Name: Queensland Past and Present: 100 Years of Statistics, 1896–1996

Section name: Chapter 10, Law and Order, Section 2

Pages: 318–324

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In 1948 the Police Citizens’ Youth Welfare Association was established with the purpose of developing physical fitness and good citizenship. The Brisbane centre opened in 1950 and a Woolloongabba branch in 1957. By 1959 there were 2,671 members belonging to the Lang Park headquarters and the Woolloongabba branch. By 1971 there were 14 branches with a total membership of 9,633. In 1996 there were 32 Police Youth Clubs throughout the State with 29,026 members including 14 in the Brisbane area with 14,632 members.

In 1963 a Juvenile Aid Bureau was set up and staffed by detectives and policewomen. The bureau provided advice to parents and children on remedial measures for potential juvenile offenders.

In the 1890s there appeared to be a strong link between crime and lack of education. As Thornhill Weedon stated in *Queensland Past and Present* in 1896:

> Thus males of imperfect or of no education contributed to the criminal class in about three times the proportion that their number in the population would justify. On the part of the females the difference was still more pronounced, for whilst the census figures showed 8.16 as the percentage of illiterate women in the population, there were 39.28% of that class found amongst those arrested during the year. A relatively larger number of educated men as compared with women might be looked for amongst the criminal class. Some offences are of a nature requiring a considerable amount of education for their accomplishment, and women are rarely placed in such a position as to be tempted to commit them.

Evidence since the 1960s suggests that school education may not have a major impact on later educational or occupational achievements, and that poor parent-child relationships may be more likely to lead to crime. Juvenile crime remains a problem exacerbated by family breakdown and high unemployment. In 1993–94, 193 juveniles were committed to a higher court, or to the Childrens Court with a judge. Another 1,713 were placed on supervised orders, 1,470 were handed reprimands and 692 were placed on good behaviour bonds. The most common offence for which juveniles were committed or placed on supervised orders was breaking and entering offences, for which there were 60 committals and 398 supervised orders. For unlawful use of motor vehicles, 20 juveniles were committed to a higher court and 288 placed on supervised orders.

**POLICE**

**State police**

A police force, which included a native police force to minimise conflict between Europeans and Aboriginal persons on an expanding pastoral frontier, was established in Queensland before separation from New South Wales. The native police were brought under the control of the commissioner of police by the *Police Act 1863* (Qld). This force was commanded by European officers. The native police were being disbanded by the late nineteenth century, although in 1899 they still operated at Coen and Turn-off Lagoon. Native police were replaced by native trackers, whose numbers peaked in 1917 and then slowly declined.

In the 1890s the Queensland Police Service was expanding, and police were mainly young and born in Queensland. In 1893 and 1894, 60% of the 111 police recruits were aged 20–24 years and 25%...
were 25–29 years. Nearly half (49%) were 178 cm or more in height and 13% were 183 cm or more. Most (60%) were born in Queensland, 23% in Ireland, 9% in England or Scotland and 4% in New South Wales. While 58% were Catholic, 22% were Anglican and 17% Presbyterian. Educational entrance tests in reading, writing and arithmetic were necessary due to the clerical work involved. Education and fitness of police have increased during the twentieth century, although minimum height has been reduced to encourage otherwise suitable applicants.

The first policewomen were appointed in 1931 but their position was not clearly defined. In 1942–43 the number of policewomen had risen to 10, but fell to seven by 1957. They were not sworn-in members of the police service until 1964. Their duties were largely clerical and stenographic, but they were called upon where offences against females were being investigated. From 1975 female police officers had the same conditions as male police officers.

The size of the police force in Queensland increased from 907 in 1895 to 6,406 in 1996 (table 10.6). In 1895 there was one police officer for every 481 persons, increasing to 767 by 1930, before falling to just over 500 in the 1980s and 1990s. In June 1995 there were 505 persons to each sworn officer in Queensland compared with 466 persons in New South Wales, 439 in Tasmania, 431 in Victoria, 386 in South Australia and 381 in Western Australia.

Police duties were many and varied. One duty included being present at social events such as sporting days which were looked forward to as they attracted extra remuneration. Police attendance at social events attracted the concern of Commissioner Cahill in 1901 when he decried the practice of police accepting free meals at shows, exhibitions and sports meetings. He ordered police to refrain from this practice and suggested that they carry ‘a meal in their haversacks’. Non-police functions increased from 20 in 1901 to around 70 by 1924, and included acting as clerks of petty sessions, rangers of Crown lands, protectors of Aboriginal persons, inspectors of slaughter houses, district registrars of births, deaths and marriages, and collectors.
Table 10.6 Police officers (a) by region, Queensland, 1895–1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year (b)</th>
<th>Metropolitan (c)</th>
<th>Country (d)</th>
<th>Total (e)</th>
<th>Ratio of population to police officers (f)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>1,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>1,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1,332</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>1,333</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1,630</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>1,601</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,467</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>1,923</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 (g)</td>
<td>2,974</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>2,550</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 (g)</td>
<td>3,076</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>3,330</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Officers sworn in as members of the police service and police cadets. Excludes public servants working in the police service.
(b) From 1940 figures are as at 30 June.
(c) Comprises Metropolitan North and Metropolitan South regions, Ipswich district and state functions such as headquarters, state crime operations command and the Criminal Justice Commission.
(d) Comprises the regions of Far North, North, Central, North Coast (including Redcliffe), Southern (excluding Ipswich) and South Eastern (including Logan).
(e) Excludes 93 native police in 1910, 86 native trackers and 1 female searcher in 1920, and 68 native trackers and 1 female searcher in 1930.
(f) From 1940 ratio was calculated by dividing the estimated population at 30 June by the number of police.
(g) Figures apply only to sworn officers.

Source: ABS, Year Book Australia, various years; ABS, Queensland Year Book 1996; Queensland Police, Police Commissioner's Annual Report and statistical tables, various years; Queensland Police, unpublished data.

of statistics, for example, those on agriculture and irrigation. During the 1930s depression, police acted as relief agents for unemployment benefits. They had the power to inquire into the credentials of people applying for relief. In some places they also acted as labour agents. Another responsibility during the depression was the policing of railway laws such as preventing persons riding illegally on trains, referred to as 'jumping the rattler'.

Until 1896 the only means of transport the police had in carrying out their duties were horses. The Queensland police comprised both mounted and foot police, but horses were essential to successful policing because of the large areas covered. The purchase of horses took up a sizeable proportion of police funds. Horses were purchased on the open market, but their quality was frequently the subject of complaint. Commissioner Parry-Okeden considered that the solution was to establish a horse stud. One was opened at Woodford in 1904 and another at Rewan in central Queensland in 1908–09.

Bicycles were introduced in 1896 and at £13 each were more expensive than horses. The first police motorcycle was purchased in 1925 and operated in the Brisbane area; the first police motorcycle outside Brisbane was bought in 1928 and operated at Cloncurry. Cars were not in general use although some police were using their own vehicles. Two vans for the transport of prisoners and police were purchased in 1926. By the 1930s an increasing number of motor vehicles were purchased; for example, 28 cars, one van, five utility trucks and 33 motorcycles were purchased in 1938.
Gold escort leaving the Bank of New South Wales, Croydon, c. 1906. Seven boxes of gold are on the footpath at left.

Mounted special constables recruited in the country arriving in Brisbane for duty during the 1912 General Strike. This photograph was taken in George Street outside Police Headquarters. (Information from W. Ross Johnston, *The Long Blue Line*, p. 185.)
Committee formed to establish the Central Fingerprint Bureau of Australia, Sydney, 1941. The Queensland Fingerprint Bureau was established in 1904. Sergeant Marsh of the Queensland Police is third from left.

Police barracks, Brisbane, 1930.
As the police service mechanised its transport, new communications equipment was also progressively installed. In 1896 letters and telegrams were the standard means of communication. By 1910 telephones were in use. Police cars were first equipped with wireless in 1935. The department's annual report stated that these cars were 'patrolling between sunset and sunrise and have proved most efficient in crime detection, and have had a very noticeable influence in crime prevention'.

Over time the increasing sophistication of criminal activities required the introduction of advanced investigative methods and more technically qualified staff. In 1898 photography was used to produce photographs of criminals in the Police Office Gazette, sent to each police station throughout the colony. In its first year of operation 3,416 photographs were taken and distributed. Fingerprinting of persons charged with offences was introduced in 1899. By 1913, 1,000 prints were taken during the year.

Australia is a member of the international Criminal Police Commission, and Queensland police participate as part of a national network. The increasing complexity of offences such as commercial and drug crimes often requires overseas investigation and applications for extradition of offenders.

The Fitzgerald Inquiry (the Royal Commission into Possible Illegal Activities and Associated Police Misconduct) was set up by Queensland Parliament in 1987 following allegations of corruption. A number of senior police officers were stood down. Various reforms were initiated as a result of the inquiry, including the establishment of the Criminal Justice Commission to 'monitor, review, co-ordinate and initiate reform of the administration of criminal justice on a permanent basis'.

The Queensland Police Service has been administered by several government ministries. From 1896 to 1957 the service was administered first by the home secretary and then by the
secretary for Health and Home Affairs. Only from 1974 was the police service included in a portfolio designation. In 1996 the Queensland Police Service was controlled by a commissioner responsible to the police minister, and its mission was to:

serve the people in Queensland by protecting life, property, preserving peace and safety, preventing crime and upholding the law in a manner which has regard for the public good and the rights of the individual.28

**Federal police**

The establishment of federal police is attributed to an incident where eggs were thrown at the Prime Minister, William Hughes, at Warwick railway station in 1917. Hughes, who had been in Queensland as part of the conscription referendum campaign, claimed a member of the Queensland police had assaulted him and had refused to obey Commonwealth law. As a result Hughes promised to set up a Commonwealth police service.29

The Australian Federal Police are responsible for the prevention, detection and investigation of criminal offences such as drug offences, money laundering, organised crime, and fraud against the Commonwealth such as social security and taxation fraud.

**COURTS OF JUSTICE**

The court system in Queensland comprises higher courts (Supreme and District courts) and lower courts (Magistrates Court, which also sits as the Childrens Court, the Coroner’s Court and others). The system was established after Queensland separated from New South Wales. After federation the High Court of Australia was established, with the State courts empowered to sit in federal jurisdiction. This role has been modified to some extent with the court system divided between federal and state systems of courts. Civil and criminal cases are heard in higher and lower courts.