.

Commissioner Ian Stewart

Acknowledged everyone present.

Acknowledged the pressures the communities are facing as a consequence of current events.

Emphasised that the QPS is here to serve the community and keep everyone safe and to protect all against unlawful behaviour.

Observed that the relationship between QPS and the Muslim community is strong, will continue to be strong, and is one of the most successful partnerships in Australia.

Reinforced that if there is any problem the community feel needs to be addressed, then an approach should be made to a QPS member - the QPS will do its utmost to serve the community irrespective of the background, ethnicity or religious beliefs of its members.

Assistant Commissioner Peter Martin

Advised that:

- He had met with senior officers to plan for the potential Anti-Islam protests on Saturday 10 October 2015 and that officers are in a state of readiness, have been properly instructed, and are ready to respond.
- Muslim infrastructure has been given a high priority throughout the state.
- A Police Operations Centre would be setup for the day.
- A communique will be prepared and will be sent to ICQ for distribution to mosques, organisations and community members.

Commissioner Ian Stewart

Added that he is hopeful there will be no protests, however, given the right to free speech, protests are unable to be prevented.

Spiro Drossos [AFP]

Advised of the support of his organisation for the efforts of the QPS in keeping the community safe.

Sultan Deen

Noted that Facebook is being used to create hatred and disharmony in the wider community.

Ismail Cajee [ICQ]

Advised that he had been in liaison with Assistant Commissioner Peter Martin regarding the potential protest.

Confirmed that information from this meeting would be disseminated at Friday prayers at the Mosques to reach a greater audience.

Ammar Khan [Islamic Society of Ipswich]

Inquired as to whether the QPS response to the potential protest activity would be reactive or proactive.

Assistant Commissioner Peter Martin

Advised that with the assistance of the Police Operations Centre, the QPS would be ready to promptly respond to any issue/disturbance anywhere in the state.

He advised that officers would not be stationed at Mosques or schools unless there is a specific threat.

Ali Kadri [ICQ]

Expressed disappointment that a male person who abused and exposed himself to a Muslim woman in an incident at Logan was only charged with public nuisance.

Commissioner Ian Stewart

Advised that the QPS operates within the law and that an offender will face the full extent of the law whenever there is evidence to support it.

A/Chief Superintendent Ben Hanbidge [Logan District]

Advised that the offence involving the male person who abused and exposed himself was taken seriously and Police were dispatched after a '000' was made to Police. He further advised that the victim had already left when police arrived.

He confirmed that the offender was charged and is well known to the police and that further inquiries are being undertaken to determine if the offender could be charged with racial vilification.

David Forde

Advised that the government is looking to strengthen the anti-discrimination and vilification Act.

Assistant Commissioner Peter Martin

Advised that currently no permits have been issued for Saturday 10 October. He noted that protests do require permits, however, a small group of people protesting peacefully and not impeding or obstructing anyone is not unlawful. He advised that if the community had any concerns they should contact the Police on 000 if urgent, or POLICELINK on 131444 if not urgent.

Hussein Ahmed [Chair United Somali Association of Qld Inc.]

Noted that the QPS still do not have a Somali Police Liaison Officer.

Assistant Commissioner Peter Martin

Advised that resources are limited and that it was not possible to provide every community with a PLO

Mohammed Yusuf

Advised that the community is concerned after specific social media threats against Muslims and Mosques were made on Facebook.

He stated that Muslim youths are concerned that Muslims can be insulted under the banner of freedom of speech and no one is charged and consequently feel frustrated and helpless.

Graham Perret [Federal member - Moreton]

Noted that every citizen has rights and responsibilities and that if anyone is being harassed, vilified or stopped from practising their religion, they should take their complaints to the ADCQ.

He further noted that every member of the community is protected under the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Neroli Holmes [ADCQ]

Advised that there are laws to protect people against discrimination and vilification and that ADCQ is working with the government to strengthen laws and increase penalties.

Kemal Begic [Bosnian Islamic Centre]

Inquired as to whether the community should close the Mosques on Saturday and what other action it should undertake.

Assistant Commissioner Peter Martin

Advised that people should continue with their normal activities and should report any criminal/unlawful activity to the police.

Anas Abdalla

Noted that youth need to be supported so that they don't fall into the trap of extremism.

Sultan Deen [Chair]

Thanked the Queensland Police Service and Commissioner Ian Stewart for the meeting.

Thanked Dr Barrett and Ismail Cajee [ICQ] for the use of ICB at short notice.

Thanked all attendees for attending meeting at short notice.