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Neighbourhood Watch for the Facebook generation: The impact of the NSW Wales
Police Force's Project Eyewatch strategy on public confidence in policing

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Honours Dissertation

Charles Sturt University, School of Communication and Creative Industries

2013

Acknowledgments

This dissertation has been completed under the guidance of staff at the Charles Sturt University School of Communication and Creative Arts, including Dr Amalie Finlayson, Dr Peter Simmons, Dr Bruce Fell and Dr Richard Pickersgill. Generous assistance was also provided by the NSW Police Force.

Authorship

The work presented in this dissertation is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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Abstract

In 2011, the NSW Police Force launched Project Eyewatch, a community-policing strategy that uses Facebook as the primary means of engagement between police and the public. The literature shows that the scale of the project is unmatched anywhere in the world and that most policing organisations are using some form of web communication to engage with the public. It also demonstrates a link between police engagement and the level of confidence and trust the public has in their local police. Given that many policing organisations are routinely using web-based social networking services to engage community stakeholders, this study seeks to evaluate, at a local level, whether contemporary understanding about the impact of police contact and engagement on levels of public confidence remains true when engagement occurs using Facebook.

Four areas of contemporary scholarship provide a literary context for this dissertation. The areas are Neighbourhood Watch, the use of technology by police, customer service, and public trust and confidence. Few studies have explored the use of web technology by policing organisations and even fewer have focused on Facebook and community policing. Research does show, however, that the NSW Police Force is focused on improving customer service across the organisation (Burn, 2010). Project Eyewatch is closely linked to this reform and a review of the literature highlights the relationship between this strategy and its impact on the reforms underway in the NSW Police Force. Scholarship on the topic of public trust and confidence provides the basis for understanding the motivations of the NSW Police Force in establishing Project Eyewatch, for understanding how engagement can influence public perceptions of confidence in local police and for evaluating the effectiveness of the Project Eyewatch strategy.

The dissertation was written through the epistemological lens of objectivism, with a scientific-positivist theoretical framework and the use of quantitative methods of analysis. The study considers whether Project Eyewatch is an effective strategy for enhancing public confidence in the police and, if so, to what degree. The study hypothesises that the use of Facebook by the NSW Police Force contributes to building mutually-beneficial relationships with local communities and engenders confidence and trust in local police. By applying deductive logic, the study shows that if the characteristics of enhanced trust and confidence are present in Project Eyewatch communication, it follows that the hypothesis is true and Project Eyewatch is an effective strategy for enhancing public trust and confidence in the police. These characteristics were drawn from survey questionnaires of major studies of public trust and confidence and then applied to the coding and analysis of this research project. The data was then analysed from both the perfect world (positivist) reality and the real world (normative) reality using a sample of 10 Project Eyewatch Facebook sites as a case study.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study aims to address a gap in the scholarship relating to the use of public confidence as a measure of policing performance. Most of the recent topic literature stems from Britain, where scholars have generally used large-scale surveys to evaluate the impact of police engagement on perceptions of public trust and confidence in local police. Engagement in the majority of these studies is defined by face-to-face contact between police and the public or the sharing of information by traditional methods such as mail. This study differs from earlier studies by using an alternative form of engagement as the basis of an evaluation of perceptions of public confidence. It recognises that police organisations are increasingly using the web and social networking platforms, such as Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and Facebook to engage with the public, and police and scholars need to turn their attention to these new approaches.

In 2011, the NSW Police Force launched Project Eyewatch, a community-policing strategy that uses Facebook as the primary means of engagement between police and the public. A study of the literature reveals that the scale of the project is unmatched anywhere in the world and that there is a growing acceptance and adoption of communication technology by modern policing organisations. Given that many policing organisations are routinely using web-based social networking services to engage community stakeholders, it is necessary now to evaluate whether contemporary understanding about the impact of police contact and engagement on levels of public confidence remains true when contact and engagement occurs online.

Four areas of contemporary scholarship provide a literary context for this dissertation. The areas are Neighbourhood Watch, the use of technology by police, customer service, and public trust and confidence. The literature review will show that Project Eyewatch shares many of the objectives of Neighbourhood Watch and is regarded by the NSW Police Force as an online version of this seminal community-policing strategy. The similarities between the two strategies enable comparisons to be made between the current research project and a more extensive body of research on the topic of Neighbourhood Watch. Few studies have explored the use of web technology by policing organisations and even fewer have focused on Facebook and community policing. The literature review will show that police have been reluctant adopters of web technology, performing old tasks in new and different ways and using the web to push out information to the public while largely ignoring the need to engage the public in meaningful dialogue. There is, however, evidence that policing organisations are trying to improve this situation. For example, engagement with the public through social media is a key facet of the NSW Police Force's efforts to enhance customer service (Burn, 2010). Project Eyewatch is closely linked to this reform and literature review examines the relationship between this strategy and its impact on the reforms underway in the NSW Police Force.

The fourth, and most influential, focus of this study is public confidence and trust. Public confidence is closely associated with how Neighbourhood Watch schemes have come to be evaluated, with the strategic objectives of customer service and other public engagement programs, and in justifying the risk and resourcing of using web technology and social media. Literature on the topic provides the basis for understanding the motivations of the NSW Police Force in establishing Project Eyewatch, for understanding how engagement can influence public perceptions of trust and confidence in local police and for evaluating the effectiveness of the Project Eyewatch strategy. Several significant international studies on public confidence and trust are regularly referred to in this study. The methods and findings of these key studies underpin this study's discussion, both in a theoretical sense and practically through the methodological process.

This study was carried out through the epistemological lens of objectivism, with a scientific-positivist theoretical framework and the use of quantitative methods of analysis. The methodological choices taken in this study are explained in detail in Chapter 3, but broadly speaking the study embraces the objectivist view that "things exist as meaningful entities independent of consciousness and experience" and their truth and meaning can be discovered through careful research (Crotty, 1998, p.6). The scientific-positivist theoretical framework is closely associated with objectivism and this study's goal-centred approach (Crotty, 1998; Campbell, 1977), where data obtained from the content analysis of Project Eyewatch dialogue is analysed and evaluated against the strategy's objectives and related scholarship, is consistent with such a framework.

A hypothesis and research questions are used to frame the analysis and discussion. In keeping with the scientific approach to research, deductive logic is used to generate meaning from the data and to develop logical conclusions based on known truths (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). For example, the literature shows that direct contact between police and the public enhances public confidence in police (Bradford, Stanko & Jackson, 2009). Therefore, if direct contact is identified as occurring through the Project Eyewatch strategy it follows that the strategy is enhancing public confidence.

The hypothesis for this dissertation is as follows:

- The use of Facebook by the NSW Police Force contributes to building mutually-beneficial relationships with local communities and engenders confidence and trust in local police.

The primary research question is as follows:

- Is Project Eyewatch an effective strategy for enhancing public confidence in police?

The secondary research question is as follows:

- To what degree is the strategy effective?

The argument is made in this study that police contact and engagement with the public will enhance trust and confidence in the police. It is demonstrated that online contact between police and the public is theoretically no different from in-person contact. The survey questionnaires of major studies of public trust and confidence are deconstructed to elicit key characteristics. These characteristics are then applied through the epistemological lens of objectivism to the coding and analysis of data obtained for this research project. The results of the study are considered from both the perfect world (positivist) reality and the real world (normative) reality as defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2010). Using deductive logic, if the characteristics that lead to enhanced trust and confidence are found to exist in the data taken from Project Eyewatch, it follows that the hypothesis is true and the primary research question is answered in the affirmative. There are a multitude of organisational and other variables that could affect the conclusions in the study, but most are ignored in keeping with Campbell's (1977) discussion on the need to exclude the many variables that would otherwise render it impossible to conduct a summative evaluation of organisational effectiveness. The one variable that is evaluated in this study is the extent to which effective communication is occurring on Project Eyewatch Facebook sites, as it would be of little value to merely identify its presence without further elaborating on its impact. The secondary research question addresses this need by focusing on how effective the strategy is and, importantly, how effective it has the potential to be under different circumstances.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Project Eyewatch is a community policing strategy that has been marketed by the NSW Police Force as an online version of Neighbourhood Watch (NSW Police Force, 2012). The similarities between the two strategies make it possible for this study to draw on decades of Neighbourhood Watch research and to position Project Eyewatch as the next step in the evolution of community policing. Project Eyewatch is discussed in the context of the objectives, shortcomings and achievements of its parent Neighbourhood Watch strategy.

Having established the link between Neighbourhood Watch and Project Eyewatch, the literature review considers a number of topics relevant to this study. These topics include the risks of using Facebook, police public relations approaches, customer service, the use of technology by police, perceptions of public trust and confidence, and policing legitimacy. The review outlines how policing organisations and governments in Australia, the United Kingdom and elsewhere are using public confidence and trust as a measure of effective policing. It makes the link between this trend and reforms to the NSW Police Force, including the implementation of the Project Eyewatch strategy. It concludes that police can positively influence perceptions of public confidence and trust by engaging with the public and by being more visible.

From Neighbourhood Watch to Project Eyewatch

Project Eyewatch is described by the NSW Police Force as an online version of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme (NSW Police Force, 2012). Versions of Neighbourhood Watch, including Block Watch, Apartment Watch, Home Watch and Community Watch, began appearing internationally in the 1970s and in Australia in 1983 amid changing community attitudes about the role of police (Hunter & Barker, 2011; Fleming, 2005). The traditional military model of policing, which invited limited public scrutiny and accountability, was inconsistent with changes occurring within society and this had led to the erosion of the image that police are an efficient and disciplined bureaucracy (Fleming, 2005; Maguire & Wells, 2002; O'Malley, 1997). Neighbourhood Watch was a strategy that police and governments could hold up as evidence that police organisations had embraced the move to a more community-oriented policing approach (Rosenbaum, Graziano, Stephens & Schuck, 2011). Support for Neighbourhood Watch waned during the 1990s as other policing models such as problem-oriented policing were trialed but in recent years there has been a renewed focus on customer service and community engagement, leading to the widespread reintroduction of Neighbourhood Watch-like strategies (Fleming, 2005).

Neighbourhood Watch has attracted surprisingly little attention from scholars given its prominence as an international community policing strategy (Fleming). There have been very few evaluations of Neighbourhood Watch since the mid 1990s and many earlier studies lack sufficient detail about the subject material and research methodology to make broad assumptions about the scheme's effectiveness (Bennett, Holloway & Farrington, 2009). Weatherburn (2004) suggested that Neighbourhood Watch was embraced by police and the community well before there was any evidence that it worked, and this is a cautionary point for the implementers of Project Eyewatch. Bennett et al (2009) reviewed 40 years of international Neighbourhood Watch literature and found that about half of Neighbourhood Watch schemes were effective in reducing crime, although they bemoaned the lack of consistent methodology and lack of detail in most evaluations of the scheme, which has made it difficult to properly assess the success of the strategy.

In Australia, local Neighbourhood Watch groups incorporated areas of 300 to 3000 households, although groups were generally much smaller in the United Kingdom and the United States, which typically included 20 to 30 households (Fleming, 2005). Engagement between police and community took place at regular public meetings, where policing and crime issues were discussed and information shared with citizens. Fleming outlines the early assumptions that were made about the scheme's benefits.

- The willingness of the community to actively watch and report anything suspicious increases the chance of an offender being caught, reduces the opportunity for crime and deters potential offenders;

- The distribution of Neighbourhood Watch schemes across diverse geographical areas allows for homogeneous membership levels;
- With the public operating as the eyes and ears of the police, levels of crime reporting and intelligence provided to the police will increase, leading to more arrests and convictions, resulting in a reduction of crime;
- The sharing of information with citizens, such as crime statistics and crime education material, will reduce crime and victimisation;
- Neighbourhood Watch reduces crime through decreasing opportunities to offend by creating signs of occupancy, property marking, security surveys and greater security awareness;
- Active Neighbourhood Watch schemes reduce fear of crime;
- Residents and communities are generally willing to participate in Neighbourhood Watch schemes;
- Formal meetings strengthen neighbourhood dynamics; and
- Neighbourhood Watch activity consolidates a strong and meaningful partnership between law enforcement officers and the community (Fleming, 2005, p.3).

From the outset, Neighbourhood Watch was measured against crime statistics and crime reduction targets. On that basis, Neighbourhood Watch was widely regarded as only ever having limited success (Rix, Faye, Maquire, & Morton, 2009; Fleming & O'Reilly, 2007; Fleming, 2005; Weatherburn, 2004). Evaluations have shown that:

- The scheme was only successful in a few white middle-class communities where crime was already low;
- People in high-crime neighbourhoods are reluctant to organise themselves in terms of crime prevention;
- In some communities, fear of crime rose because of the publicity about the scheme;
- When the scheme operated well in one community, crime was often displaced to a neighbouring community;
- In many instances, the scheme generated no improvements to reporting rates, clear up rates, calls to the police, discernible improvements in home protection behaviour or change in the way people viewed police (Fleming, 2005);

- Many local Neighbourhood Watch groups failed because of a lack of ongoing commitment by police and a short-term focus on community policing initiatives among policy makers and legislators (Bull, 2010; Fleming & O'Reilly, 2007); and
- Most of the ongoing Neighbourhood Watch groups have a membership that is unrepresentative of the community, with a bias towards older, white, middle-class citizens (Rix et al, 2009).

The NSW Police Force has published a number of objectives for Project Eyewatch on its corporate website. It says that Project Eyewatch should:

- Give the community greater access to police;
- Facilitate real time engagement between police and citizens;
- Seek public consensus on solutions to crime and policing problems;
- Provides accurate up to date information to the public;
- Facilitate forums to find solutions to crime and policing problems;
- Provide a forum so citizens can provide feedback to police; and
- Develop a high value community network (NSW Police Force, 2012).

Both Neighbourhood Watch and Project Eyewatch rely on police engagement with local communities. Where Neighbourhood Watch achieved this with community meetings at school halls and the like, Project Eyewatch uses Facebook to communicate online with local citizens. The Project Eyewatch website says Eyewatch will give community members the opportunity to participate in active crime prevention activities online and in their own homes 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Project Eyewatch attempts to address the problems that beset Neighbourhood Watch by using a modern and ubiquitous online social networking service to share information with an audience that is more representative of the local community than was possible under the constraints of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

“Facebook has given [the NSW Police Force] an unprecedented and extremely powerful tool to communicate with the public and provide a higher level of customer service and information exchange” (Au, 2013, p.11). The NSW Police Force conducted a survey of its Facebook users in May 2013, with more than 4000 responses (Au). The survey found that people were most interested in information related to emergencies, followed in descending order by appeals for missing/wanted people, news about arrests, crime prevention advice, traffic conditions, road closures, human interest stories about police, videos of police operations and recruitment information. The survey found that people were most likely to share police posts with others when they related to missing or wanted people, interesting

videos, interesting photos, positive news stories and media releases on arrests. Au said that as a result of the survey, the NSW Police Force would loosen up the tone of conversation and be more human, share more content to maximise awareness of its local Facebook pages, close the loop on missing persons and re-share old appeals, publish more proactive crime prevention tips and themed advice such as cyber security, and host live chats.

Facebook, privacy and the risks of social networking

Facebook is an online social media platform that allows users to create profiles, share personal information and interests, post videos and photographs and interact online with other members (Henson, Reyns & Fisher, 2011). With more than 10.9 million users in Australia, almost half the population, and 900 million users worldwide, Facebook gives police access to a very large section of society (Socialbakers, 2012). Aside from its potential to enhance engagement with the public, social media is a source of intelligence for police and a source of real-time information about policing issues, such as road accidents or emergencies, which is useful for those in the police who are directly engaged in protecting the public from harm on the internet and as a tool for sharing knowledge with other policing organisations (Crump, 2011).

There were two types of communication proposed by the architects of Project Eyewatch. The first involves a daily dialogue between police and citizens on the Facebook forum, where pictures, videos and dialogue are posted by police with a view to generating comments and feedback from the public. The second type of communication is to hold regular online forums between police and members of the local community. The meeting agenda is prepared in advance and group members are given a set time, typically an hour or two, to respond to an agenda item before that item is closed to new postings and the next agenda item is opened for comment. Dialogue on Facebook is asynchronous, with one posting following the next down the forum page. Police respond and participate during the meeting, reporting back to the forum on actions taken by police to address the issues raised by the group (NSW Police Force, 2012).

The growing use of Facebook by organisations has focused attention on privacy issues and risk. Complex jurisdictional, legislative and social issues make it difficult to assess the risk of public comments made on an organisation's social networking site and, as a consequence, public sector managers are often risk-averse when it comes to engaging online in dialogic communication with the public (Shirky, 2008; Pickin et al, 2002). Online networks are "complicit risk communities where personal information becomes social capital which is traded and exchanged" (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 251), and users of social networking sites are often prepared to risk their privacy because of this social capital that is gained from being part of an online network (Debatin, Lovejoy, Horn & Hughes, 2009). This risk-taking behaviour often extends to friends and friends of friends because of the nature of social networks, which allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile

within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Privacy breaches occur when third parties target the data of social networking services for personal information and for other malicious purposes such as hacking and identify theft (Boyd & Ellison). As such, organisations have a social and legal responsibility to ensure the data, records and personal information of its subscribers is kept private.

Most police organisations have a website and are involved in the investigation of online crime but relatively few are using social networking services to their full potential, partly because of concerns about resourcing, reputation and liability (Vrieling, 2011; Cohen, 2010; Stevens, 2010). The NSW Police Force prohibits the public from posting discriminatory, unlawful, defamatory, private, copyright or intellectually protected comments on its Facebook sites. The rules are part of a risk mitigation strategy, which also relies on filtering technology and 24-hour monitoring by the NSW Police Force Media Unit to protect against objectionable public discourse. A key objective of community policing is to inform the public about local crime and policing issues but public discussions about court matters can pose a risk to the judicial process and place the police in contempt of court (Kingshott, 2011). The NSW Police Force Media Policy warns of the need for police to balance the public's right for information against the integrity of the investigative and judicial processes (NSW Police Force, 2013).

There are three forms of control that can help to reduce the risks of engaging in social networking: legislative; technological; and human. Legislative control is complicated by jurisdictional issues and the pervasive idea that cyberspace is free and distinguishable from the real world (Williams, 2007). For example, the Australian government had been considering introducing mandatory filters for internet communication since 2007, primarily to protect children from harmful content, but the legislation was ultimately abandoned due to a lack of community support (Crozier, 2012; Duffy, 2009). Technology is a more effective way to regulate cyberspace than through legislation because it can disrupt human action, impose constraints on how content is accessed and distributed, be instituted pervasively and with immediacy, be adaptive to changes in law, societal norms, market influences or cyber threats, be less contentious than regulation and be preventative rather than punitive (Williams, 2007; Lessig, 1999). For example, Facebook provides organisations with tools to block people or content. Employees assigned to moderate an organisation's website also play an important role in educating users and reinforcing an organisation's social networking policy (Herring, Job-Sluder, Scheckler & Barab, 2002). Moderator engagement with the site's membership can also help ensure important corporate messages are not ignored or missed (Regeher & Larkin, 2008). Studies have also shown that online forums are generally comprised of a homogenous membership of active and passive supporters who will do what they can to maintain the norms of the group, reducing the need for

moderator vigilance (Farsangi, 2010; Bruggeman, 2008; Boyd & Heer, 2006; Dahlberg, 2001).

Police public relations

Social networking provides police with an opportunity to improve the way they engage and communicate with the community. The way an organisation engages its stakeholders has often been defined by police scholars in the context of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations, which include: press agency/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical. The press agency/publicity model involves one-way communication, projecting messages from source to audience with the goal of winning media attention. The public information model is also a one-way approach to communication but aims to inform an audience rather than persuade. An organisation using the two-way asymmetrical model will typically disseminate information with the expectation of feedback from the audience, although that feedback will generally not be used for the purpose of improving or changing the organisation and instead it will be used to make the organisation's message more persuasive. The two-way symmetrical model promotes the equal and free flow of information between the organisation and its audience and is widely, although not unanimously, regarded as the most distinguishing feature of excellence in public relations (Egan, 2011; Grunig & Grunig, 2011; Harrison, 1999).

The assumptions of symmetry theory have been challenged from the moment they were proposed (Brown, 2010). Grunig went on to propose an enhanced form of symmetry, which became less defined by the normative view that two-way symmetrical communication describes what public relations could and should be and more as a concept that organisations should aspire to; describing it as a process of public relations and not an outcome (Brown, 2010; Grunig, 2001). Indeed, many organisations practice all four models of public relations in their everyday dealings with stakeholders.

Castells (2008) plots the evolution of civil society, describing it as the organised expression of the views of the public sphere, " ... where people come together as citizens and articulate their autonomous views to influence the political institutions of society" (Castells, p. 78). In a civil society the role of government is not to convince but to communicate, not to declare but to listen (Castells, p. 91). Governments are increasingly adhering to this ideal by emphasising the need for public bodies to be more accountable, responsive and encourage citizen participation in priority setting and running local services (Jackson, & Bradford, 2010; Brainard & McNutt, 2010). Historically, police organisations have tended to restrict and control the release of information to the public, relying on the public information model when engaging the community (Perlman, 2012; Crump, 2011; Egan, 2011; Motschall & Cao, 2002). Project Eyewatch appears to challenge this tradition by encouraging citizen feedback and involvement in police decision making.

Hand and Ching (2011) argue that social media should not be viewed as a panacea for increasing citizen engagement without first addressing the need for a fundamental change in the power relations that exist between government organisations and the public. They say that social networking is being used by authorities to maintain power relations and inform citizens about their views rather than using it as a platform for egalitarian discussion and meaningful feedback. In this context, this study seeks to discover how the NSW Police Service is using Facebook and to what extent the organisation is engaging in meaningful and egalitarian discussion.

Customer service and its link to public confidence

The NSW Police Force introduced a Customer Service Programme (CSP) in 2009 to address an issue of poor customer service and service delivery across the organisation. Burn's report into the police customer service strategy the following year stated:

[The NSW Police Force] is now in a position to embark upon more challenging and ambitious strategies and approaches to improve not only satisfaction with policing services but also confidence in police (Burn, 2010, p. 252).

This is a goal shared by policing organisations internationally, particularly in the United Kingdom where public confidence has been a key measure of policing performance for more than a decade, prompting scholars to make a fresh examination of issues such as police effectiveness, public engagement, perceptions of safety and security, community involvement in policing and crime prevention initiatives (Lee & McGovern, 2012; Mawby, 2010; Burn, 2010; Bradford et al, 2009; Fleming, 2005). The launch of the CSP coincided with a NSW state government campaign to improve customer satisfaction and service delivery in all areas of government (NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2009, cited in Burn 2010, p. 249). Customer service research by the NSW Police Force revealed that there was only 28 per cent victim follow up across the organisation and that 26 per cent of complaints related to customer service (Burn). As Burn further explained, "results from the research component indicated several areas the NSWPF needed to address to improve service delivery, reduce complaints, improve victim care, and increase satisfaction (p. 251)".

Satisfaction, as referred to by Burn, has a different meaning to confidence, both in the context of customer service and in the broader literature. Satisfaction is related to the outcome of personal contact with police whereas confidence in police may be influenced by such contact but it does not depend on it (Burn, 2010; Bradford et al, 2009). Burn relates online and real-world contact, suggesting that visibility is not just about police having a physical presence; it is also connecting with communities in various ways, including the internet. It includes keeping people informed about police crime investigations and about crime in their local community generally.

Burn proposed a model for achieving the NSW Police Force's customer service aims focused on six areas of organisational improvement, including: service delivery, anti-social behaviour, problem solving, crime prevention, visibility and community engagement (see Figure 1, below). The CSP initially focused on the areas of visibility and public engagement, two areas of the model that have a strong link to scholarship on public confidence and policing (Hohl, Bradford & Stanko, 2010; Quinton and Tuffin, 2007). Burn suggests increased community engagement and visibility can help address the perception gap that exists in many communities, where citizens believe crime rates are higher than they actually are. Project Eyewatch is a strategy borne out of this change in organisational priorities.



Figure 1: Burn model of public confidence

The model focuses on six areas of public confidence in the NSWPF:

1. Service delivery: This encompasses the various NSWPF initiatives outlined above with a focus on improving satisfaction. It also involves internal customer service including workplace conflict and officer health;
2. Crime prevention, detection, and reduction: This includes effectiveness in preventing and reducing crime and enhancing feelings of safety;
3. Anti-social behaviour: This involves effectiveness in tackling anti-social behaviour in the community, e.g. graffiti and noise;
4. Community engagement: This includes consultation and discovering what issues most concern local people;

5. Visibility: This includes the physical presence of police and other methods of communication such as newsletters, leaflets, e-policing, media, and marketing; and

6. Problem solving: Includes working with the community, government agencies, non-government organisations, and other stakeholders through committees, accords, etc, to tackle emerging crime/anti-social behaviour problems such as outlaw motor cycle gangs or perceptions of police harassment (Burn, 2010, p. 253).

Police use of online communication

The pace of integrating online social networking services into everyday policing functions has been varied, according to the literature, with many jurisdictions adopting it as a strategic or operational imperative, some reluctantly entering into it because of the need to take over sites impersonating police and others maintaining a limited or no web presence (McGovern, 2011). The use of social networking services by police in the United Kingdom has increased significantly since 2008 following an endorsement by the Association of Chief Police Officers (Crump, 2011). In Australia, both the Victoria Police and the NSW Police Force are using Facebook for recruitment, public relations and community-policing purposes, while most Australian police organisations are also using Twitter, YouTube and Flickr for these and other policing purposes. In Canada, police successfully used social networking to engage with the public and protesters during the 2010 G20 Conference in Toronto (Stevens, 2010). Globally, there has been rapid growth in the use of web communication in all areas of policing.

The limited amount of research that exists on the police use of the web has found that police are generally performing old tasks in new and different ways, using the web to push out information to the public while largely ignoring the need to engage the public in meaningful dialogue (Rosenbaum, Graziano, Stephens & Schuck, 2011; Brainard & McNutt, 2010; Welch & Fulla, 2005). The use of the web and social networking services by police has not yet brought about the transformational change to policing culture and practice that was expected by some (Crump, 2011). For example, a study by Brainard & McNutt (2010) of Washington DC police use of online forums to communicate with the public found that the strategy did not enhance community engagement. The researchers identified strong support for the strategy among senior police but there was a lack of commitment among junior police. Bull (2010) highlighted similar issues in a study of community policing in Victoria. The Flemington Renewal Project was established after a breakdown in the relationship between police and the community led to ongoing public disorder. Despite having the support of middle and senior managers and a small group of dedicated officers working on it, the project had limited success because most operational police assigned a greater importance to traditional crime responses and law enforcement practices than they did to the community-oriented policing required for the project. Bull found, as other scholars have identified, that police are

outcome-focused and there is a prevailing culture that is resistant to change and risk-averse to community policing (Bull, 2010; Fleming & O'Reilly, 2007).

There is however a growing consensus among police managers that the web has the potential to enhance police legitimacy and further community policing objectives (Crump, 2011; Rosenbaum et al, 2011). Social networking has provided police with an efficient, inexpensive (or free) and convenient tool to bypass the media altogether and communicate directly with the public (Economou, 2009). Organisations and government authorities are increasingly communicating directly with the public because it is more effective and transparent, and, to some extent, it sidelines a sometimes hostile and agenda-driven media from the communication process (Croucher, 2008). Media outlets challenged by the arrival of the internet, cuts to newsroom expenditure and the decline in specialist crime reporters, are increasingly using media releases and content generated by police organisations to meet the demands of a 24-hour news cycle (McGovern, 2011; Mawby, 2010; McGovern & Lee, 2010). For example, the Queensland Police Service's use of Twitter and Facebook to communicate emergency information to the public during the January 2011 flood crisis was extremely successful from both an operational and a public relations perspective, attracting 170,000 new members to the organisation's Facebook site (Hearn, 2011; Traffika, 2011). The information provided on Twitter and Facebook by the police during the crisis was also widely used by the mainstream media as a credible source of content for their reports.

The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) advised forces in the United Kingdom to adopt seven principles for effective online communication. These included: be credible, consistent, responsive, inclusive, ethical, and personable, and for the police service user to be an ambassador for the force and the service (2010). For online communities to prosper it is important that organisations focus on building membership, providing members with the tools, access and enabling technologies they need to participate, and actively engaging with the membership (Williams & Cothrel, 2000). The more interactive an organisation is with the public online, the more control citizens have over police decision making and organisational direction (Welch & Fulla, 2005).

There are considerable logistical advantages to using new media technology. Social networking services are easily accessible both for police officers and for the general public and many of the social networks that police seek to engage already exist online (Crump, 2011). Marketing Project Eyewatch almost entirely online, training personnel, setting it up at Local Area Police Commands and the ongoing monitoring of the Facebook sites should be considerably less expensive than traditional policing programs such as Neighbourhood Watch, which by the mid-1990s had to be rationalised and refocused on high-crime neighbourhoods in order to cut costs (Laycock & Tilley, 1995). The ease of use and connectivity of social networking services should alleviate the physical difficulties and time pressures of travel,

crowds and fixed hours for participation in traditional public meetings, while also facilitating lateral communication between members of the forum (Perlman, 2012).

Legitimacy, trust and confidence

Quinton and Tuffin's (2007) study of reassurance policing across a sample of London police wards found that the perception gap between imagined and real crime rates was reduced over time with increased police visibility and engagement. Perception of crime was a key measure of early Neighbourhood Watch strategies but recent studies have found that fear of crime has relatively little impact on opinions of the police (Jackson, Bradford, Hohl & Farral, 2009).

Moreover, there is much evidence to suggest that expressions of concern about crime relate less to actual fears of victimisation and more to broader concerns about society and the direction of change in modern life – and it is these later changes that have important influences on opinions of police (Stanko & Bradford, 2009, p. 325).

It is important that the public is informed of local police and crime issues so they can make the link between the policing activity and any improvements that are occurring in the local community (Stanko & Bradford, 2009). Providing citizens with crime and policing information can improve perceptions of their neighbourhood and of the local police (Quinton, 2011; NPIA, 2010). It is most effective when the information is instantly recognisable as coming from the police, pertains to the immediate local area, includes details about local crime and disorder issues, improves police accessibility and is inclusive of all citizens (Quinton, 2011; NPIA, 2010; Wunsch & Hohl, 2009).

Direct contact with police has also been shown to influence levels of public confidence, although research has also shown that positive contact does not necessarily increase the public's confidence in police (Skogan, 2006). The relationship between police contact and public confidence is asymmetrical, with positive contact likely to maintain existing levels of confidence and negatively received contact strongly predictive of lower levels of confidence (Myhill & Quinton, 2010; Skogan, 2006). Indeed, it has been shown that police are often rated more highly by individuals who have not had contact with police in the previous year than those who have had contact (Skogan, 2006).

Bradford et al (2009) agree that the relationship between contact and confidence is asymmetrical but suggest a more sophisticated definition of confidence is needed in order to properly assess the impact of police contact. The authors identify effectiveness, community engagement and fairness as empirically distinct dimensions of confidence and trust. Their research revealed that public perceptions of police effectiveness (for example, the ability of police to arrest criminals) were unchanged with positive contact, but perceptions of fairness and community engagement were positively affected. They also demonstrated that increased police

visibility and the receipt of information from police can improve all three dimensions of trust and confidence.

The quality of police-public contact clearly matters. Poorly received contact is consistently associated with lower opinions of the police. There does, however, appear to be some scope for positive contact to increase confidence (Myhill & Quinton, 2010, p. 278).

Stanko and Bradford (2009) describe four influences on public perceptions of confidence in local police:

- Perceptions of police effectiveness - the ability of police to fulfil its central remit of combating crime, providing a visible presence, policing public events and responding to emergencies.
- Fairness of personal treatment - the way in which officers treat people in terms of fairness and respect, and whether they are helpful and friendly.
- The level of police engagement with the community - the extent to which police listen and respond to the concerns of those they police
- Local people's concerns about local disorder - the extent to which police respond to disorder and the nature of people's local area.

Bradford, Jackson & Stanko (2009a) suggest that the most important tool police have for influencing public views is how officers communicate with people.

By their actions and demeanor, officers communicate not only that they are acting fairly and properly but also that those who they are dealing with are worthy of respect, consideration and police attention in a positive sense (Bradford, Jackson & Stanko, 2009a, p. 145).

Public confidence can be enhanced simply by the police engaging as an active, visible and accessible part of community life (Rix et al, 2009; Bradford et al, 2009; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Skogan, 2006; Tyler & Fagan, 2006). A one-on-one conversation with a member of the police has the effect of making a member of the public feel worthy of attention and respect (Bradford et al, 2009). Confidence is further enhanced if police officers take the time to explain their actions, follow correct procedures and act fairly and in accordance with the law (Bradford et al, 2009). The level of police interaction with the public is also influential on public perceptions (Welch & Fulla, 2005).

Interactivity can be measured using the following four constructs:

- Content sophistication - the more detail available the more transparent the organisation;

- The opportunity to provide feedback - either through synchronous applications such as chat or asynchronous applications such as email;
- Dialogue complexity - using two-way rather than one-way communication; and
- Response frequency - relating to both speed and ratio of responses (Welch & Fulla, 2005).

Bradford, Jackson & Stanko (2009a) found that there are four types of police customers with whom interaction occurs:

- The supporters (49% of respondents) who are the most satisfied and confident about policing. Low levels of victimisation and police contact.
- The contents (13% of respondents) who are in the main satisfied with policing. Low levels of victimisation and police contact.
- The needy (16% of respondents) who expect policing to get worse and only a quarter are satisfied with policing. They have high levels of being a victim and high levels of police contact
- The demanding (22% of respondents) who are less likely to have been a victim of crime than the needy but have similar levels of police contact (Bradford et al, 2009a, p. 146).

Knowing that these audiences exist, police can tailor their engagement and visibility to shore up public confidence.

For those who are generally supportive of the police but have very little need of them, good information about local policing problem solving should be sufficient to keep people in the know and confident that police are doing what matters in the local area (Bradford et al, 2009a, p. 146).

Trust is closely associated with confidence and is influenced by the same factors. Trustworthy police are seen by the public to be effective, to be fair and to have shared values, interests and a strong commitment to the local community (Jackson & Bradford, 2010; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003a). Trust extends beyond perceptions that police perform their duties effectively and efficiently to include a sense that the police understand the needs of the community, they treat people fairly and with dignity, they give information and allow the public a voice to highlight local problems (Jackson & Bradford, 2010). Research has identified robust associations between trust and confidence and the readiness of public to be involved in policing, to cooperate with police and defer to officers (Tyler & Fagan 2006; Bradford & Jackson 2010).

Scholars have also investigated how interaction between the police and the public can influence citizen perceptions of police legitimacy. Legitimacy exists when the community accepts its obligation to obey the directives of a legal authority, when citizens trust the institution of policing and when local police are viewed as fair and effective (Jackson & Bradford, 2010; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003a). Legitimacy is important because people will tend to cooperate with the police when they feel that they are acting in solidarity with the community and are supporting and defending community norms in their social regulatory actions (Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). Also, a citizen might consider policing as an institution to be legitimate but still lack confidence or trust in the police at a local or organisational level (Bradford et al, 2009).

Measuring organisational effectiveness

Public confidence has been a key indicator of police performance in the United Kingdom since 2009 and is at the centre of a new customer service approach in Australia (Lee & McGovern, 2012; Mawby, 2010; Burn, 2010). It has been shown that police organisations can increase public trust and confidence through interactivity, visibility, direct contact and by keeping the public informed of local crime issues (Hohl, Bradford & Stanko, 2010). Traditional measures of community policing, such as crime and arrest rates, have largely been discredited as a true indicator of police effectiveness, particularly for strategies such as Neighbourhood Watch (Rix et al, 2009; Fleming & O'Reilly, 2007; Fleming, 2005; Weatherburn, 2004). Scholars and police practitioners are now focused on the effectiveness of community engagement.

To be effective, policing requires the ongoing support, consent and voluntary cooperation of the public. Such support and cooperation rests upon the police organisation and power it exercises being perceived as legitimate (Lee & McGovern, 2012, p. 5).

Confidence is used in this study as the measure for evaluating the effectiveness of Project Eyewatch. Campbell (1977) said finding an all-encompassing definition of organisational effectiveness has long been regarded as unnecessary and unachievable; that organisations are unique and complex, capable of being simultaneously effective and ineffective across the various facets of their operation; and organisational effectiveness is not one individual tangible thing so there can be no single truth or theory that suitably encompasses all situations. This study seeks therefore to delimit inquiry to a small component of organisational practice, to acknowledge that infinite variables exist in such practice and to define effectiveness as it applies to the objectives of the Project Eyewatch strategy. By doing this, the study uses a goal-centred approach to evaluate the strategy. A goal-centred approach adopts a scientific methodology, considering matters such as the validity of the assessment, the reliability of measures and the breadth or narrowness of the effectiveness assessment (Campbell).

Summary

In summary, Project Eyewatch has evolved from the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and a society-driven demand for open and accountable community policing.

Attempts by police to use social networking have so far not improved the way police engage the public although police managers appear genuinely interested in greater transparency and citizen involvement at a local policing level, which is consistent with the recent policy objectives of governments in Australia, the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

Studies have shown that police contact with the public, enhanced visibility, engagement, interactivity and the sharing of crime and policing information can positively influence public confidence. More than 10 million people in Australia and 900 million people worldwide communicate through Facebook (Socialbakers, 2012). As public acceptance for using online social networking grows it becomes more reasonable for police to use these services as a primary source of contact with the public. Recent studies have linked a number of police behaviours to public confidence, including the sharing of crime and policing information, one-to-one contact, fairness, responsiveness, engagement and the effectiveness of dealing with community concerns. Nothing in the literature suggests that the internet is a barrier to these behaviours. Indeed, the NSW Police Force suggested on its Project Eyewatch website that the public will find it easier to engage with police on Facebook than attending traditional Neighbourhood Watch meetings.

There are some clarifications that need to be made about the focus of this study. First, the data being sought relates to public perceptions of local police in New South Wales and not policing at an organisational or societal level, which is more closely associated with studies of police legitimacy. Many of the factors that impact on public perceptions of local police are common to police legitimacy more generally, but while a negative experience involving contact with a local police officer can reduce confidence in local police it is unlikely to change that person's views about the legitimacy of policing more generally (Tyler & Fagan, 2006). Project Eyewatch is administered by local police for local citizens, so it is valid for this study to evaluate the impact of the strategy on public confidence, but not the broader concept of legitimacy.

As such, this study is focused on identifying and measuring the factors that influence public perceptions of trust confidence in the NSW Police Force. Bradford, et al (2009) overcame the conundrum of the asymmetrical affect of police contact by identifying three dimensions of confidence: engagement, effectiveness and fairness. Burn (2010) posited that community engagement and visibility are attributes of public confidence and a key driver of customer service and satisfaction. Visibility is widely discussed in the literature as contributing to all dimensions of public confidence (Stanko & Bradford, 2009; Quinton and Tuffin, 2007).

Engagement is also a recurring theme in the topic literature, although it is often spoken about in different terms. For example, interactivity and feedback were the focus of a study of Chicago Police and their use of email to engage the public (Welch & Fulla, 2005). Engaging citizens by providing crime and policing information can also improve public perceptions confidence in policing (Quinton, 2011; NPIA, 2010; Wunsch & Hohl, 2009).

Scholars have linked people's perceptions of fairness to the type of contact they have with police (Myhill & Quinton, 2010; Quinton and Tuffin, 2007). Trust extends beyond perceptions that police perform their duties effectively and efficiently to include a sense that the police understand the needs of the community, they treat people fairly and with dignity, they give information and allow the public a voice to highlight local problems (Jackson & Bradford, 2010). Bradford et al (2009) found that public perceptions of police effectiveness (for example, the ability of police to arrest criminals) were unchanged with positive contact, but perceptions of fairness and community engagement were affected.

Chapter 3; Methodological Overview

This study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the Project Eyewatch strategy in New South Wales using quantitative methods to measure characteristics in Facebook dialogue associated with public trust and confidence. The research process is viewed through the epistemological lens of objectivism and is guided by the theoretical perspective of positivism, both of which will be discussed in detail in the upcoming sections. This approach was chosen for four reasons. First, the scientific approach taken by positivist researchers is compatible with this study's use of a goal-centred approach to compare the strategy outcomes with its objectives and scholarly best practice. Second, quantitative data is sufficiently detailed to inform the analysis and discussion without the need for the rich and nuanced data provided by qualitative methods. Third, the project is limited in scope and ambition by assessment criteria, meaning a mixed-methodological approach was not possible because of time and word constraints, and a need to fully explore the quantitative aspects of the study. Future research would benefit from the use of qualitative methods, including case studies and interviews, but this study's hypothesis and research questions can be suitably addressed with quantitative data alone. Fourth, the objectivist epistemology is based on the search for the underlying truth and meaning (Crotty, 1998), and this approach is considered to be the best way to deliver evidenced-based recommendations about the Project Eyewatch strategy.

Theory

This study examines the ontology of policing, of a policing organisation and, in particular, how police organisations engage with the community. While epistemology challenges the researcher to ask what knowledge is, how do we acquire it and to what extent can a given subject be known, ontology deals with

what exists, what is reality and what is the nature of the world (Crotty). Crotty says that researchers need to be introspective, to consider the underlying epistemology of their research approach before committing to a theoretical perspective, methodology and methods in that order. A number of epistemologies were considered before objectivism was chosen as a lens for viewing the research process.

Objectivism purports that “things exist as meaningful entities independent of consciousness and experience” and their truth and meaning can be discovered through careful research (Crotty, p. 6). A commonly used example of objectivism is that of a tree in a forest. It is a tree whether humans are aware of its existence or not, or even if they had never seen a tree before (Crotty). Project Eyewatch and Facebook exist within complex organisational frameworks but are by no means hiding out of view. Careful observation of Project Eyewatch in this study aims to uncover the truth and meaning behind the strategy and its relationship with key themes such as public trust and confidence, customer service and organisational effectiveness.

As Crotty explains, “positivism is objectivist through and through. From the positivist viewpoint, objects in the world have meaning prior to, and independently of, any consciousness of them” (p. 27). Positivism has two distinguishing features: explanation can only be based on observable and measurable events, and it involves the search for order and patterns between variables (Jones, 2011, p. 201). The advantage of this scientific approach to research is that it allows a researcher to step away from the object of the study, the society they are necessarily a part of, and maintain scientific objectivity (O’Leary, 2010). Data obtained through scientific methods is generalisable in the sense that it pursues timeless truths that hold across a wide range of contexts (Thatcher, 2008). For example, the results of this study would be applicable, within the parameters specified, to any situation and any jurisdiction where police use Facebook to engage the public for community policing.

Policing research has historically been dominated by the objectivist epistemology and the use of positivist or scientific methodology (Thatcher, 2008; Vickers, 2000). Much police research is driven by the pragmatic and prescriptive expectations of senior police managers, who want solutions to problems or to know if an initiative is working as opposed to research on how to make the initiative better (Thatcher, 2008). As Vickers explains:

Police researchers should remind themselves that if they choose to adhere unquestioningly to the positivist approaches currently revered in police research organisations (that is, to remain in Plato's cave), they resign themselves to knowledge that is, at best, a shadowy incomplete representation of reality (Vickers, 2000, p. 518).

Shilston (2008), an academic and chief superintendent with the Northumbria Police in the United Kingdom, criticised the historical reliance by police researchers and practitioners on quantitative methods, suggesting that assumptions about the efficacy of quantitative measurements have simply been extended to assessments of public perceptions. Shilston suggests that academics take a subjective approach to their research of policing, which “can only result from the application of detailed, in depth qualitative case studies targeted at recent and personal recipients of police services”(p. 363). Thatcher says there is a need for police researchers to move beyond the classically scientific approach and its “value-neutral interpretation” and to “help resolve the normative ambiguity that stands out as a major challenge for front-line practice” (Thatcher, 2008, p. 56). He says, in addition, that researchers should conduct more case study, ethnographic and interview-based studies of policing, in line with alternative theoretical approaches, such as subjectivism and constructivism.

Constructionists and constructivists suggest there is a need for researchers to consider the multiple realities humans construct around their lives and interactions with others (Patton, 2002). Subjectivism is an epistemological perspective that directly challenges the objectivist viewpoint that truth can be found independently from the researcher and subject (Somekh & Lewin, 2005). In this study, the researcher has worked with and for policing organisations for about 25 years. Experience, include work and education, will have shaped the views of the researcher and it may not be possible for the researcher to see beyond the metaphorical Plato’s cave where these experiences have occurred (Vickers, 2008).

Campbell (1977) suggests that organisations are too large and complex to measure organisational effectiveness because of the infinite variables that exist within the operations and structure of an organisation. This is certainly true for the subject of this research – the NSW Police Force. Campbell suggests that the task of measuring organisational effectiveness, which this study is attempting to do in its evaluation of Project Eyewatch’s impact on public confidence, can be achieved by focusing on a small component of the organisation and by largely ignoring the variables. For example, in this study public comments made on Project Eyewatch are attributed values leading to broad judgments by the researcher about the general impact of those comments on levels of public confidence. Studies have shown that citizens will have different views of local police depending on the frequency and type of contact they have had with officers (Myhill & Quinton, 2010; Skogan, 2006) and this is a variable that is not able to be measured in this study.

The use of large-scale surveys and quantitative analysis (the scientific-positivist approach) dominates police research (Thatcher, 2008; Vickers, 2000) and while this study has also followed this approach, the limitations of using quantitative methods and data, and the promise of a using subjective or qualitative approach are acknowledged. This is not such a problem when the study is considered as one in an ongoing series of examinations of the police use of Facebook, each with the

potential to not only address the immediate issues posed in the study but also to inform later studies using qualitative methods and alternative epistemologies. The use of reflexive interviewing or other qualitative methods commonly used by critical, feminist, ethnographic and other researchers would be likely to add significant depth and meaning to the data obtained in this project but these have been ruled out, given this study's scope and purposefully delimited objectives.

There are two reasons why this study continues the tradition of scientific-based police research. The first reason is pragmatic in that this study is the first in an ongoing investigation of the police use of social networking services. As such, it is useful to broadly examine the impact of police using Facebook on public trust and confidence before focusing on the specific groups or issues in later, more involved, studies. Project Eyewatch is still developing in respect of its size and pervasiveness in the community so findings at this point in time are preliminary only. The second reason for taking a scientific approach relates to the use of quantitative data and its suitability for measuring the key concepts of this study: engagement, fairness and effectiveness.

Cook and Garratt (2011) suggest that positivist researchers must give serious consideration to the reliability, validity, generalisability and quantification of the research they are undertaking. For positivist studies to be taken seriously, researchers must be critical and reflective about their methods, their relationships with participants in the research and their conceptualisation of the context in which the research is located (Cook & Garratt, 2011). Post-positivist or post-modern researchers are less rigid in their outlook, going beyond what is observed by the senses and recognising the role of chaos, complexity, the unknown, incompleteness, diversity, plurality, fragmentation and multiple realities in the world (O'Leary, 2010, p. 6). This exploratory and interpretive approach to research is attractive but, as already explained, unnecessary for the scope of this project. Positivists are generally not criticised for their science but rather they are often criticised for making excessive assumptions and claims and the status they ascribe to scientific findings (Crotty, 1998). As such, the findings in this study are delimited to the positivist reality, focusing on underlying truth as revealed by the quantitative data.

It is important to note that this is not a study of objectivism or positivism. Rather, it pertains to the NSW Police Force's Project Eyewatch strategy, and as such, objectivism is just a useful lens through which to collect data and formulate analysis. The research acknowledges the complexity of human interactions, comprehends the diversity that exists in online communities and accepts that the outcomes of the research are only true in the positivist (perfect world) sense, as outlined by Crotty.

Methodology

This study's methodology or plan of action is to conduct a summative evaluation of the Project Eyewatch strategy using quantitative methods. Evaluation research attempts to determine the value of an initiative, to identify an initiative's consequences and opportunities for modification and improvement (O'Leary, 2010). Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in summative evaluations and the use of qualitative data in summative evaluations can add depth, detail and nuance to quantitative findings (Patton, 2002; Crotty, 1998). Ensuing studies would benefit from the richness of qualitative data but are unnecessary in the context of this study given its narrow focus on patterns of behaviour that are firmly established in the topic literature.

Quantitative data is essentially information about the world in the form of numbers (Punch, 2005). The scientific method guides the researcher to seek insight by identifying the problem, positing a hypothesis and gathering, analysing and interpreting data against the hypothesis and research questions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). For the findings of the study to be considered reliable they must be able to be replicated by others and to be valid they must apply in real life policing situations, because "... validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure" (Kumar, 2005, p. 153). Reliability relates to the stability and consistency of the research instruments, whether they are predictable, accurate and therefore reliable. Consistency occurs when you collect the same set of information more than once, using the same instrument and results are similar under similar circumstances (Kumar, 2005). This study strives for reliability by including a transparent explanation of the methods used. It does not rely on the large-scale surveys used in a lot of studies on public trust and confidence but does, so far as possible, attempt to replicate the coding used in those studies so findings can reliably be attributed to research past, present and future.

As previously stated, this study examines Project Eyewatch from the positivist perspective, meaning the findings are valid for the perfect world but are likely to vary in the normative sense or in real life policing situations, depending on the circumstances. The objectives of Project Eyewatch outline an ambitious police agenda to meaningfully engage the entire community, in other words, to produce a perfect world outcome. This study seeks to evaluate Project Eyewatch on this basis. If the objectives of the strategy are not being met then inferences need to be made about the extent to which the findings of this study are valid for all situations, but the value of the research and its application to this type of policing situation remains valid. The instruments used for data analysis in this study are consistent with similar studies in respect to how key concepts such as effectiveness are defined, the variables measured and the coding classifications (Hohl et al, 2010; Jackson & Bradford, 2010).

This study will use three sources of data to test the following hypothesis:

- The use of Facebook by the NSW Police Force contributes to building mutually-beneficial relationships with local communities and engenders confidence and trust in local police.

The first source of data is drawn from literature related to the study. This includes an analysis of the coding used by researchers in similar studies and key themes and directions in the associated literature, including the NSW Police Force Customer Service Programme (Burn, 2010). The second source of data is from Facebook Insights (*see Appendixes Tables 2 - 4*). Facebook provides the NSW Police Force with daily, weekly and monthly statistical information on the demographics and online habits of Project Eyewatch users. This data will primarily be used to analyse the representativeness of Project Eyewatch communities. The third and richest source of data will come from a content analysis of three days of dialogue on the 10 largest Project Eyewatch sites.

Content analysis seeks to find recurring words, patterns or themes within a text (Patton, 2002). It can involve linguistic analysis, where words and text are tallied; can refer to thematic analysis through coding, where meanings such as ‘fear of crime’ are attributed to dialogue; or can be linked to trends or patterns. Content analysts usually seek to infer the effects of the messages they have analysed but also to make predictive claims (Merrigan & Huston, 2004). The analysis phase of this study will use deductive reasoning to reach conclusions, in keeping with the positivist approach. For example, the following might be deduced from the data:

- Police frequently post information on Facebook about crime activities;
- Studies have shown that the public’s confidence in police increases when they are provided with relevant crime and policing information; and
- Therefore, given that the public is using Facebook, providing the public with information on crime activities via Facebook is evidence of effective communication and likely to enhance public confidence.

Research design

As discussed, the first stage of the research design is to use the literature review to identify codes and themes for the analysis and discussion stages of this study. Three sources of literature are most relevant to this discussion, including published articles relating to the implementation of the NSW Police Force Customer Service Programme, literature on policing and public trust and confidence, and survey designs from similar studies. Each of these literary sources is covered in depth in the literature review section of this study.

Community engagement and visibility are a key focus of this study, just as they are the priority of the NSW Police Force Customer Service Programme (Burn, 2010). Stages 2 and 3 of this study offer insight into whether Project Eyewatch is

addressing the need to enhance community engagement and visibility and to what extent. A review of survey questions from recent studies of public trust and confidence identified several recurring themes. Research by Jackson and Bradford (2010) identifies trust and confidence as having three distinct dimensions:

- Trust in effectiveness – of police dealing with crime;
- Trust in fairness – or integrity of police when dealing with the public; and
- Trust in engagement - the extent to which the police engage with the local community.

These dimensions of public confidence were expanded upon in a study by Hohl et al (2010) on the influence of police leaflet drops on public perceptions of policing in London. Stage 3 of data collection relies on codes developed from survey questions provided in the leaflet drop study, as follows:

1. Police community engagement
 - a. To what extent do police listen to the concerns of local people?
 - b. To what extent do police understand the issues that affect the community?
 - c. To what extent are police dealing with things that matter to the community? (or more accurately to what extent are they communicating that they are dealing with things?)
2. Can police be relied upon to be there when you need them?
 - a. Police fairness
 - b. To what extent do police treat everyone fairly?
 - c. Would police treat the respondent with respect if they had contact?
 - d. Are police friendly and approachable?
 - e. Are police helpful?
3. Police effectiveness
 - a. How well do police deal with specific crimes and operational issues (relates to whether crime or other issue is resolved)?
 - b. How well do police support victims and witnesses?
 - c. How well do police manage major events?
 - d. How well do police respond to emergencies?

The second stage of the research design involves an analysis of Facebook Insights data from August 2013. Facebook provides the NSW Police Force with copious data,

such as the number of people using mobile telephones to access Project Eyewatch sites. Facebook Insights provides relevant data on a user's gender, age and home suburb.

The third stage of the research design is a content analysis of dialogue and interaction between the police and public on the 10 largest Project Eyewatch sites, from a total of 80 such sites. This includes, by chance, five sites from the Sydney metropolitan area and five from regional NSW. All postings and comments placed on the sample sites between 16 and 18 September, 2013, were collected in the sample. Data was obtained late the next day from 17 to 19 September, allowing between 24 and 36 hours for the police and the public to comment on postings from the previous day.

In total, there were 72 posts by police and 9 by the public, generating 528 items of dialogue. Every comment in each of the 79 postings (threads of dialogue) was analysed against a series of questions (codes) elicited from the survey by Hohl et al (2010) and the results were recorded in a spreadsheet. Numerical values were assigned to the coding questions as part of a procedural function to keep the data collection and analysis valid and transparent (Brill, 2013). All data was collected and analysed by a single researcher, eliminating most of the issues with inter-coder reliability and ensuring that consistent coding decisions were made (Ballou, 2013; Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2002).

A similar approach was taken in this study to research conducted by Welch and Fulla (2005), which used a codification protocol to classify email messages between police and the public in their study of email and online communication by Chicago Police. Both the Chicago study and this one list a series of substantive categories where numerical values are attributed to positive, negative or neutral comments in order to determine the frequency or prevalence of interactivity (in the case of Chicago) and fairness, engagement and effectiveness (in this study). Each code is considered against every comment, with numerical tallies updated each time comments are matched to codes. The codes were framed to address each of the dimensions of public trust and confidence, as follows:

Engagement

- Total number of public and police comments occurring on each thread (including original post)
- Number of issues/questions/requests raised by the public
- Ratio of police responses to identified issues/questions/requests
- Ratio of police to public comments in a thread

Engagement and Effectiveness

- Positive or negative expressions of crime and public safety (addressing the perception gap)
- Identified crime resolved or unresolved
- Identified operational policing issue resolved or unresolved
- Identified non-operational policing issue resolved or unresolved

Effectiveness

- Trust in police dealing with crime/policing issues
- Trust in police support for victims and witnesses
- Trust in policing of major events
- Trust in police response to emergencies

Fairness

- Satisfaction with Project Eyewatch as a strategy
- Satisfaction with procedural fairness
- Satisfaction with police action
- Satisfaction with police contact
- Satisfaction with police response to issue on Project Eyewatch

Summary

This study provides a snapshot of the Project Eyewatch strategy two years after its 2011 implementation. It relies on a scientific methodological approach, using a hypothesis and research questions to guide the research process. Data is triangulated from three sources and deductive logic is used to make sense of the data. The reliance on quantitative methods in this study means that findings should only be made within the defined limits of the research construct. Assumptions made in the research design have a firm and transparent basis in contemporary topic literature and the methodological tools used are consistent with similar scientific studies. This will help ensure that the findings are reliable and valid.

This study builds on existing scholarship related to public trust and confidence but extends the boundaries of the existing research to consider it through the prism of online social networking. The scale of Project Eyewatch and the NSW Police Force's commitment to its implementation represents a potential breakthrough in police efforts to embrace the online public sphere. Whether the strategy is as revolutionary as first appears will be the subject of ongoing attention from scholars, through studies such as this.

Chapter 4: Research Data and Analysis

The analysis for this study of the NSW Police Force's Project Eyewatch strategy and its impact on public confidence in police work will be guided by the research hypothesis and questions. The study was guided by the following hypothesis:

- The use of Facebook by the NSW Police Force contributes to building mutually-beneficial relationships with local communities and engenders confidence and trust in local police.

The study posed two questions, as follows:

- Is Project Eyewatch an effective strategy for enhancing public confidence in police?
- To what degree is the strategy effective?

The purpose of the analysis is to determine what the data tells us about Project Eyewatch and specifically about the impact the strategy is having on levels of public trust and confidence. The key to reliable analysis is reproducible coding instructions and, while the triangulated approach taken in this study is likely to afford multiple interpretations, the analysis will necessarily only focus on a few of those interpretations (Krippendorff & Bock, 2009). Studies of public trust and confidence reflect the priorities of modern policing, both at the organisation and government level. This symmetry enables the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of Project Eyewatch against its objectives and the drivers of public confidence with the same set of data.

Public perceptions of confidence in police are central to this study. The research does not attempt to infer what individual or groups of people perceive; rather it relies on the literature to establish which behaviours influence confidence so broad assumptions can then be made about the sampled population. The quantity and frequency of data occurring across the various categories of coded data is considered in the context of the related scholarship and it is at this point that inferences can be made about the strategy's effectiveness and influence on perceptions of public confidence, as well as the objectives of the Project Eyewatch strategy.

The analysis will determine if the following objectives are being met, where it was stated that Project Eyewatch should:

- Give the community greater access to police;
- Facilitate real time engagement between police and citizens;
- Seek public consensus on solutions to crime and policing problems;
- Provides accurate up to date information to the public;

- Facilitate forums to find solutions to crime and policing problems;
- Provide a forum so citizens can provide feedback to police; and
- Develop a high value community network (NSW Police Force, 2012).

Sample

Of the 117 official NSW Police Force Facebook sites, including 80 Local Area Command (LAC) Project Eyewatch sites that are the focus of this study, the 10 sites with the largest public subscriptions were selected in the sample. As of September, 2013, these sites have memberships ranging from 7,453 to 14,758 (*see Table 1, below*)

Insert Table 1 here

Based on the 7.38 million population of NSW (ABS, 2013), the average population of each local area police command is about 92,000 people. Residential density varies across the state, so the population of each local area command can vary between 60,000 and 180,000 (NSW Police Force, 2012). Of the 10 largest local area command Facebook sites, five are based in the Sydney metropolitan area and five are based in regional NSW. Many NSW Police Force Facebook sites have fewer than 1000 public subscribers so it was necessary to obtain a sample of the largest sites in order to evaluate the strategy as close as possible to its full and desired potential. All postings and comments placed on the sample sites between 16 and 18 September, 2013 were collected in the sample. Data was obtained late the next day from 17 to 19 September, allowing between 24 and 36 hours for the police and the public to comment on postings from the previous day. In total, there were 72 posts by police and 9 by the public, generating 528 comments (items of dialogue).

Findings

Facebook Insights data

Of the 100,149 subscribers to the 10 largest NSW Police Force Project Eyewatch sites, 66,196 or 66 per cent are female. Females comprised between 62 and 68 per cent of the membership on each of the sites, with very little deviation. The ratio of male to female users varied more with age. Females comprised 51 per cent of users aged 13 to 17, 59 per cent aged 18 to 24, 67 per cent aged 25 to 34, 72 per cent aged 35 to 44, 71 per cent aged 45 to 54, 70 per cent aged 55 to 64 and 58 per cent aged 65 or more.

People aged 25 to 34 were the largest group of users on all sites with 29,480. There was strong representation among 18 to 24 year olds with 22,947 and 35 to 44 year olds with 24,154. There were 4,719 13 to 17 year olds, 4,504 55 to 64 year olds and 1853 65 or older.

The data shows that 84 per cent of regional users are identified as residing in NSW – 83 per cent in regional LACs and 85 per cent in metropolitan. Thirty seven per cent of users are identified as residing in the Sydney area – 22 per cent in regional LACs and 58 per cent in metropolitan LACs. Membership across the 10 sites grew 14.6 per cent in three months to September 2013 – 12.7 per cent in regional LACs and 17.2 per cent in metropolitan LACs. Quarterly growth at individual LACs ranged between 7.3 per cent at Newcastle to 23.5 per cent at Sutherland. Brisbane Waters LAC experienced 22.7 per cent growth, almost double the growth of the next fastest growing regional LAC site. Penrith was the slowest growing metropolitan LAC site, with 12.7 per cent growth (*See Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5, below*).

Insert Tables 2 to 5 here

Content analysis of Project Eyewatch

In 30 days of police-public interaction, there were 72 posts by police, an average of 7.2 for each site in three days and 2.4 posts on a single day. Two sites, Port Stephens and Penrith, posted no entries during the sample period, while the most posts were made by Brisbane Waters with 25. There were nine unique posts by members of the public during the sample period, including three each for Sutherland and Blue Mountains, two at Hawkesbury and one at Port Stephens. The public posts predominantly related to unexplained (at the time) incidents in the local area, including a traffic hazard at Port Stephens, break and enter offences and a found laptop at Hawkesbury, helicopter and policing activity in the Blue Mountains and helicopter and policing activity at Sutherland. One public post at Sutherland related to a newspaper article about speed cameras.

There were 17 codes applied to each item of dialogue. This included five codes relating specifically to engagement, five relating to fairness, four relating to effectiveness, and three relating to both engagement and effectiveness.

The following issues were examined in relation to effectiveness:

- Trust in police dealing with crime/policing issues;
- Trust in police support for victims and witnesses;
- Trust in policing of major events; and
- Trust in police response to emergencies.

Overall, 91 per cent of people, from 47 applicable comments, expressed trust in how police deal with crime and policing issues. Brisbane Waters attracted the overwhelming majority of these comments with 30 positive comments and only one negative comment. Police received considerable support in postings about a drug supply arrest and a child porn arrest. There was minimal data on the other three categories of effectiveness, with two positive comments and one negative comment relating to police dealing with victims and witnesses, nil data on major events, and

three positive comments on responding to emergency incidents, linked to the police response to a truck crash in the Blue Mountains.

The following issues are applicable to analysis on both effectiveness and engagement:

- Positive or negative expressions of crime and public safety (addressing the perception gap);
- Identified crime resolved or unresolved;
- Identified operational policing issue resolved or unresolved; and
- Identified non-operational policing issue resolved or unresolved.

There were 17 comments about community safety, all of which related to people feeling unsafe. Nine of these comments occurred in Sutherland in response to two police postings about armed robbery offences. There were 77 crimes identified and 33 of them, or 43 per cent, were resolved by the arrest of an offender. Of the nine non-crime operational issues identified, six were resolved, with most sites having one or two such issues. For example Brisbane Waters had one resolved and one unresolved issue, the first relating to the discovery of a woman's body and the second to an appeal for public assistance to find a missing man. There was nil data relating to resolution of administrative issues, such as errors on the webpage.

The following issues were examined in relation to engagement:

- Total number of public and police comments occurring on each thread (including original post);
- Number of issues/questions/requests raised by the public;
- Ratio of police responses to identified issues/questions/requests; and
- Ratio of police to public comments in a thread.

There were 528 items of dialogue during the three-day sample of 10 sites. Brisbane Waters had 184, or 35 per cent, of items and was by far the largest source of online dialogue. Thirty seven items from Brisbane Waters related to a police release about the sentencing of a man who assaulted a bus driver, 29 to the arrest of a man for child pornography offences and 16 to a police release warning about number plate theft. Penrith and Port Stephens attracted zero and one item respectively, while other sites ranged between 18 and 84 items of dialogue.

There were 49 specific questions, issues or requests intimating a need for a response from police, 12, or 24 per cent, of which were responded to by police.

Mount Druitt did not respond to any of 10 items raised, which included:

- A complaint about the telephone at Mt Druitt Police Station ringing out;
- Two requests for information about possible sexual assault offences in the community;
- A report of damage to a person's vehicle, a request for further information about a police arrest; and
- Four requests for police to post a picture of a missing woman.

Sutherland responded to one of eight items raised, which included:

- Police posting a release to the site that answered one person's request for further information about a crime incident;
- A request for information on a road closure not responded to by police;
- A request for information about an incident at a local park not responded to by police;
- A request for information about an incident at a local shop not responded to by police (two contrary responses provided by other public users);
- A complaint about the police handling of a traffic dispute involving the person not responded to by police; and
- Three people requesting further information about an attempted armed robbery – one of who wanted police to post CCTV footage not responded to by police.

Blue Mountains responded to three of nine items raised, which included:

- Three items when police responded to requests for information about a truck crash; and
- Six items stemming from a later police posting about the truck crash, one requesting further information about the speed of the truck, one asking why a comment was deleted, one requesting more police patrols of the area at night and three others requesting further detail about the crash - not responded to by police.

Wagga Wagga responded to none of three items raised, which included:

- An allegation that police took no action against a relative of an officer;
- A request for more undercover police patrols; and

- A person asks what police are doing about rising crime in the town.

Hawkesbury responded to half of the four items raised, which included:

- Police responding to a request for further information about break and enter offences;
- Police proactively asking a person to report a stolen laptop after the person discussed the incident in a post; and
- Police do not respond to a query about the use of the Young Offender's Act; and
- Police do not respond to request for a picture of shoplifting offenders

Campbelltown responded to none of six items raised, which included:

- Four requests in a one posting for a picture of counterfeit currency;
- Question to police on whether firearms offence related to earlier incident; and
- One complaint related to details of police release that there are no well-lit areas for people to walk.

Brisbane Waters responded to six of eight items raised, which included:

- Police respond to two questions on the description of the type of screws needed to secure number plates;
- Police respond to a criticism of the photo used in posting by informing person that all photos used are generic;
- Police advise person to contact PAL to report crime identified in comments;
- Police clarify that the offender is appealing a sentence after clarification sought by user;
- Police comment on person's request that court sentences be posted on Project Eyewatch more often;
- Police did not respond to a request for the meaning of a concurrent sentence; and
- Police do not provide a photo of the offender when requested.

Newcastle responded to none of two items raised, which included:

- Person raises earlier unreported crime; and
- Person raises issue of mattresses being dumped illegally in streets.

Of the 528 items of dialogue, 89 were posted by police and 439 by the public. This included the 72 initial postings by police and nine by the public. Aside from the initial 72 postings, police contributed just 17 comments in the 30-day (3 days x 10 sites) sample period. The public posted an average of 14.6 comments to each site on each day. Of the 184 items on the Brisbane Waters site, police provided 31, or 20 per cent, of the comments. This was bettered by three sites, albeit with far fewer comments overall, including Sutherland, with police providing 16, or 40 per cent, of the 54 items, Campbelltown, with police providing nine, or 30 per cent, of the 39 items, and Newcastle, with police providing five, or 38 per cent, of the 18 items. Overall, police contributed 20 per cent of items to the Project Eyewatch sites.

The following issues were examined in relation to fairness:

- Satisfaction with Project Eyewatch as a strategy;
- Satisfaction with procedural fairness;
- Satisfaction with police action;
- Satisfaction with police contact; and
- Satisfaction with police response to issue on Project Eyewatch.

Only a limited amount of data was able to be extracted in relation to fairness. There were five items expressing satisfaction with Project Eyewatch generally (which is distinct from the category of satisfaction with police response to an item on Project Eyewatch). For example, a person commented on the Hawkesbury site that they were grateful police were able to use Project Eyewatch to get information out to the public quickly, while three other people on the Brisbane Waters site commented about the usefulness of Project Eyewatch in separate postings.

There was only one item relating to procedural fairness, occurring on the Sutherland site in a general police posting about traffic laws. The person complained that police failed to properly investigate a traffic matter he was involved in. Eight of 11 items relating to people's satisfaction with police actions raised in the posts, or 73 per cent, were supportive or positive. A person complained on the Sutherland site that police did not take action to investigate a traffic matter. A person praised police for attending a picnic day on the Blue Mountains site. On the Newcastle site, a user praised police for efforts to tackle gun crime and another user praised police for arresting a young person for breaking offences. A posting on the Wagga Wagga site included three items praising police for taking action against a young offender and one item criticising police for not taking action against another young person in an unrelated incident. A posting on the Hawkesbury site relating to the arrest of a young person for a liquor store offence resulted in one item of

support for the police action and one of dissatisfaction that police dealt with the young offender under the provisions of the Young Offenders Act. On the Campbelltown site, a person praised police for their efforts in combating counterfeit crime.

There was only one item relating to satisfaction with police contact generally, a public comment on the Mount Druitt site alleging police at the station failed to answer the telephone. This issue was also not addressed by police on the site.

Two of the four items relating to satisfaction with the police response to issues, questions and requests made on Project Eyewatch were positive. A police posting about a missing woman at Mount Druitt elicited a comment critical of police for not posting a picture of her on the site. A person on the Blue Mountains site was unhappy that police deleted his comment from a thread of dialogue on a police posting related to a truck crash. Police also posted two messages at the end of this thread, which had 67 items of dialogue, requesting people to stop posting comments. There were no more items posted after the second police request. Two people in separate public postings on the Hawkesbury site praised police for providing a response to their question.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

The findings detailed in chapter 4 above are applied through the epistemological lens of objectivism, defined by Crotty (1998) as the search for inherent truths, as has been explained previously. This lens of objectivism is used here as part of a positivist theoretical perspective, which has two distinguishing features that are relevant to the discussion of these findings: Any explanation can only be based on observable and measurable events; and, it involves the search for order and patterns between variables (Jones, 2011). Broadly speaking, the data suggests that police are using Project Eyewatch to transmit information to the public, replicating the public information approach to public relations that police organisations have traditionally used (Brainard & McNutt, 2010). There is only minimal evidence of interactivity or the use of public feedback by police to inform decisions, policy and operations. Police visibility is enhanced, although in a limited way because of the relatively small number of subscribers to local area command Facebook sites. There is limited evidence that dialogue on Project Eyewatch sites reflects behaviours that would enhance perceptions of public confidence. Of the 10 local area command sites, Brisbane Waters is operating the most efficiently but is still far from meeting the positivist ideals of the strategy. Other sites are having a negligible influence on public confidence.

The objectives of Project Eyewatch and the customer service priorities of the NSW Police Force are in keeping with modern principles of effective police-public engagement as explained by Bradford et al (2009) and others in chapter 2 of this dissertation. Governments and policing organisations in Australia and Britain have in recent years been focused on customer service, being visible, being accountable

and engaging with local communities (Jackson, & Bradford, 2010; Brainard & McNutt, 2010). Whereas policing was once measured against fluctuations in crime, police practitioners and scholars are now using public confidence as a key measure of performance. In that respect, Project Eyewatch aspires to achieve what could be regarded as best practice in public confidence policing. The data from this study suggests that the strategy is far from achieving its objectives. As Bull (2010) and others have found in studies of community policing, the aspirations that police managers have for a strategy are not always shared or understood by the more junior police tasked with its implementation. Project Eyewatch has grown quickly to include 117 sites, each independently administered by local police, and many with fewer than 1000 public subscribers. As such, the findings of this study are preliminary and reflect the strategy at a point of time in its growth where it has not realised its full potential.

Stage one of this study's triangulated approach focused on establishing the relationship between the Project Eyewatch objectives, the customer service priorities of the NSW Police Force and the literature on public confidence. The objectives were shown to be consistent with the historical Neighbourhood Watch strategy and with contemporary views on best practice in community policing. Visibility and community engagement were identified as key influences of public confidence and as a way of improving customer service across the NSW Police Force organisation. Visibility and community engagement are a significant component of public confidence, which scholars have found to include the dimensions of effectiveness, fairness and engagement (Bradford et al, 2009). A number of codes were able to be developed for this study's content analysis from the questions asked in large scale surveys of public confidence (including: Quinton, 2011; Hohl et al, 2010; Myhill & Quinton, 2010).

Stage two of this study involved an analysis of Facebook Insights data. One of the failures of Neighbourhood Watch was the perceived lack of representation among community participants, in that many of those who volunteered their time and effort to the scheme were older, white and middle-classed (Fleming, 2005). To that extent, this study attempted to discover the make-up of the Project Eyewatch audience as part of a two-pronged analysis of the strategy's objectives. The first used a content analysis to evaluate whether police are using Project Eyewatch in a way that meets the strategy's objectives and influences public confidence. The second examined Facebook Insights data to evaluate the size and nature of the audience the strategy is having an influence on.

The data shows that females account for more than 60 per cent of subscribers to Project Eyewatch. More than 75 per cent of subscribers are aged between 18 and 44, which is not in keeping with the historical dominant representation of elderly people participating in Neighbourhood Watch schemes (Fleming, 2005). The difference is possibly a reflection of the reluctance by older people to use the internet or a preference to communicate with police in traditional ways. It may be

that the use of Facebook has encouraged greater participation by younger people as the strategy's architects intended. None of these possibilities are able to be established using the quantitative data in this study. But the question of why people are accessing Facebook is less important than the question of who is accessing in this study, which shows the audience is small in number and dominated by females aged 18 to 44.

Facebook Insights also revealed that on average 84 per cent of subscribers reside in NSW, with 22 per cent of people subscribing to Project Eyewatch sites belonging to NSW regional local area commands actually residing in Sydney. This means that as few as 60 per cent of subscribers to these regional sites are likely to be residing in the areas policed. Only 58 per cent of subscribers to metropolitan local area commands are recorded as residing in Sydney, showing that a little more than half of the subscribers to metropolitan Project Eyewatch sites reside in or near the area policed. With there being fewer than 15,000 subscribers for the largest Project Eyewatch sites, and the likelihood that more than 40 per cent of those subscribers are not local, none of the sites can be regarded as being representative of the local population at this moment in time. Future discussions on the representative nature of police Facebook sites should also consider the likelihood that as many as 40 per cent of subscribers do not reside in the areas being studied.

Stage three, the content analysis, focused on collecting data associated with the three dimensions of confidence: effectiveness, fairness and engagement. Bradford et al (2009) say that positive encounters between police and the public do not enhance the perception that police are effective, and can often have the asymmetrical effect of reducing public confidence, as scholars such as Skogan (2006) have found. As a key dimension of confidence, it is still necessary to consider the factors in the Facebook dialogue that are associated with effectiveness. These factors relate to how well the police deal with crime and policing issues, with victims and witnesses, in emergency situations, with operational challenges and with administrative issues such as web maintenance.

There were 47 items of dialogue, from 528 items, relating to how police deal with crime and policing issues. Only four people lacked trust in the ability of police to deal with crime and policing issues. It is possible that the support for police is linked to the homogeneity of such sites, which tend to be comprised mostly of supporters (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003), or it could just be that most people are supportive of the work police are doing. Regardless, the amount of positive dialogue is expected to have a nominal influence on overall confidence because of the asymmetrical effect identified by Skogan (2006). The small amount of negative dialogue is a positive sign as the same studies have shown that poor perceptions of effectiveness can be detrimental to public perceptions of confidence.

It is suspected that the lack of dialogue relating to victims, witnesses and emergency situations is linked to there being no significant news events during the three days of data collection. It should be noted that 31 (30 positive and one negative) of the 47

items of dialogue relating to crime and policing occurred on the Brisbane Waters Project Eyewatch site. Brisbane Waters police posted 25 times during the sample period, more than any other site, generating 184 items of dialogue and responded to six of eight public issues, questions or requests, which was by far the most responsive of all the sites. The heightened willingness of the public to comment about police effectiveness might be related to the comparatively high level of engagement taking place on the site between police and the public.

Perceptions of public safety are linked in the literature to both effectiveness and engagement (Fleming, 2005). There were 17 items of dialogue in the data pertaining to how safe people feel in their community, all of which were negative. It is possible that Project Eyewatch communities feel unsafe, although the sample of data is too small to be considered definitive. Burn (2010) suggests that enhanced police visibility and engagement with the public would reduce the perception gap between perceived and actual levels of crime. Hohl et al (2010) found that providing crime and policing information to the public positively influences perceptions of confidence. This study attempted to find out whether the type of crime and information provided has an influence on public perceptions. For example, data was collected on whether the crime information shared with the public related to crimes that police had resolved or not, and similarly whether operational and non-operational issues were resolved or not. While this data relates to the effectiveness of police at resolving crime and policing issues, it is also a measure of engagement. It was apparent from the data that police had resolved 33 of the 77 crimes mentioned and six of nine operational issues mentioned. There were no mentions of non-operational issues. The figures combined show that police are about 50 per cent effective in dealing with crime and operational-related issues, although publicising the crimes is evidence that police are at least trying to solve the crime. It is more important that police have shared information with the public 86 times. This type of engagement has been shown in studies to positively influence perceptions of confidence, while the impact of effectiveness is at best negligible (Hohl et al, 2010; Jackson & Bradford, 2010). In summary, the data shows posting information that possibly portrays police as ineffective is worthwhile if the objective is to enhance perceptions of public confidence.

Police appear to be using Facebook to share crime and policing information with the public but there is little evidence of interactivity and two-way communication occurring. In almost all police postings, police did not follow up with responses to comments made by the public. There were 37 specific issues, questions and requests raised by the public, only 12 of which were responded to by police. Once again, Brisbane Waters stood out from the sample of 10 sites by responding to 35 per cent of issues, questions and requests and by maintaining an active presence on the site. While it was the police who initiated 72 of 81 threads of dialogue, the public contributed 439, or 80 per cent, of the 528 items of dialogue across the 10 sites. When the 72 initial posts are removed from the analysis, there were just 17 comments posted by police in 30 days of data. This is clear evidence that police are

using Project Eyewatch primarily to transmit information, just as they would if they were issuing a media release.

To consider Facebook communication as an equivalent to face-to-face contact, it would be necessary for police to be interactive and engaging beyond the first introduction. As such, this study concludes that the benefits that contact can have on public perceptions of crime are somewhat negated by the lack of follow-up by police. The influence of sharing crime and policing information on perceptions of confidence remain valid as studies have found it to be a positive influence, such as the study of leaflet drops in London by Hohl et al (2010), which did not associate confidence with feedback or interaction.

While the data on engagement is compelling, the influence of Project Eyewatch on fairness is less clear. Project Eyewatch did not appear to encourage subscribers to air their grievance or if they did these grievances did not make it past the Facebook blocking tool or moderator. As such, there was only a single item of data relating to procedural justice. There were occasional postings about the usefulness of using a Project Eyewatch site to communicate with and occasionally praise police after information was posted. Of the 11 comments relating to satisfaction with police actions, eight were positive. For example, police were praised for attending a picnic day in the Blue Mountains, while police attracted criticism in another entry for not arresting an unnamed youth. Only one comment related to police contact, where a subscriber criticised police for being uncontactable by telephone. Twice, the public praised police for providing responses to questions on Project Eyewatch.

It could be argued that the lack of dialogue relating to fairness is a consequence of the failure of police to engage with the public. Positive feedback was generated on the few occasions when the police did respond to public issues, questions and requests. For example, at Hawkesbury police engaged a member of the public who raised the issue of a stolen laptop, encouraging them to report the crime. A conversation ensued and it was established that the laptop had been handed in as found property at another police station. The police were praised for their help. Another posting from Hawkesbury also attracted public praise when police responded to a question about break and enter offences.

Many of the assumptions made in this study relate to having a representative population to evaluate police visibility, community engagement and confidence. Project Eyewatch has been implemented across the organisation but has not reached its full potential in terms of community engagement. Many sites have only a few hundred subscribers and even the most popular sites have a membership of fewer than 10 per cent of the local community. In the positivist reality, Project Eyewatch sites would reach 100 per cent of the local population. The normative reality is that Project Eyewatch presently has a very small reach and how much the normative reality will ultimately move towards the positivist is likely to be influenced by how well the strategy is implemented and marketed. The 10 sampled sites grew between seven and 23 per cent in the three months from June to

September 2013, suggesting that Project Eyewatch is growing and has not reached its full potential. Success might be self propelling in that the more time and effort police put into the strategy the more likely people will want to involve themselves and the greater the reach police will have with their community.

There is evidence from the data that police involvement encourages public participation. The Brisbane Waters site grew 22.7 per cent, by 2611 to 14,138, in the three months from June to September 2013. The next highest growth in terms of people liking their local Project Eyewatch site was at Hawkesbury with an extra 1506 new subscribers. The data shows police from Brisbane Waters and Hawkesbury, to a lesser extent, were the most interactive and responsive of all the sites. As discussed, Brisbane Waters police posted 25 times during the sample period, generated 184 items of dialogue and responded to six of eight public issues, questions or requests. Hawkesbury twice engaged with the public over crime issues, drawing immediate praise from the public. Another example where public interested peaked was a truck crash at Blue Mountains. Police were more responsive than usual, contributing comments to several posts and issuing a media release about the crash, although police were still criticised for not being more interactive and responsive. There may be other factors associated with the strong subscription growth of Brisbane Waters but the data does appear to show a link between police engagement and higher levels of public participation.

There are two ways to look at this study's primary research question: 'Is Project Eyewatch an effective strategy for enhancing public confidence in police?' Project Eyewatch could be considered as either a work in progress or a fully implemented organisational strategy. Weatherburn (2004) suggests that Neighbourhood Watch was embraced by police and the community well before there was any evidence that it worked and it might be worth withholding judgement on Project Eyewatch until it has been fully integrated into local policing. Project Eyewatch was developed in response to a need for police to be more visible and engaging with the public. Scholars, practitioners and governments are in agreement that the best measure of effective policing is public confidence in police. We know from the literature that public confidence can be enhanced simply by the police engaging as an active, visible and accessible part of community life (Rix et al, 2009; Bradford et al, 2009; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Skogan, 2006; Tyler & Fagan, 2006). Visibility is not just about police having a physical presence; it's connecting with communities in various ways, including the internet. It includes keeping people informed about crime and policing issues. If Project Eyewatch achieves this aim then it follows that the strategy is more effective than doing nothing at all, even if it has not reached its full potential. Despite the limited effectiveness and reach of the strategy in its current state, the data obtained in this study does show that police are behaving in a way that enhances public confidence through the actions of posting crime and policing information to citizens, on a forum that the public can be found, by engaging the public, by encouraging feedback and through interaction.

Project Eyewatch is resource intensive and there are a number of alternative strategies to which police could apply their time and effort. Thus, it is perhaps not sufficient to say that the strategy is more effective than doing nothing; the extent of its effectiveness must also be determined, which is the focus of the secondary research question. This is best achieved by evaluating Project Eyewatch against its objectives in the goal-centred approach outlined in the methodology. These objectives have been stated previously in this study in chapter 2 but are worth repeating and are as follows, in that Project Eyewatch should:

- Give the community greater access to police;
- Facilitate real time engagement between police and citizens;
- Seek public consensus on solutions to crime and policing problems;
- Provides accurate up to date information to the public;
- Facilitate forums to find solutions to crime and policing problems;
- Provide a forum so citizens can provide feedback to police; and
- Develop a high value community network (NSW Police Force, 2012).

People can access Project Eyewatch sites on their mobile phone or other devices at any time and location. The rhetoric from the NSW Police Force at the launch of Project Eyewatch identified the difficulty many people had in finding time to attend Neighbourhood Watch meetings (NSW Police Force, 2012). Police said that Project Eyewatch will make it easier for the public to access their local police for community policing purposes. The question of whether people actually want to engage with police online is considered in this study by analysing the participation levels, which are currently very low. So the first objective of giving the community greater access to police has been achieved but in a limited way.

Facebook communication is asynchronous, meaning people post a comment and await a response. Responses are provided almost immediately at times but can be delayed by minutes or hours. For example, a thread of dialogue on the Blue Mountains site, which stemmed from a media release about a truck crash, attracted 66 comments. Police posted the release in the morning of 17 September and posted the first of two follow up comments at 6.17pm that day and the second at 8.18am on 18 September. To facilitate real time engagement between police and citizens it would be necessary for an officer at each local area command to continuously monitor the Project Eyewatch site. It is apparent from the Blue Mountains example that police are either not doing this or if they are they are choosing not to continually engage with the public. This is consistent with the challenges faced by other jurisdictions, including in Toronto, Canada, where resourcing of an organisation's social media sites was found to be a major challenge (Stevens, 2010).

There is no evidence that Project Eyewatch is being used by police to seek public consensus on solutions to crime and policing problems. Numerous releases were posted to the sites, many containing the contact details of local police or CrimeStoppers but there was no feedback on the site, either from the public or the police, to suggest that the public was providing information to the police. At one level, police are currently responding to a small number (24% of the overall sample of dialogue taken from 10 LAC Facebook sites) of public issues, comments or requests. There is no evidence of more complicated engagement, with conversations between the police and the public never extending beyond three items of dialogue. This could be overcome by police actively soliciting public feedback on selected issues and by providing unsolicited feedback to the public. This may be in the form of general messages linking the information provided by the public of Project Eyewatch to a successful policing outcome or it may involve a specific response to a person who has posted interesting or useful information on the site. Presently, there is no evidence that police are engaging the public in this manner.

Hand and Ching (2011) argue that social media should not be viewed as a panacea for increasing citizen engagement without first addressing the need for a fundamental change in the power relations that exist between government organisations and the public. For police to solicit feedback from the public but then fail to use it in a meaningful way perpetuates the prevailing power imbalance.

Police posted 72 items relating to crime and local policing issues. Items such as Campbelltown LAC's release on counterfeit currency appear to have been released strategically by police to assist with an investigation, rather than as general information for the public. Aside from the information being delayed, releasing it on Facebook is still more efficient and reliable than traditional methods, including using the media and the corporate website. The former relies on the media to pass on the information while the latter relies on people accessing the website, whereas Facebook audiences are accessed directly. There were examples in the data where people requested further information about a posting or an incident but most of these requests were ignored or missed by police. Accordingly, police appear to have only partly met the objective of providing accurate and up to date information to the public.

One of the initial proposals of Project Eyewatch was to conduct forums to find solutions to crime and policing problems (NSW Police Force, 2012). The forums were designed to have an agenda and to give people a set time to respond to agenda items. Police would follow up on the issues raised and report back to the forum. There is no evidence that these forums are occurring, and this is supported by an internal survey conducted by the organisation (Au, 2013). There is evidence that Project Eyewatch is working as a forum for the public to provide feedback to police. Most of the public comments could be classified as feedback to police. However, it could not be said that police are providing feedback to the public to any great extent or using the public feedback for any meaningful purpose.

Project Eyewatch already has value as a community network, despite lacking a representative subscriber base. It would need to move somewhat closer to the positivist goal of 100 per cent participation if it is to be classified as high value. To share crime and policing information on Facebook alone would lead to only a limited portion of the community receiving the information. This problem is somewhat offset by the use of multiple mediums by police to distribute information. For example, releases are distributed through Facebook, the media and on the organisation's website to ensure the maximum possible exposure.

Finally, the hypothesis of this study is considered using deductive logic. Put simply, research has shown that increasing contact and visibility enhances public confidence. Data from this study shows that Project Eyewatch has led to an increase in contact and visibility. Therefore, Project Eyewatch could be said to increase public confidence, albeit at a level that is far short of expectations outlined in the objectives and organisational rhetoric. The success of the project depends on it continuing to grow, which appears to be occurring across all sites. Success also depends on the involvement of police, which the data suggests is lacking at this point. Bull's (2010) study of the Flemington Renewal Project is portentous in that it failed because of a lack of support by police at a local level, despite the best intentions of senior police. If Project Eyewatch fails to grab the imagination and the support of police at a local level, engagement will continue to fall short of what is required.

A recent survey of NSW Police Force Facebook subscribers identified a need for police to loosen up the tone of conversation and be more human, share more content to maximise awareness of local Facebook pages, close the loop on missing persons and re-share old appeals, publish more proactive crime prevention tips and themed advice such as cyber security, and host live chats (Au, 2013, p. 11). The publishing of these survey findings by the NSW Police Force suggests that the organisation is both willing to improve Project Eyewatch and aware of its current limitations, as outlined in this study.

Recommendations

The recommendations of this study have been divided into two categories: research-related and organisation-related.

Research-related recommendations

1. The findings of this study reflect Project Eyewatch in its infancy as an organisational strategy. Scholars should consider evaluating the strategy when the organisation's Facebook subscriber base is larger and more representative of the community;
2. Qualitative methods such as interviewing members of the public and police should be used in future studies so the impact of Project Eyewatch on

police and community attitudes can be ascertained from first person data rather than relying on assumptions in the literature;

3. Future research should keep pace with the changes that the web is bringing to policing practice. Further case study research of the use of social media would add increased knowledge and methodological insight; and
4. The lack of quality research carried out on Neighbourhood Watch should serve as a warning for police researchers when considering and conducting research on this new technology-led era of community policing.

Organisation-related recommendations

If the NSW Police Force wants to enhance the current efficacy of Project Eyewatch local area command sites, they should consider:

1. Providing more resources to the monitoring of Project Eyewatch sites in order to improve their responsiveness to public comments;
2. Providing regular feedback to the public on how public information posted to Project Eyewatch is helping local police;
3. Responding to most questions, issues and requests posted by public users;
4. Being more interactive, engaging with members of the public and so far as possible replicating face-to face contact;
5. Posting more information about local crime statistics and follow up as a point of discussion;
6. Providing information about operational decision making, for example, the use of the NSW Young Offenders Act 1997;
7. Being proactive about posting information on Project Eyewatch sites when a serious incident occurs in the local area command;
8. Focussing on continuing to grow Project Eyewatch in local communities; and
9. Identifying the more successful Project Eyewatch sites, methods and strategies, and sharing those success stories across the organisation.

Conclusion

Project Eyewatch represents a return to community policing, a style of policing that fell out of favour in the 1990s as other approaches were trialed. The strategy is driven by the policy directions of governments in Australia, the United Kingdom

and elsewhere, which are seeking to enhance public perceptions of confidence and trust in the organisations that serve local communities. In NSW, this objective is a key part of the NSW Police Force Customer Service Programme and the organisational rhetoric supporting Project Eyewatch. Fortunately, scholars have given considerable attention to the topics that underpin this change in policing focus. Literature on the topic of public confidence and trust shows that police can positively influence perceptions of public confidence when they make the effort to contact the public, to engage, be visible, interact, share information and provide meaningful feedback.

The study found that Project Eyewatch is not being used to its full potential at any of the sampled local area command Facebook sites. Resourcing appears to be a problem as police very rarely respond to the issues, questions and requests posed by members of the public. Many of the objectives the organisation set for Project Eyewatch are not being achieved and the subscriber base of the police Facebook sites is too small to be considered as representative of the local communities being serviced by the strategy. These issues are somewhat offset by the potential for Project Eyewatch to grow and improve. All sample sites grew between seven and 23 per cent in the three months since June 2013 (*see Table 1*) and as the LAC sites become larger and more representative of the local community, Project Eyewatch too will increase its value as a source of community engagement for the NSW Police Force. It is also not too late for police to focus attention on how Project Eyewatch is being used, to better engage with the public and to make improvements to operational procedures.

Project Eyewatch has all the characteristics of traditional methods of police engagement with the public. This study has outlined how the web and social media can be used by police to increase their visibility, to engage and interact with the public, to provide meaningful feedback and to share crime and policing information; often more efficiently and cost effectively than traditional methods of engagement. The data shows that police are using Facebook to engage with the public in the ways described, albeit with limited effectiveness, and there is sufficient evidence from the literature to infer that this type of engagement positively influences public perceptions of confidence in police. It is also safe to posit public confidence would be further enhanced if police increased and improved the way they engage with local communities on Facebook.

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Appendices

Table 1: NSW Police Force Project Eyewatch subscribers

Location	Membership September 2013 (June 2013 figure)	3-month growth	Metro or regional
Newcastle City	14,758 (13,758)	1000 (7.3%)	Regional
Blue Mountains	13,013 (11,660)	1353 (11.6%)	Regional
Brisbane Waters	14,138 (11,527)	2611 (22.7%)	Regional
Penrith	12,564 (11,150)	1414 (12.7%)	Metropolitan
Wagga Wagga	8,699 (7,893)	806 (10.2%)	Regional
Hawkesbury	9,300 (7,794)	1506 (19.3%)	Metropolitan
Port Stephens	7,780 (6,957)	823 (11.8%)	Regional
Campbelltown	7,843 (6,729)	1114 (16.6%)	Metropolitan
Mount Druitt	7,453 (6,371)	1082 (17%)	Metropolitan
Sutherland	7,518 (6,089)	1429 (23.5%)	Metropolitan

Table 2: Total users by gender and Local Area Command

Age	Newcastle		Mount Druitt		Wagga Wagga		Sutherland		Port Stephens		Penrith		Hawkesbury		Campbelltown		Blue Mountain		Brisbane Waters		Total	Female	Male	% overall	
13-17	323	328	171	174	245	214	199	217	277	197	224	217	197	192	101	140	331	321	323	328	4719	2391	2328	5%	
18-24	1824	1223	1195	717	1423	943	943	791	1055	735	1760	1108	1188	698	936	665	1511	1332	1614	1286	22947	13449	9498	23%	
25-34	3115	1398	1530	687	1664	852	1281	658	1408	659	2840	1237	1622	725	1704	797	2060	1250	2672	1321	29480	19896	9584	29%	
35-44	2596	950	1179	473	1233	497	1341	491	1352	462	2250	848	1531	579	1352	537	2035	957	2484	1007	24154	17353	6801	24%	
45-54	1396	510	591	221	725	288	646	272	701	280	863	323	804	301	655	284	1217	616	1263	537	12493	8861	3632	12%	
55-64	492	190	165	83	293	88	180	96	265	91	362	122	254	118	231	96	475	247	452	204	4504	3169	1335	4%	
65 +	155	98	58	42	85	52	78	78	105	80	93	66	92	57	74	57	172	142	165	103	1852	1077	775	2%	
Total by gender	9901	4697	4889	2397	5668	2934	4668	2603	5163	2504	8392	3921	5688	2670	5053	2576	7801	4865	8973	4786	100149	66196	33953	66%	
Total both sexes		14598		7286		8602		7271		7667		12313		8358		7629		12666		13759					
% female	68		67		66		64		67		68		68		66		62		65						

Table 3: Users by age group

Age	Total	Male	Female	% Female
13-17	4719	2328	2391	51%
18-24	22947	9498	13449	59%
25-34	29480	9584	19896	67%
35-44	24154	6801	17353	72%
45-54	12493	3632	8861	71%
55-64	4504	1335	3169	70%
65 +	1852	775	1077	58%

Table 4: Place of residence by LAC

LAC	Australian Users - 31 August 2013	NSW Users - 31 August 2013	% NSW users against Sept m'ship	Sydney users - 31 August 2013	% Sydney users against Sept m'ship	M'ship September 2013	M'ship June 2013	M'ship growth since June	% growth in m'ship
Regional									
Brisbane Waters	13,578	11926	84%	4761	33%	14,138	11,527	2611	22.7%
Blue Mountains	12,425	10,784	83%	5452	42%	13,013	11,660	1353	11.6%
Newcastle	14,387	12,098	82%	1303	9%	14,758	13,758	1000	7.3%
Port Stephens	7596	6492	83%	749	10%	7,780	6,957	823	11.8%
Wagga Wagga	8544	6971	80%	554	6%	8,699	7,893	806	10.2%
	56,530	48,271	83%	12819	22%	58,388	51,795	6,593 (1318)	12.7%
Metropolitan									
Mount Druitt	7209	6453	87%	4915	66%	7,453	6,371	1082	17%
Campbelltown	7535	6595	84%	4148	53%	7,843	6,729	1114	16.6%
Penrith	12,227	11,293	90%	6818	54%	12,564	11,150	1414	12.7%
Hawkesbury	8304	7322	79%	4920	53%	9,300	7,794	1506	19.3%
Sutherland	7177	6389	85%	4917	65%	7,518	6,089	1429	23.5%

	42,452	38,052	85%	25,718	58%	44,678	38,133	6,545 (1309)	17.2%
Totals regional and metropolitan	98,982	86,323	84%	38,537	37%	103,066	89,928	13,138	14.6%

Table 5: Project Eyewatch Content Analysis Data - Part 1

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Posts	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement	Engagement/ Interactivity	Effectiveness and Engagement
Mount Druitt	6/0	40	9	0/9 = 0	6 to 34 = 0.18	0 to 4 = 0
Sutherland	15/3.	54	8	1/7= .125	16/38 = .4	0 to 9 = 0
Port Stephens	0/1	1	0	Nil data	0/1= 0	Nil data
Blue Mountains	4/3.	84	9	3/6 = .33	10 to 74 = .14	0/1 = 0
Wagga Wagga	5/0	62	3	0/3 = 0	5 to 57 = .09	0/1 = 0
Hawkesbury	4/2.	46	4	2/2 = .5	7 to 39 = .18	0/1 = 0
Campbelltown	9/0	39	6	0/6 = 0	9 to 30 = .3	0/1 = 0
Brisbane Waters	25/0	184	8	6/2 = .83	31 to 153 = .2	Nil data
Newcastle	4/0	18	2	0/2 = .5	5 to 13 = .38	Nil data
Penrith	0/0	0	0	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data
Overall results	72/9	528	49	12/37 = .24 issues addressed or answered	89 to 439 = .2 police comments for each public comments (or 1 to 5 ratio)	17 users who commented expressed feeling unsafe in their community. 0 expressed feeling safe

Table 5: Project Eyewatch Content Analysis Data - Part 2

A	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
	Effectiveness	Effectiveness	Effectiveness	Engagement/ Effectiveness	Engagement/ Effectiveness	Engagement/ Effectiveness	Effectiveness
Mount Druitt	1 to 0 = 1	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	2 to 3 = .4	1/0 = 1	Nil data
Sutherland	0 to 1 = 0	0/1	Nil data	Nil data	9/10 = .47	2/0 = 2	Nil data
Port Stephens	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data
Blue Mountains	2 to 0 = 2	Nil data	Nil data	3/0	1 to 0 = 1	1/0 = 1	Nil data
Wagga Wagga	3/1 = .75	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	2/6 = .25	Nil data	Nil data
Hawkesbury	1/1 = .5	1/0	Nil data	Nil data	1/3 = .25	1/0 = 1	Nil data
Campbelltown	2/0 = 1	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	2/5 = .29	0/1 = 0	Nil data
Brisbane Waters	30/1 = 99%	1/0	Nil data	Nil data	14/16 = .47	1/1 = .5	Nil data
Newcastle	4/0 = 4	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	2/1 = 2	0/1 = 0	Nil data
Penrith	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data
Overall results	43/4 = 91% of users expressed confidence in work of police	2/1 = 67% Trust in police support for victims and witnesses	Nil data	3/0 = 100% trust in police response to emergencies	33/44 = 43% of identified crimes resolved	6/3 = 67% of identified non crime issues resolved	Nil data on administrative issues such as problems with webpage and

Table 5: Project Eyewatch Content Analysis Data - Part 3

A	O	P	Q	R	S
	Fairness	Fairness	Fairness	Fairness	Fairness
Mount Druitt	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	0/1	0/1
Sutherland	Nil data	0/1	0/1	Nil data	Nil data
Port Stephens	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data
Blue Mountains	Nil data	Nil data	1/0	Nil data	0/1
Wagga Wagga	Nil data	Nil data	3/1.	Nil data	Nil data
Hawkesbury	1/0	Nil data	1/1.	Nil data	2/0
Campbelltown	Nil data	Nil data	1/0	Nil data	Nil data
Brisbane Waters	3/0	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data
Newcastle	Nil data	Nil data	2/0	Nil data	Nil data
Penrith	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data	Nil data
Overall results	4/0 = 100% satisfaction with Project Eyewatch generally	0/1 satisfaction with procedural fairness	8/3 = 73% satisfaction with actions and decisions	0/1 satisfaction with police contact	2/2 = 50% satisfaction with police response on Project Eyewatch

Table 5 - Key to row 1

A: LAC site

B: Police and public original posts

C: Total number of public and police comments occurring on each thread (including original post)

D: Number of issues/questions/requests

E: Police responses to identified issues/questions/requests - ratio responses/non-responses

F: Ratio of police to public engagement on all comments in a thread - ratio police comments/public comments

G: Crime and public safety: Positive or negative expression

H: Trust in police dealing of crime/policing issues. Positive or negative expression

I: Trust in police support for victims and witnesses - Positive or negative expression

J: Trust in policing of major events - Positive or negative expression

K: Trust in police response to emergencies - Positive or negative expression

L: Identified crime resolved/unresolved

M: Identified non-crime operational policing issue resolved/unresolved – eg. police promised extra patrols of main street to stop car thefts

N: Identified non-crime, non-operational policing issue resolved/unresolved eg fixed the webpage or posted a requested picture or statistic

O: Satisfaction with Project Eyewatch generally - satisfied/unsatisfied

P: Satisfied with procedural fairness - satisfied/unsatisfied

Q: Satisfied with police action/decision - satisfied/unsatisfied

R: Satisfied with police contact generally - satisfied/unsatisfied

S: Satisfied with police response on Project Eyewatch site - satisfied/unsatisfied