

# Mobile Police Community Office (MPCO)

## *Setting the wheels in motion...*



# Overview

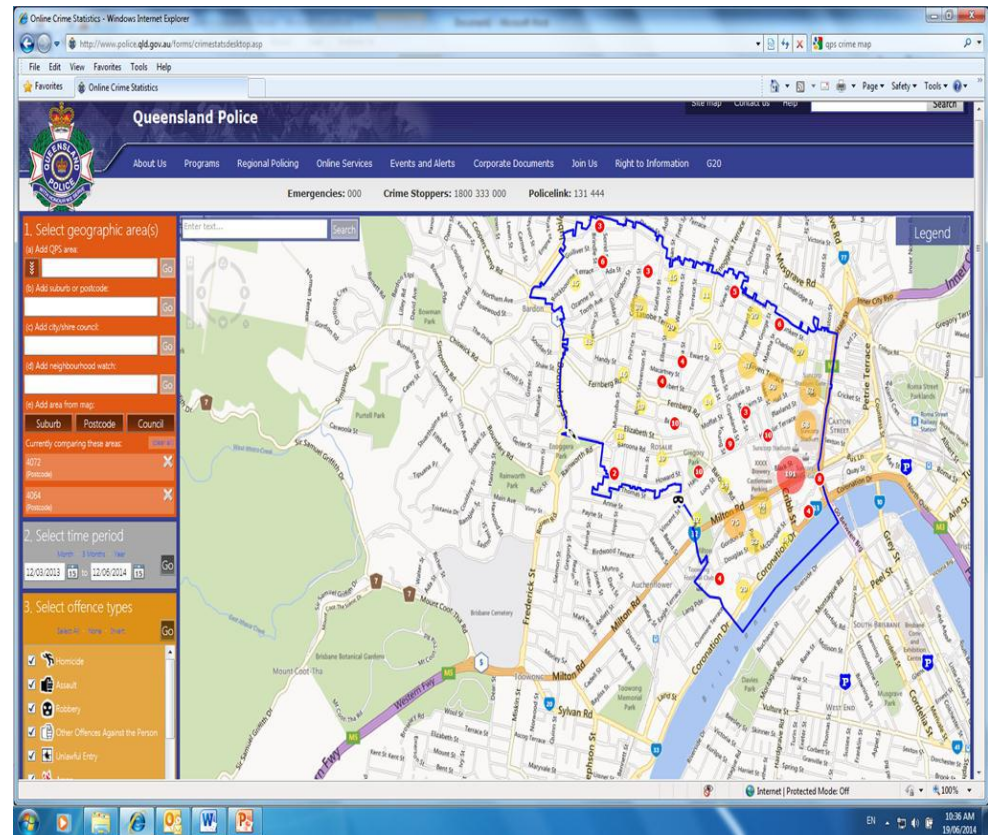
- Acknowledgements
- The MPCO – a new police initiative
- Hotspot policing
- Legitimacy and policing
- Evidence based research strategy
- What you can do

# The MPCO Partners



# Crime Hotspots

- Greater than average number of crimes
- High victimization
- Approximately 3% of area accounting for 50%+ crimes
- Significant police resources



# Hotspot Policing

## What we know

- Focus police resources to Hotspots
- Brief, high visibility policing has positive impact on reducing crime but....
- Increased police presence can **increase fear of crime**
- Increased police presence and aggressive policing responses can **reduce police legitimacy**
- *If we are reducing crime...why are perceptions of legitimacy important?*



# Why is Police Legitimacy Important?

**Legitimacy in Policing is crucial for maintaining social order within communities....**

- Promotes a sense of public trust in police
- Facilitates law abiding behavior
- Fosters compliance and cooperation
- Increases reporting of crimes to police

When police promote feelings of fairness and trust within the community

↑ increased compliance

↓ decreased crime and disorder



# How can police foster legitimacy?

Research demonstrates that police foster legitimacy when they use these Procedural Justice elements:

- ✓ **Citizen participation or voice**
- ✓ **Neutrality**
- ✓ **Dignity and respect**
- ✓ **Trustworthy motives**

In encounters with citizens



# Innovative response - MPCO



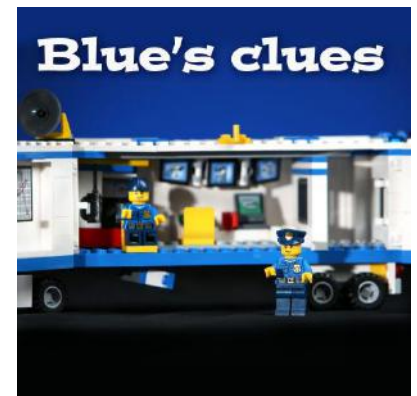
The Mobile Police Community Office MPCO is a hotspot policing initiative which aims to reduce crime AND fear of crime AND increase police legitimacy





# To set the MPCO wheels in motion

- MPCO officers **target the causes** of crime in the hotspot by involving the community
- MPCO officers use the **elements of procedural justice** in their encounters with the public
  - Neutral decision making
  - Providing opportunities for community members to talk (ask questions and listen)
- QPS social media used to engage public



# Method

- **What:** Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT)
- **Where:** 13 North Brisbane District crime hotspots and compare to 13 matched 'control' hotspots
- **When:** 24 November to 24 February
- **Who:** 1 MPCO Sergeant with assigned local police
- **Respondents:** Community residents/businesses, MPCO Users, Social Media users, police officers
- **Outcomes:** crime (official records), fear of crime (survey) and perceptions of police legitimacy (survey), police views



# Where we are at:

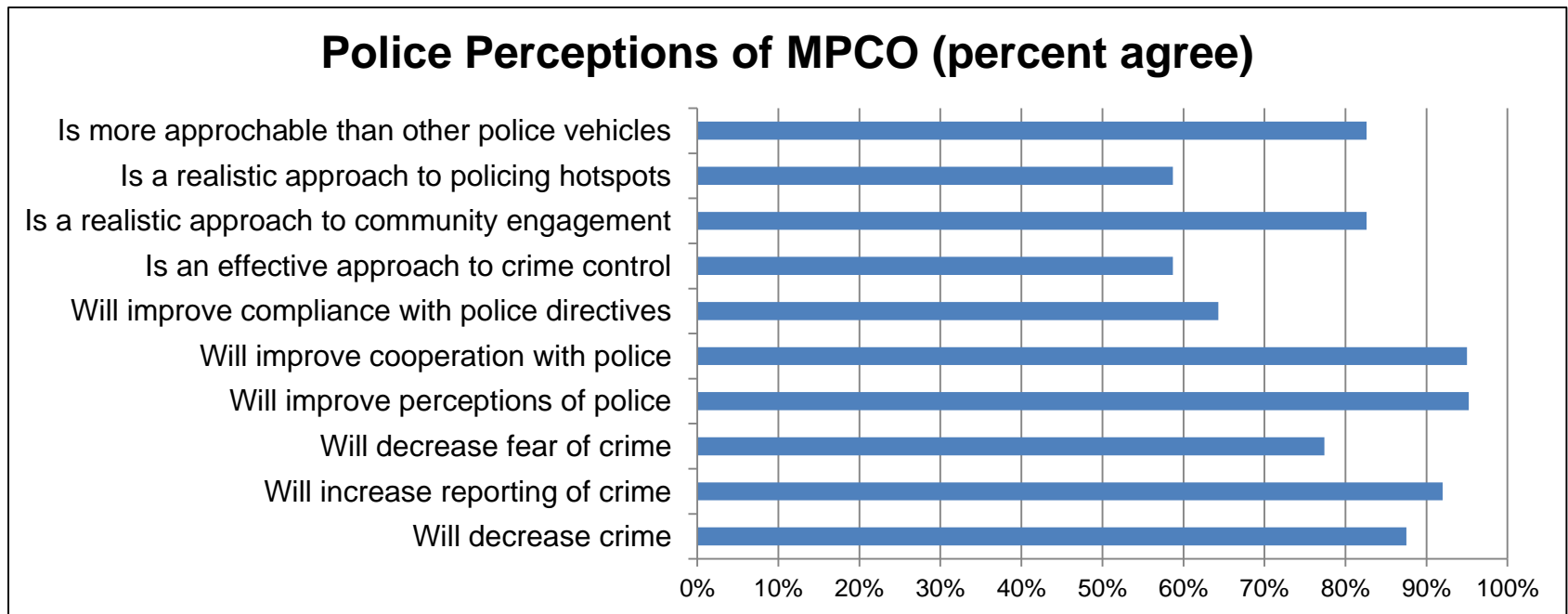
## Survey Response Progress as of ANZSEBP Conference 2015

Survey	Count	Rate
Community Survey	208	10%
MPCO User Survey	1,664	81%
Social Media Survey	239	N/A
Police Survey	47	100%



# Preliminary Police Survey Results

- 47 officers; Male (n=36), Female (n=9); Average age is 32 years (SD 10.3) with an average of 6 years of service (SD 6.4) with the QPS.



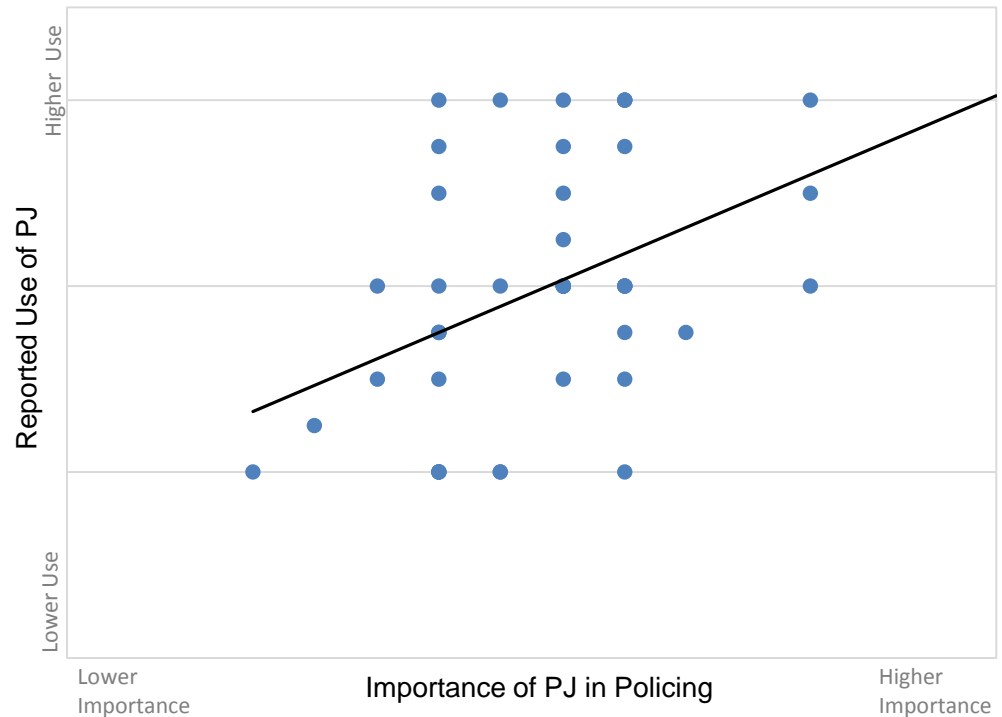
# Preliminary Police Survey Results

The more police agreed  
with *procedural just*  
policing...

the more likely they were to report being *procedurally just* during encounters with the public at crime hotspots.

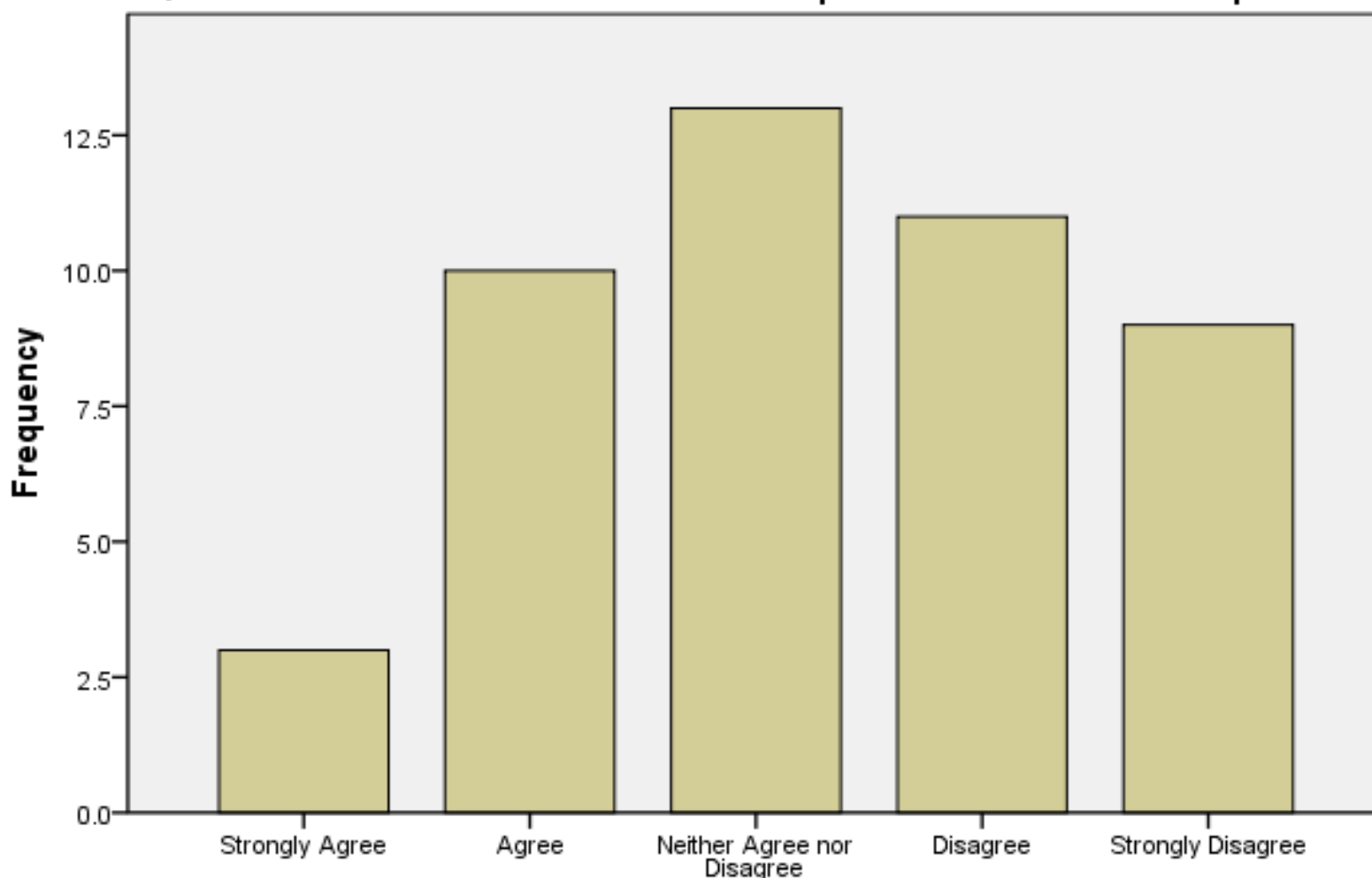


## Procedural Justice Perceptions and Use





**Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about QPS officers:-It is a waste of time to help some members of the public**



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# MPCO lessons learnt

- What did we do well
  - Engaged with sponsors when funds weren't available
  - Used Social Media to stimulate community engagement with MPCO
  - Selected appropriate staff to manage MPCO
  - Partnered with UQ to get evaluation support



# Fear of Crime: Mobile Police Community Office Project

## Research Aims and Methods

### Background

- The MPCO is an overt police community engagement project, designed to increase police-community relations and police legitimacy, and reduce community fear of crime through procedurally just policing in Hotspots within the North Brisbane district. The project compares the survey responses and systematic observations in experimental hotspots (with the MPCO) with matched control sites.



### Research Question

- How do environmental factors, coupled with the MPCO, affect communities' fear of crime?

### Focus; To Explore

- The physical and social characteristics of specified crime Hotspots,
- The relationship between the environmental factors and reported fear of crime and
- How the MPCO affects reported fear of crime.

### Hypothesis

- That when deployed in a crime Hotspot, the MPCO would decrease community fear of crime.

### Methods

- Developed social and physical observation measures (environmental factors).
- Developed fear of crime measures within survey for residents and businesses.
- Conducted physical and social observations of Hotspots.
- Administered surveys to members of the public at the MPCO launch and the QP150 expo, in order to gauge initial impression of the MPCO.



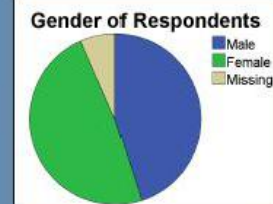
## Findings and Discussion

### Survey at Launch and QPS Expo

- Paper survey, online link survey and QR link survey tested.
- 91 completed surveys (44 female, 41 male); 6 invalid responses.

### Preliminary Survey Results

- 76% of respondents indicated that the MPCO would improve perceptions of safety,
- 98% of respondents indicated the MPCO would be an effective method of policing and community engagement and
- 59% of respondents indicated that the MPCO would decrease community fear of crime.



### Social and Physical Observations Recommendations

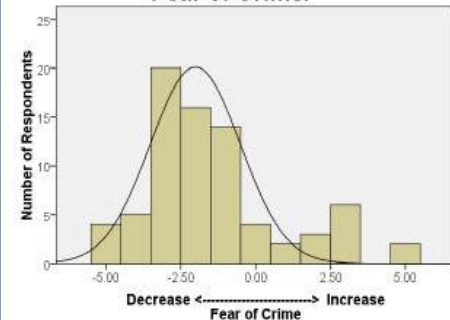
- Place the MPCO in the most prominent position of the Hotspot section to optimize visibility and encourage engagement.
- Place the MPCO in an area where it can be readily accessed by members of the public.
- Pre-advertise how the MPCO is different from other law enforcement vehicles. This may not be readily apparent to the public.

### Survey Snapshot

"People think the MPCO will..."

75%	Decrease crime rates
55%	Increase catching of offenders
73%	Increase reporting of crime
49%	Increase calls for service
46%	Decrease calls for service

### Influence of the MPCO on Community Fear of Crime.



### Discussion

- Initial results suggest that the MPCO was well received by the community, and showed the community believed the MPCO would decrease crime rates; increase the catching of offenders; increase reporting of crime; decrease fear of crime; and decrease amount of people choosing to commit and offence.
- These results contribute to an overall reduction in the community's fear of crime, and therefore suggests the MPCO would be an effective crime prevention strategy and community engagement policing initiative.



# More learning

- What could we done better?
  - Provide senior level managers with same legitimacy training as MPCO officers



# Where to from here...

- MPCO operational deployments
- Work with stats team to develop a more user friendly hotspot identification system (including predictive modelling)

