

SUCCESS WITH A SIMPLE SYSTEM

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Introduction

This overview of the Gatton Safe CCTV system does not provide a prescriptive recipe for success with a CCTV system. It does however, demonstrate how additional actions will enhance a simple system.

As a result of the progressive implementation of lighting, our communications strategy, signage, incident mapping, police operations and active monitoring we are able to demonstrate the effect of each of these actions on reported and cleared incidents.

Background

Gatton is the commercial centre of the Lockyer Valley, (1 hour west of Brisbane). Since 1997, vandalism and good order offences in the CBD were on the increase.

Police operations utilising both high profile foot patrols and plain clothes officers detecting offences, provided short term relief from incidents.

In 1997 Council had completed a study for improvements to the Gatton Central Business District – Gatton Streetscape Project.

During 1998 opportunities to implement some of the improvements began to gain momentum. Council identified the project in the 1998 – 99 financial year and applications for funding were submitted.

An opportunity presented itself through the State Governments new Security Infrastructure Program (SIP) and an application was lodged and subsequently successful. This application included lighting, other crime prevention measures as well as the CCTV system.

The successful funding application enabled the opportunity to implement a CCTV ‘safe’ system.

Research Ownership and Facilitation

Research into operations and policy was undertaken into other systems by council.

As a result of this research it was recommended that strong community ownership was required.

In 2001 the ‘Gatton Safe’ committee was formed and included members from:-

Business	Legal
Hotels	Neighbourhood Centre
Clergy	Police
Ambulance	Council

The Gatton Shire Council appointed a coordinator to provided secretarial support and facilitation of the program.

Policy and Procedure

One of the first roles of Gatton Safe was to adopt policy and procedures for the operation of the system in line with community expectations. A period of community consultation followed the adoption of draft guidelines which were subsequently modified and formally adopted as policy. Acknowledge TCC for guidelines.

The adopted policy and procedures are closely followed in order to protect the integrity of the system. This necessity is driven by both community expectations and required evidentiary provisions.

The Procedure for Gatton Safe Program includes:

Aim: - To enhance the public safety and well being of the citizens and visitors to the town of Gatton.

Objectives: - To identify and prevent situations within the CBD that would cause alarm to citizens or damage or destruction of property
To prevent and deter anti-social behaviour

- Delegations – Coordinator, Surveillance staff (monitors)
- Access Control – Conditions and Entry
- Incident Reporting
- Enquiries for information
- Visitors procedure
- Requisition for copies of recordings – Persons, Members of QPS
- Equipment usage
- Notification to Operations Manager
- Release of Tape and Still Vision
- Master Operational Retention Cabinet
- Tape Destruction
- Sub-Committee of Review
- Duties of Council's Operations Manager
- Registers

The System

6 Digital fully controlled cameras controlled by 9 station multi-plex unit. 4 recorders, monitors and playback equipment housed at the Gatton Civic Centre.

Fully installed and maintained by Security Pro.

Operations Manager

Gatton Shire Council EHO Mr Marcus Moloney is the Operations Manager responsible for the day to day operations and implementation of the program procedures.

Implementation

In January 2002, the Gatton Shire Council introduced the Gatton Safe CCTV system into the recently renovated Gatton CBD.

Upon introduction of the Gatton safe system media reports highlighting its operation and the visible presence of the cameras saw an immediate downturn in offences.

System Enhancements

The CCTV system was progressively enhanced over an 18 month period. Each individual implementation enabled specific promotion of the benefits of the system. Although time consuming this slow progression enabled a higher awareness within the community. This further validated the role of Gatton Safe to our community.

Each of the progressive interventions of lighting, communications strategy, signage, incident mapping, police operations and active monitoring has allowed us to see the effect of each of these actions on reported and cleared incidents.

Whilst time consuming each enhancement has resulted in a more mature and effective system.

Lighting

The completion of both pedestrian overhead and footpath lighting has enhanced both the physical environment and the ability to identify persons and vehicles.

Communications Strategy

The program launch and accompanied media releases were directed purely towards creating an awareness of the presence of the system. Our Communications Strategy now includes:-

- Signage,
- Flyers,
- Police and Council media reports and
- Community Addresses (Schools, UQ Gatton & other)

The communications strategy has provided a coordinated approach to community awareness and ownership. Its focus has been to enhance a climate of non-tolerance of anti-social behaviour.

The promotion of each additional enhancement as a legitimate and positive contribution to the community has assisted the development of the present climate.

Incident Mapping

Constable Camilla Akers of the Gatton police completed a map of incidents to enable the programming of cameras to hotspots in order to maximise the efficiency of the system.

Whilst no immediate reduction in reported offences was expected or observed, this enhancement of the system has given police more confidence in the systems effectiveness due to more coverage of hotspots and thus more opportunity for the recording of evidence.

Police Operations

Irregular operations continued to be conducted by local police. These operations were enhanced by the inclusion of 'tape viewing' in order to detect otherwise unreported offences. This resulted in the

prosecution of offenders for numerous anti-social activities. This intervention strengthened both the profile and perceived effectiveness of the system.

One of the challenges confronted was the education of local police in the limitations of the system. There was a very high expectation of the recorded images. Fortunately the reduction of incidents has overcome this limitation. Police now recognise the system for its preventative nature.

Monitoring

After 12 months of operation 5 monitors (Gatton Safe community members) were selected and trained in the use of the system by Mr Paul Pomerence of Security Pro.

The authorisation of these surveillance staff to monitor (under strict procedure and supervision) the Gatton Safe area has enabled the manual direction of cameras to specific incidents to enhance the quality of recorded material.

Responsible advice to local police as incidents or potential incidents occur was seen as a further advantage.

Co-ordinated Operations

With the cooperation of local police three coordinated operations to date have occurred. These operations have seen an officer being located at the operations room with police communications equipment. This has allowed for immediate response to incidents both by directing police as a means of prevention and also the immediate identification of offenders.

Conclusion

The success of this simple system has been observed to be enhanced by –

- Strong ownership by the community,
- Strict adherence of Policy and Procedure,
- Provision of adequate lighting,
- Communications and Signage,
- Programming of cameras toward hot spots,
- Training and use of Monitors and
- Police assistance and coordination.

The implementation of the Gatton Safe system and each of the enhancements outlined have proven to be effective contributing factors, in the reduction of anti-social behaviour in the CBD area. Anecdotal evidence also suggests a marked reduction of fear of crime by citizens and visitors to the Gatton CBD.