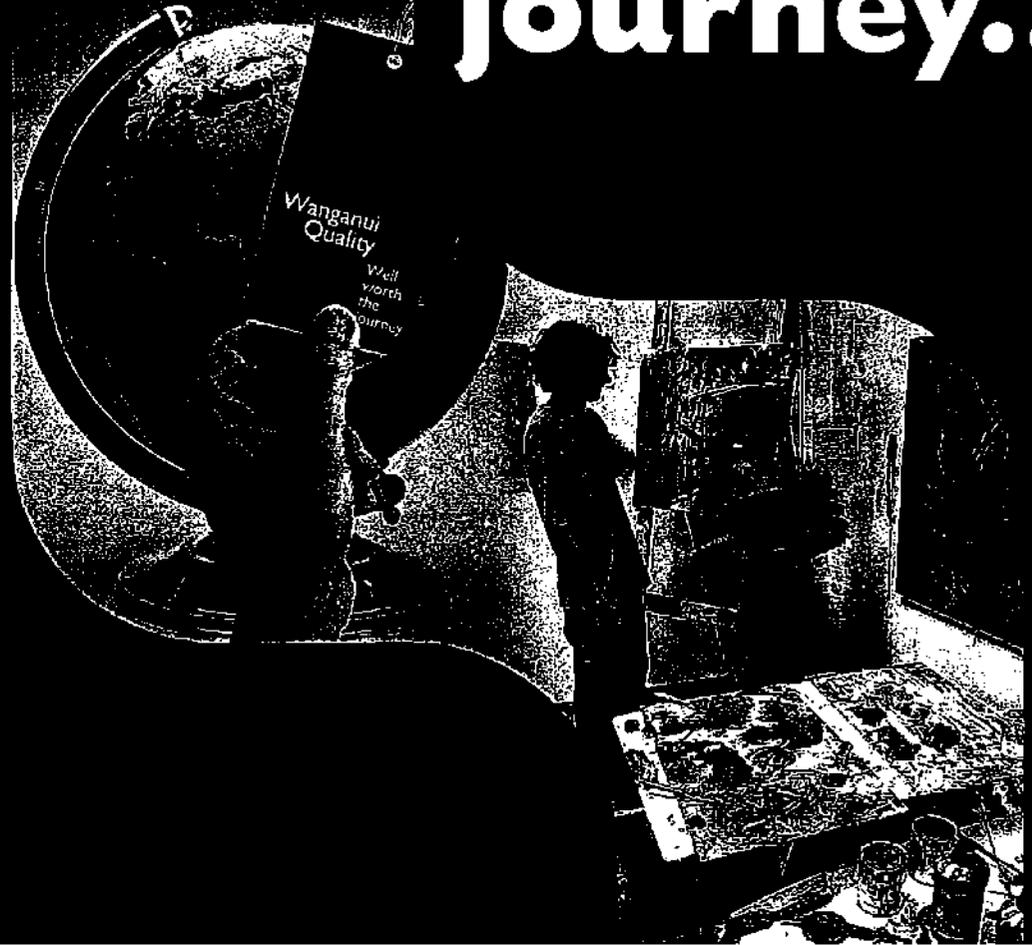


**Wanganui Policing**  
WELL WORTH THE JOURNEY

98-47

**Our  
journey...**



## ***THE WANGANUI POLICING MODEL: SUMMARY***

A rising crime rate is no longer the sole justification for more police, no matter how bad the crisis.

This document proves that

The model has taken four years to get to its present form, and the exciting thing is that it has the potential to get even better, to drive crime figures down even further and contribute to an even healthier community.

The soul of the Model is the organisation's culture, which is dramatically different from that which existed four years ago in the city.

The new culture allows us to;

- consider everyone's opinions internally and externally;
- continue building partnerships with all sections of the community;
- manage the flow of information efficiently and effectively;
- use that information to work as a team toward common agreed outcomes;
- measure performance;
- be thinking police;
- introduce and manage change as required.

It is easy to find examples of the culture that Wanganui left behind. Nationally and internationally you will find it in areas which are not doing all of the above list.

Sounds simple? The hard part is the gulf that can exist between police understanding the model and making it their own.

To date the Wanganui Policing Model has not reached a limit and it is not expected to.

Crime continues to fall, which is a great statistic, but the real measure of our success is a healthy community and crime figures are just one indicator.

Changes in society will always put fresh challenges in front of a community.

If culture is the soul of the Wanganui Policing Model, then ability to change is its heart.

Police have begun playing a part in saving a city in crisis because they realised that there was no other option but to change.

This document spells out the police role in Wanganui's journey to becoming a healthy community.

# THE WANGANUI POLICING MODEL

## ***THE ISSUE***

By the early 1990s crime in Wanganui was out of control.

The root of the problem was a combination of societal change and the failure of the police to recognise that change until the crime it produced had reached crisis point. Symptoms were:

- Economic decline
- Rising unemployment
- Wanganui, the country's 12th largest city, had the nation's third highest per capita crime rate.
- High levels of serious crime.
- Strong gang activity.
- High proportions of youth offending.
- Increasing fear of crime.
- Media and community groups were highlighting the problem.
- Police began losing more jury trials than normal.
- Dealing with the crime rate was stifling Police internal communication.
- As a result there was poor focus and management decision-making.
- Lack of time was contributing to a lack of legal research affecting court cases.
- The judiciary lost confidence in the Police
- Relationships between police and agencies had broken down.
- Police morale was low.
- There was a high attrition rate with police moving out of the area or resigning.
- This was compounded by staff cuts.

All this happened in what had been a prosperous processing centre for primary industry. Through the 1980s and early 1990s these had struggled due to central government removing agricultural subsidies, and to the long-term decline in the terms of trade for the meat and wool sector.

During the same period central government restructuring forced the closure of the New Zealand Railway Workshops and the closure or downsizing of other government departments.

While the population had remained static at 45,000, surveys revealed a declining economic and social structure (national figures in brackets):

- Unemployment - 10.5% (7.7%)
- Residents 15 or over with annual income \$NZ50,000 or more - 3.7% (7.3%);
- Residents 15 or over with annual income \$NZ20,000 or less - 66.8% (58.6%);
- Residents 15 or over who over a 12 month period have received a government benefit - 24.9% (19.6%);
- Residents 15 or over who have said they have no formal qualifications 41.7% (34.7%).

*(Source: Statistics New Zealand, 1996)*

These factors were manifesting themselves in a growing body of people with lower life skills and low social values creating more demand for police resource.

Three factors came together in Wanganui to force a response.

First, the police bureaucracy began using corporate and strategic planning, and in turn began demanding forecasts and outcomes which threw the crime rate into sharp relief.

Second, national headquarters restructuring in 1994 cut Wanganui Police staff by 27 people, or 20 per cent.

The third was a build-up of new staff transferred into the area, creating a nucleus of people who had the energy to help staff subdued by the mounting pressures of policing Wanganui.

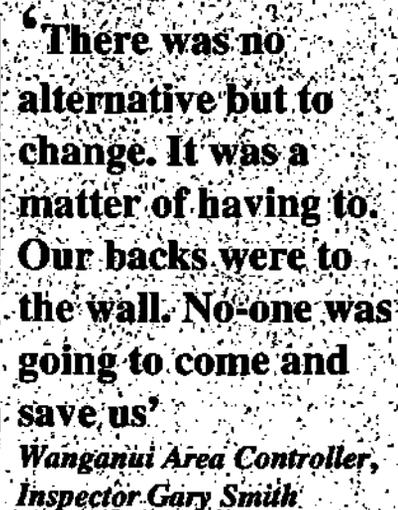
The drive first came from discussion among the city's middle managers, who identified that local solutions to local issues were required, even to the point of questioning traditional Police culture and operational structure.

A cross-section of staff were selected to undertake workshops, in an uninterrupted environment, and given one directive:

'Design an efficient policing structure to effectively police Wanganui. Disregard any structures, policies etc that are currently in place.'

In other words "have a go, take risks".

That was the start of an 18-month journey, the first stage in developing the Wanganui Policing Model.



**'There was no alternative but to change. It was a matter of having to. Our backs were to the wall. No-one was going to come and save us'**  
**Wanganui Area Controller,  
Inspector Gary Smith**

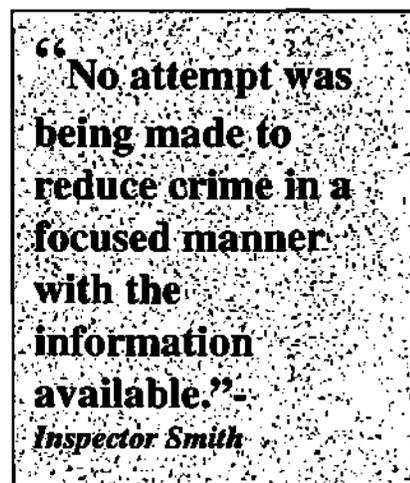
Workshop members cast wide for any tool or information to help their challenge.

These included crime trend analysis, strategic analysis, research of policing strategies internationally through all forms of media - from magazines to the internet - research of technology available, use of problem solving techniques and research into organisational structures, marketing and communications. They looked closely at the crime problem as it involved other organisations.

While economic figures track the District's financial wellbeing down through the 1980s and into 1990s, social surveys show a corresponding growth in the effects of crime from the early-to-mid 1990s

An independent survey commissioned in 1991 by the Wanganui District Council, showed crime was not even mentioned as a disadvantage of living in Wanganui. (Source: *WDC Community Views Survey, 1991*)

By 1996, when the Wanganui District Council began working on its Community Strategic Plan, the number one community priority which emerged from ensuing consultations was crime and public safety. (Source: *Wanganui's Community Strategic Plan, released 1997*)



**“No attempt was being made to reduce crime in a focused manner with the information available.”-  
Inspector Smith**

Police figures revealed an alarming change not only in the amount, but also in the type of crime committed. By 1994, figures for the preceding 12 months showed Wanganui had the third highest per capita crime rate in the country, including the second highest rate for robberies, the third highest for violent crime, and the second highest for vehicle crime. For the first time there was a high serious crime rate - figures show 30 aggravated robberies in 18 months.

There was no shortage of statistics and detail about the crime. In fact there was so much information that the lines of communication in the traditional operational structure was unable to cope. The result was a lack of focus leading to bad management, planning and decision making.

The economic and social factors impacting on Wanganui were adding to the growing database of criminals. So, too, were criminals from other centres who identified the city as a soft hit. Wanganui Prison's had become one of the biggest in the country, with a muster of 360. This played some part in the latter group, with friends and family following the criminal to the District and staying on after their release. Analysis also showed a high level of youth crime, with Maori (New Zealand's indigenous people) featuring highly in these figures. (Source: Internal data)

Meanwhile local offices of other central government departments such as mental health, justice, corrections and social welfare were unhappy with service provided by the police. Like the police they were going through a period of change, which was putting pressure on their resources, and were attempting to off-load some responsibilities onto police.

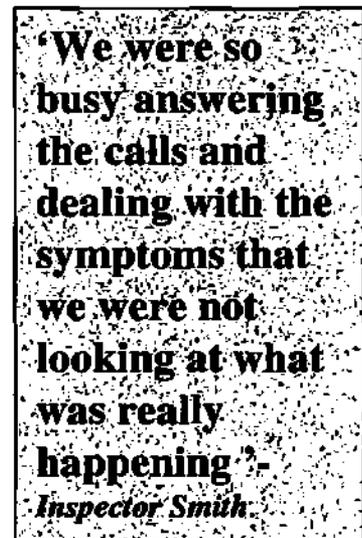
There was public dissatisfaction generally, highlighted by community organisations in comment through the media.

Juries were showing their lack of confidence by throwing out Police cases, and the judiciary was equally dissatisfied. A number of serious crime cases were dismissed. Requirements laid down in new legislation had not been followed by Police who were having trouble keeping up with change such as this.

Police should have had a strong relationship with Maori, a group which has a higher percentage of the population in Wanganui (19.3%) than it does in the national average (15.2%).

Central government had recognised the importance of consulting with, and being responsive to, the needs of Maori by making it a legislative requirement. But apart from an initial police attempt, which paid lip service to the legislation, Maori had little input into policing policy.

While the new approach to policing was at the focus workshop stage, the relationship between Maori and Police suffered even more during what became known as the Moutoa dispute, which centred on a land claim in the city. Maori protestors saw Police as siding with the rest of Wanganui against them. Meanwhile most of Wanganui saw the dispute as a further example of Police having difficulty managing law and order.



**'We were so busy answering the calls and dealing with the symptoms that we were not looking at what was really happening' - Inspector Smith.**

The effect on police staff was easy to measure. Over the period that Wanganui police were analysing the problem and developing the first stage of their response to it, the district lost 44 staff through transfers, promotions or retirements brought on by low morale.

An important understanding with which the managers and workshops began, was that requesting more staff was not an option. Written and strong personal presentations to Police hierarchy for more staff had proved fruitless.

But it was still a people problem, both internally and externally.

When the internal and external feedback were dissected, it became clear that the Police organisation was insular and living in the past For example:

- Police traditionally trumpeted crime in the media, fueling fear of crime as a justification for their existence.
- There was resistance to change.
- There was a tendency to shift problems on to other people, sections or outside organisations.
- Police are taught how to intervene in emergencies, but there is a lack of emphasis on the thinking process.
- There was still an emphasis on reacting to the criminal rather than the victim.
- Staff were not pushed outside their "comfort zones".
- There was no process for identifying entrepreneurial people with new ideas.
- Too often ideas were not put forward because of the fear of ridicule.

Wanganui Police had to respond by changing their culture.

The growing evidence of facts, figures, opinions and ideas flowing from the analysis also showed that the problem was in the community, and so the answer had to come from the entire community. Earlier in the 90s Police had attempted to get closer to the communities. But they had done it from a Police mindset, creating community policing centres in suburbs which were, in effect, mirror images of the central station. And they were further soaking up resources by duplicating effort.

The Police had to go to the community in a different way, so that the community shared ownership of the problem.

## ***JOURNEY OF CHANGE***

The internal and external consultation processes threw up a multitude of ideas and alternatives. Over the initial 18-month development process, these were either built into the first stage of the response, set aside for later consideration, or discarded after consideration.

Following is a chronological map of the development of the Wanganui Policing Model:

### **March 1994**

#### Intelligence Analysis

A fulltime intelligence analyst was appointed from existing resources. This position was unique in New Zealand as the first in a provincial area, reporting to the Area Controller, rather than the CIB. The role of analysis was elevated from being an attachment to an investigation to one which had the capacity to provide direction and focus for all areas of policing on an operational basis. The analyst was responsible for the intelligent use of police resources, using pattern analysis, strategic analysis and tactical analysis.

### **April 1994**

#### Look what we can do!

It was decided to evaluate the roll of analysis as a basis for directed patrolling, using theft from cars as the test. This was a crime type with a high impact on the victim and the community, but which had been traditionally a low priority for police because it was difficult to deal with under the old structure. All information was studied, times and locations identified and all sections were briefed and invited to include a focus on this crime in their duties. Carpark owners and relevant parties were consulted and briefed, and public volunteers were used to spread educational posters on adjacent walls and leaflets on car windscreens. The results were spectacular, with arrests and the education campaign contributing to an 80 per cent drop in the crime type. The system used was to become known as Directed Patrolling.

#### Change managers

The philosophy of the theft from cars test was a completely different way of doing things and required a dramatic change in thinking. Therefore the need for change management was identified at this point and senior staff with good interpersonal skills were identified and given this responsibility.

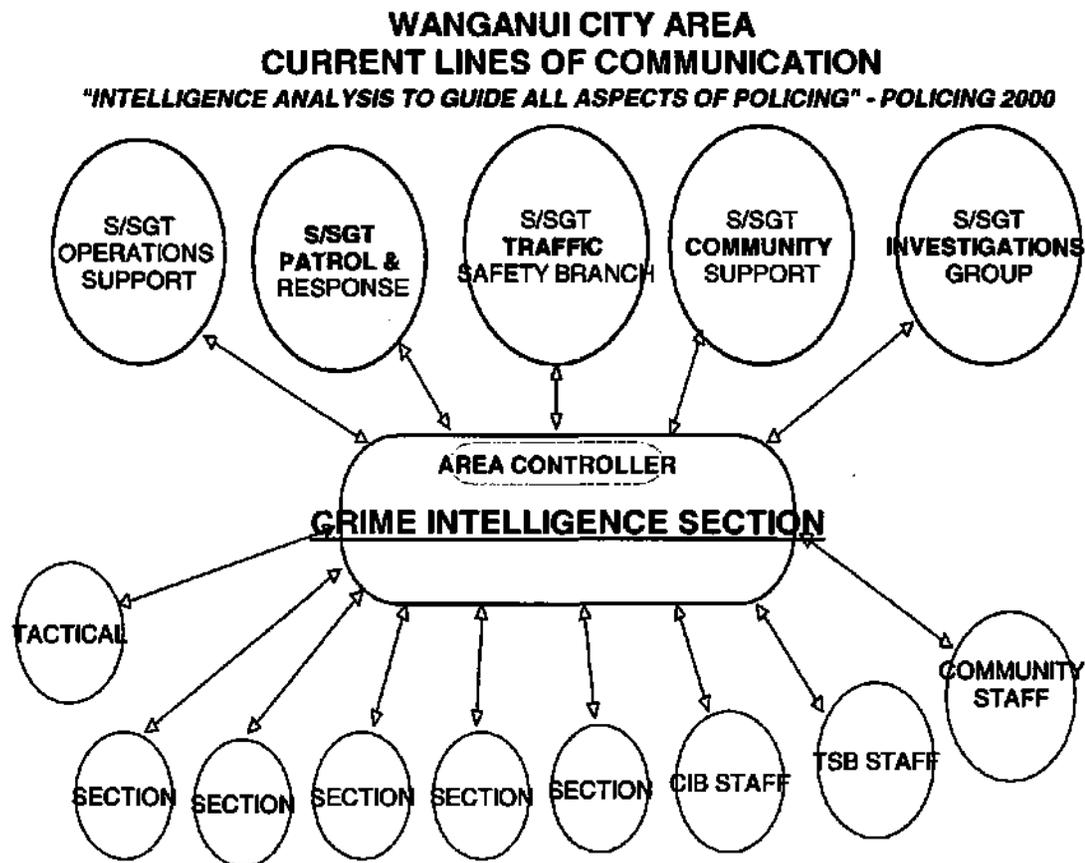
**'We have tried to engender a feeling throughout the organisation that no-one is going to be ridiculed coming forward with something new' - Inspector Smith.**

May/June/July 1994

Focus Workshops start

New Structure developed

This was unique. There were no other models to follow, experts to call on for guidance or technological tools neatly fitting what was required. The new structure was designed to better manage internal communication, so that communication with the community could be better managed. The key to the new structure is a hub, the Crime and Traffic Management Intelligence Section, called INTELL, which was formed around the former intelligence analysis function.



Feeding into this hub were five key areas of core Police business identified.

*The groups comprised the following:*

*1. Crime and Traffic Management Section (INTELL)*

Key focus: to manage crime by intelligently deploying resources.

It was set up to co-ordinate all the functions of the new structure and provide quality information to the managers of each of the following groups on crime problems, deployment and effectiveness of action taken.

*2. Patrol and Response*

Key focus: To provide quality directed patrol and response to the community.

This group is the main front line policing group for Wanganui and provides both a reactive and proactive capability to policing.

*3. Traffic*

Key focus: To provide quality traffic and road safety service.

Their primary task was to police the highways in the Wanganui city area, which included State Highways.

*4. Investigations*

Key Focus: To provide quality investigations of strategic and prioritised crime.

This area underwent the least change and is essentially the Wanganui Criminal Investigation Branch. This group was asked to focus on strategic areas, especially in dishonesty offending.

*5. Operations Support*

Key focus: To provide quality support to frontline staff and Police.

This group performs functions which support front line staff. Included in this group are prosecutions, crime scene examiners, watchhouse and operations room staff, typists, counter staff and general administration staff. A key to the restructure was to design functions that supported the front line staff members who, under the old model, perhaps received the least support but had the most expected of them, because they had the most community contact.

*6. Community*

Key focus: To provide quality support to the community.

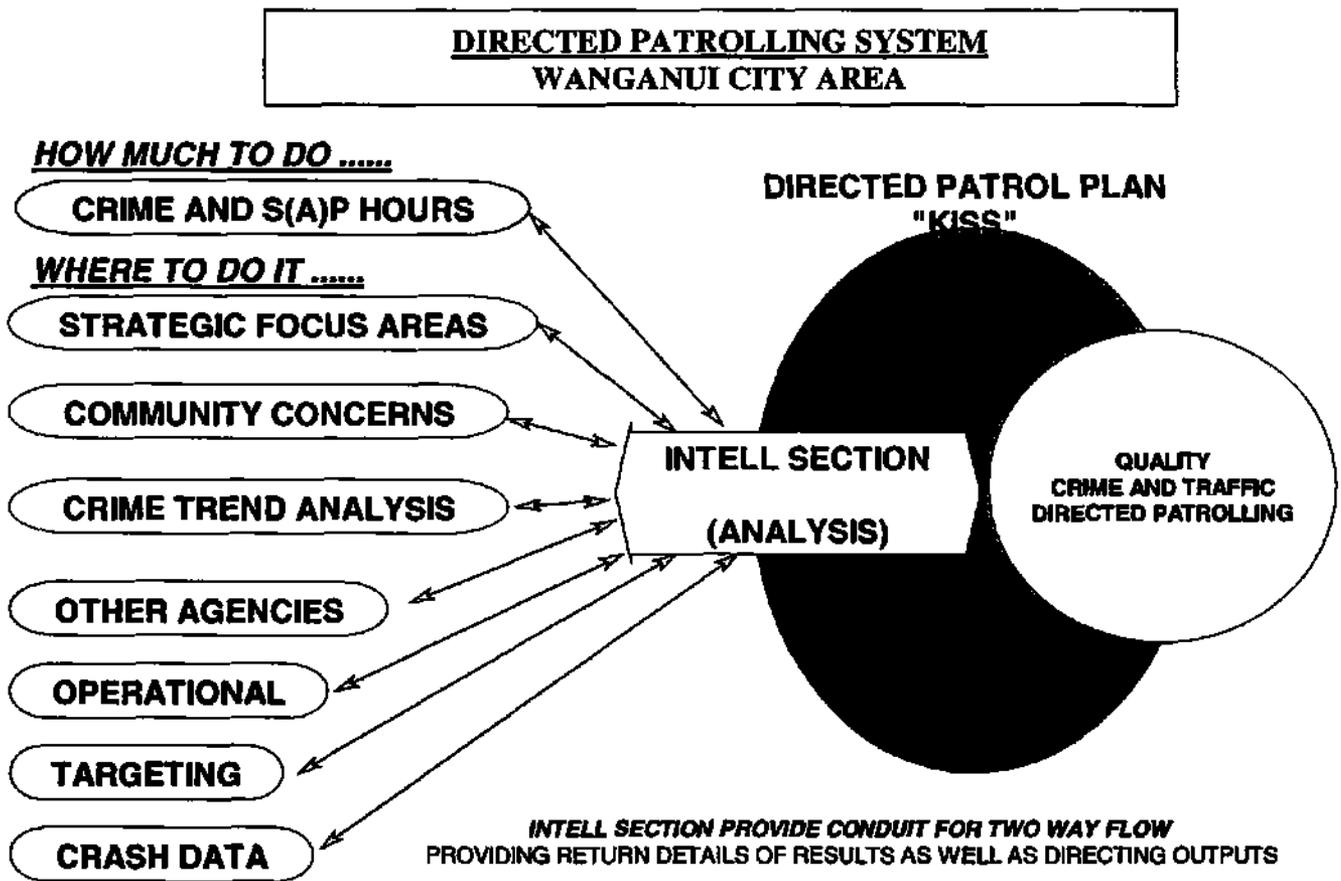
This group now consists of Youth Aid, Police Education Officers and Community Constables operating from two community policing centres, as well as a Police kiosk in the CBD. It is becoming more involved in managing partnerships and relationships. It is evolving into the main arm for addressing the root cause of crime, with prevention and intervention techniques which deliver the medium and long-term outcomes.

### Performance Measurement

Responsibilities, accountabilities and outcomes desired were clearly defined in business plans for each group, which were managed by a Senior Sergeant. These managers were encouraged to work as a team toward the common agreed outcomes, using the INTELL section to co-ordinate in conjunction with the Area Manager.

### Directed Patrolling Enhanced

With this structure the city was able to further develop the Directed Patrolling system, where problems are identified using analysis and all necessary resources are focused at the same time on the identified problems. The effect is then measured.



August 1994

### New Roster

Previously rosters were not delivering resources at peak times or in the most effective manner. The new roster reflected problem times requiring resources but allowed for the depletion of the total pool from staff cuts and were unique in New Zealand. It was not only crime-focussed but was also welfare oriented. Significant industrial were resolved before implementation and now the roster is recognised by all staff as successful.

## **October 1994**

### External survey

Further to the city's own research, the 1994 Inspector's Qualifying Course from the Royal New Zealand Police College were invited to make a study of policing in Wanganui. After internal and external survey's, their 79 page study closely matched the information which flowed from the city's own analysis. While the course's recommendations did not totally match the model developed by Wanganui, there was a key word on which both studies agreed that the response to the city's problems hinged - communication.

### Customer Satisfaction survey

These are regular and ongoing, and have shown an increase in satisfaction levels since their inception.

## **December 1994**

### New structure ready

Operational requirements forced delays at this point

## **February 1995**

### Moutoa Dispute

This caused further delays because of operational requirements

### Community relationships

A series of meetings and consultations throughout the community began to gauge the community's requirements of its policing organisation. This included suburban meetings with community groups, consultation with iwi (Maori tribal groups), the Wanganui District Council and central government departments such as justice, corrections, mental health and social welfare.

## **June 1995**

### Regional Commander briefed

Prior to implementing the response, the Regional Commander was briefed on the changes. While this report was purely an outline, it met with no resistance. The Commander knew of the problem and left the city to develop its own response.

### Change managers

Further levels of change managers were identified throughout the organisation to involve . the people they influenced in taking ownership of the plan. There were minimal difficulties and these centred internally on a small percentage of staff who reacted with negativity and at times blatant stalling on initiatives.

## **October 1995**

### New structure implemented

#### Recidivist offenders targeted

Bail checks are one method of targeting recidivist offenders to ensure that their opportunity for reoffending is reduced;

#### Gang management changed

Wanganui has five major gangs and several juvenile gangs. The traditional approach by New Zealand Police has been to police the gang. More efficient management of information has allowed Wanganui Police to successfully implement a different approach. Individual gang members are now monitored and targeted as required, a system which has greatly minimised their involvement in strategic crime areas.

#### Highway patrol initiatives

Another idea which came from this improved communication and problem solving was to dedicate specific vehicles to highway patrol, signwriting those cars with the words "Highway Patrol". The heightened awareness these vehicles created on the roads has been a major reason for a significant drop in road crashes. (50% reduction in crashes on rural roads).

#### Marketing results

Crime trends information began being widely distributed internally and externally to Wanganui Police's partners and the media. This is an important tool to maintain focus, maintain morale and increase the communities sense of wellbeing.

## **November 1995**

### Police volunteers

A group of semi-retired professional people made valuable skills available to the organisation in a support role. They play a key role in interfacing with the community. They are used in "soft" tactics with a crime prevention focus, such as leaflet drops, and in managing projects such as the Neighbourhood Support group network.

## **February 1996**

### Community partnerships

Wanganui Police have developed memorandums of understanding with organisations such as corrections, mental health, housing, social welfare, the Wanganui District Council and other community organisations to form the basis of ongoing relationships. For example, the District Council initiated a plan called Mainstreet Wanganui to reinvigorate the city centre. As well as physical improvements, organisations such as the Police became involved through the establishment of a community policing centre on the main street

This site is now used as a central point for contact with people such as parking inspectors and truancy officers, and it is shared with the Safer Communities Council (SCC). The SCC, on which Wanganui Police have a representative, is jointly funded by local and central government.

It plays a role in raising people's awareness of safer communities through education and marketing of information. It is a valuable resource because it strengthens the link between the community, local government and Police.

#### Judicial relationships

The appointment of a new judge to the city prompted discussion within Wanganui Police about communication with the judiciary. The idea of a judicial briefing was developed and initiated. The briefings contain a summary of the type of crime in Wanganui and, two years later it is still evident from the judge's comments in his rulings that they have helped his understanding of crime in Wanganui.

#### Victim focus

Wanganui Police recognised that treating victims in a different way had the potential to impact on the demand for police resource, and at the same time provide a better service to the victim and the community. It created proactive and positive opportunities for policing. A 1996 survey by Victoria University (Wellington) reaffirmed Wanganui's direction because it showed that what victims thought about and wanted from Police service often differed from what Police thought the service should be.

#### **April 1996**

##### Gang\_group focus

A six-week focus on gangs as groups removed INTELL's coordination role. There were many arrests, but they were not for the offences identified in Wanganui's strategic focus. Crime in strategic focus areas jumped. This was an important test of the new systems, which were immediately put back in place.

#### **July 1996**

"Wow. Lets do even better!"

Annual figures showed a drop approaching 20 per cent across all crime in the city. The test would be to maintain and improve for the second year so evaluation to maintain the focus on outcomes became even more important. Over time this process has developed so that daily, monthly and annual evaluations are built into the system.

#### **October 1996**

##### Tactical Response

By this stage it was clear that proactive policing had the greatest potential to produce the desired outcomes in strategic crime areas. A Tactical Response Section was created to provide a proactive tool, with deployment and direction co-ordinated daily by Intell. This initiative has been significant in reducing crime levels, particularly in

middle to lower level crime types in the city centre. One of the keys to this group was a five-week deployment This stops a group getting stale or bogged down in a particular problem by bringing in fresh ideas and developing a fresh focus every five weeks.

## **February 1997**

### Raurimu Massacre

This inquiry into the killing of six people removed all apart from one of the INTELL group. During this period, crime in strategic focus areas jumped. This period has become an important measure for the success of the model.

### Relationship with Maori

There is a gradual ongoing improvement in the relationship between Police and iwi through discussions and proactive measures used by Police at times such as the anniversary dates of the Moutoa Dispute. It is vital that Police and Maori become partners in the policing service to the Wanganui area..

### Public confidence

In die past 18 months Wanganui Police has lost only one jury trial. Over the past two years Wanganui Police has begun receiving more calls with information on crime, suspicious movements and related subjects. While there is no statistical measurement of these calls, it is a sign that die community trusts the Police enough to make the effort. At the same time the city's population remained static, and crime decreased. The only diing that could have changed was an increase of confidence in the police.

## **December 1997**

### "Yes!"

An independent survey conducted for the Wanganui District council in December 1997, included a section on public safety and Police service. It established a high level of public satisfaction with Police service - 80 per cent responded as either 'very good' or 'excellent' responses. (Source: WDC Community Views Survey, 1997)

### Total Impact

In die three years since the introduction of the new structure, crime has continually fallen. The total reduction over the period is now 30%. Directly this has cut property damage and insurance costs to the local economy. Indirecdy it has made Wanganui a safer, more desirable place to live

**"The whole attitude and culture to change and solving problems is different in Wanganui now. If we want to change something now we have no qualms about approaching people with it because everyone's minds have been opened by what we have gone through."**  
**-Inspector Gary Smith**

Visitors welcome...

...but come with an open mind. After the first year when results became known, many other Police areas began to take an interest in what Wanganui was doing. The city regularly hosted delegations from other areas examining the systems, with members of the management team being involved in presentations to interested parties

Wanganui is not aware of any area which has been able to produce the same results. The city believes this is because those visitors have used part of the model, but not understood that without it's soul - die change in culture - the model is not complete.

## ***THE JOURNEY CONTINUES***

Prior to the development of the Wanganui Policing Model, the detective was the highest status symbol in the organisation.

This is now changing.

The officer who innovates, uses problem solving skills, can facilitate and is a good communicator will be the person on the pedestal.

But as Wanganui has moved further into this model, it has become apparent that at times staff do not have the skill sets required to provide the necessary solutions to policing problems as we approach 2000. This is an issue which will need to be addressed in the future and attempts have been made to address some of these areas through outsourcing training.

Necessary skills identified in ongoing development of the response plan include facilitation, communication, marketing, management, technological, leadership, problem solving and thinking skills.

As outlined, the response plan is continually being adapted to answer new challenges, to push down crime statistics further, and to continue to contribute to the wellbeing of the community.

There is a risk that trying to continually innovate could push an organisation so far that it cannot match capability to its resources. This would take the organisation full circle, leaving it in danger of collapse and certainly damaging its credibility. It is important to continually and carefully monitor and manage the changes and their effects.

Wanganui Police is using its new culture to move towards identification and resolution of root causes of crime because this is seen as an area where long term gains can be made.

The relationship between all sections and bodies in the community will be vital to this.



## ENDIX

### AGENCY AND OFFICER INFO

11. At what level of the organisation was this initiative adopted?

The initiative was adopted at all levels. Initially the identification of the problem was made at middle management level. Then a cross-section of staff were involved in the problem solving through the workshops. Finally, when the new structure was put into place, all staff were encouraged to become involved and share problems.

12. Did officers or management receive any training in problem-oriented policing and/or problem solving before or during?

All Crime and Traffic Management Section (Intell) staff undertook intelligence analysis and change management courses. All management received training in facilitation and presentation skills.

13. Were additional incentives given to police officers who engaged in problem solving?

Immediate recognition was initiated to provide incentive, and the organisation is currently working on building recognition into performance appraisals.

14. What resources and guidelines (manuals, past problem solving examples etc) were used, if any, by police officers to help them manage this problem-solving initiative.

None could be found which suited the problem of finding a new policing structure, so Wanganui created its own guidelines and business plans.

15. What issues or problems were identified with the problem-oriented policing model or the problem-solving model?

As outlined earlier in this document, a lack of problem-solving skill has been highlighted and is seen as a priority to maintain the momentum in the Wanganui Policing Model. In their training Police are taught how to intervene in emergencies, but there is a lack of emphasis on the thinking process. There should be an environment where entrepreneurial people are identified, and everyone should be pushed outside the comfort zone.

There should also be a far greater acceptance of all ideas, whether they are adopted immediately or not. Often ideas are not put forward because of the fear of ridicule.

16. What general resources (financial or personal) were committed to this project and of those resources what went beyond the existing department budget?

The Wanganui District's entire budget is involved in the project because it involves the entire organisation. The middle management group, in particular, devoted an enormous amount of personal time outside work on research, for example on the Internet, and on training, where possible.

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