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Mr Tim Hughes  
Principal Research Officer  
Economics and Industry Standing Committee  
Parliament of Western Australia  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr Hughes

**RE: PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY – 2011 KIMBERLEY ULTRA MARATHON**

Western Australia Police appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission to the Economics and Industry Standing Committee to assist it in its inquiry into the 2011 Kimberley Ultra Marathon.

Please find following a submission from Superintendent Mick Sutherland APM, Kimberley Police District Officer.

Yours sincerely

M.S. (MICK) BURNBY  
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER  
REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012




**ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY STANDING  
COMMITTEE**

**Inquiry into 2011 Kimberley Ultra marathon**

**WA. Police Service**

**Superintendent Mick Sutherland APM  
Kimberley Police District Officer**

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I am the District Police Superintendent for the Kimberley based in Broome.

The State Emergency Coordinator appoints District Police Superintendents to be the District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) for their respective districts. This appointment is made pursuant to Section 29 of the Emergency Management Act 2005.

The functions of this position are contained in Section 30 of the Emergency Management Act 2005 and are as follows;

- (a) To provide advice and support to the District Emergency Management Committee for the district in the development and maintenance of emergency management arrangements for the district
- (b) To carry out emergency management functions in accordance with the directions of the State Emergency Coordinator

Further to this on 24/09/2008 a direction pursuant to Section 30(b) of the Emergency Management Act 2005 was issued by the State Emergency Coordinator to District Emergency Coordinators directing them to assist hazard management agencies during an emergency in the district to bring their functions in line with those of local emergency coordinators as designated in Section 37(4) (b) of the Emergency Management Act 2005.

### **District Emergency Management Arrangements**

State Emergency Management Policy 2.4 provides direction and advice to District Emergency Management Committees (DEMC) on their responsibilities with respect to emergency management for their district.

The DEMC is established pursuant to Section 31(1) of the Emergency Management Act 2005.

The DEMC membership is comprised of representatives from WA Police as Chair, generally the District Emergency Coordinator (DEC), Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) as Deputy Chair, local Government representatives, a representative from each emergency management agency in the district (Hazard Management Agencies) (HMAs) and support agencies (welfare and/or lifelines), representatives from relevant regional development commissions, tropical cyclone

industrial liaison committee, industry groups, advisory committees and any other representative as shall be determined by the chair of the DEMC.

The functions of the DEMC pursuant to Section 32 of the Emergency Management Act 2005 are;

- (a) To assist in the establishment and maintenance of effective emergency management arrangements for the district for which it is constituted; and
- (b) To undertake other such functions as are prescribed in the regulations.

The DEC and DEMC also have operational roles as per State Emergency Management Policy 4.1 which details the principles, structures and responsibilities which are in place to manage emergency operations.

The DEC's operational role is;

- (a) Assist the Hazard Management Agency (HMA) in the provision of a coordinated response during an emergency. These activities may include:
  - (1) Providing advice and support to the HMA in support of effective coordination particularly in multi agency responses
  - (2) The facilitation of meetings if required
  - (3) The active participation in Incident Support Groups (Local level) or Operational Area Support Groups(District Level)
  - (4) Assisting in the coordination of resources and information
  - (5) Facilitating information exchange at a local or district level
- (b) Carry out other emergency management activities in accordance with the direction of the State Emergency Coordinator. This may be a specific direction in relation to a particular matter or may be a general standing direction as to emergency management issues; and
- (c) Maintain effective communication with all coordinators involved in the emergency.

Generally, the DEMC and others as required by the DEC form the Operations Area Support Group at a District Level and assist the Operations Area Manager/Incident Controller in the strategic management of an incident/emergency in the operational area through the provision of agency specific information, expert advice, resources and support.

## **Police Experience**

I have served 34 years in the WA Police Service with 25 years of that time in regional WA.

Kimberley tenure - I previously served as a Senior Constable in Derby for 6 years leaving in December 1992; I was the Officer in Charge (OIC) of Kununurra Police Station for 3 years leaving in January 2004 and returned to Broome as the District Superintendent in May 2010.

The Kimberley Policing District covers an area of some 440,000 square kilometres with 7 Police Stations and 6 Multi Function Police Facilities (MFPF) (implemented from the Sue Gordon Report) and the district has a compliment of 180 Police Officers and 11 Police Staff.

## **Kimberley Ultra Marathon 2010**

WA Police had no direct involvement in respect to the 2010 event.

Officer In Charge (OIC) of Kununurra at the time, ex police officer Graham Sears stated Kununurra Police were not involved and were unaware of the event. Sears recalls that a number of competitors were taken to the Kununurra Hospital with dehydration.

The OIC of Wyndham at the time, Sergeant Jon Kazandzis states there was no involvement by Wyndham police in 2010.

Superintendent Murray Smalpage on the 30 April, 2010 called Samantha Fanshawe (Event Director), expressing his concern at the number of people being taken to hospital due to dehydration after being contacted by Kerry Winsor Director of Health in the Kimberley.

## Kimberley Ultra Marathon 2011

Kimberley Police Superintendent Mick Sutherland ordered a WA Police investigation on the police involvement into the Kimberley Ultra Marathon 2011 event organised and run by the company, Racing the Planet.

### **Terms of reference**

1. The seriousness of the injuries to competitors – in respect that some injuries appeared life threatening and may involve a **Coroners Report**. Two competitors were critically injured with 60% burns- Kate Sanderson and Turia Pitt.
2. Majority of event managers and competitors were from overseas and it was a priority to obtain statements before they left the country.
3. Police in partnership with a FESA fire investigator had a WA Police Arson Squad officer investigate the fire to see if there was any criminality linked to the lighting of the fire.

The WA Police **did not investigate or comment on the management or organisation of the event by** – Racing the Planet or the involvement of Tourism WA in the following;

- Planning of the event
- Preparedness of the event
- Risk Plans
- Response
- Evacuation
- Recovery

This was a private event run on private property.

### Police awareness of the event 2011

There would be no requirement to advise police as this was a private event on private property – except for the last leg which had runners moving across the diversion dam into Kununurra.

Senior Constable Tony Watson 7341 of the Permits and Parades Section of WA Police Service recalls receiving a call (date unknown) from a female seeking advice on whether runners required a permit to cross a bridge as part of a foot race in the North West.

On 16 August 2011 a Riitta Hanninen sent an email to Kununurra Police Station cc Samantha Fanshawe, which states she was an event manager for Racing the Planet and would like to advise Police of the event and gave some detail of staff and competitor numbers. Hanninen stated she had contacted Senior Constable Tony Watson about the route and running over the bridge

The content of the email presented gave no obvious need of concerns around the management of this event by Racing the Planet.

No other contact was made by the event management to Wyndham police who have jurisdiction of the El Questro area –either by racing the Planet or Kununurra Police.

#### **Police Notification 2011- Wyndham Police.**

The initial response to this incident was for *possible missing people*.

Police Assistance Centre (PAC) received a phone call at 2.34pm on Friday 2 September 2011 from FESA (Fire and Emergency Service Authority) representative.

The text of the incident;

*“Fem in group of adventurers hiking in El Questro have been separated by a bush fire. FESA contacting El Questro station for further details. Number of persons unknown. Caller was on satellite phone #881622429673.”*

Poor communications hampered Police in obtaining a detailed outline of the situation. It was only after arrival at the actual scene that Police became aware that people had been injured by a fire.

The initial problem of 2 missing people quickly changed to a possible 11 people missing.

Police vehicle access took some 45 minutes after following a gyrocopter. At 4.45pm Wyndham Police arrived at the checkpoint as directed. They initially reported that it was hard to ascertain what was happening due to language barriers.

On arrival Police found an Ambulance and 3 other official vehicles present.

People at the scene advised that 2 injured parties had been removed from the scene by Helicopter and were en-route to Kununurra Hospital. Contact with Riitta Hanninen (event co-ordinator) reveals that 41 competitors are in the race, 18 have been confirmed past checkpoint 3, 9 competitors returned to checkpoint 2, 2 have been injured and evacuated, which left 12 currently unaccounted for.

At 6.45pm Police arrived back at the checkpoint and spoke to Emma Fergusson (event manager) who confirms that all competitors have now been accounted for. The break down is as follows: 8 competitors at Kununurra Hospital, 2 at Wyndham Hospital, 11 competitors back past checkpoint 2, 20 stopped past checkpoint 3 and 9 at the checkpoint with them.

At that time all competitors had been accounted for and activities were directed towards transporting the injured to hospital. **The event was subsequently cancelled.**

### **Casualties**

Two competitors were critically injured with 60% burns- Kate Sanderson and Turia Pitt.

On Monday 05 September 2011 they were admitted in the Alfred and Concord Hospitals, NSW where their status remains at critical.

Two other competitors with less serious burns were transported to Royal Perth Hospital.

### **Arson Squad/ FESA Investigation of the Fire**

On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2011, WA Police Arson Squad Detective Senior Constable Rob Seaman attended the scene in company with District Manager Craig Waters from FESA – Fire Investigation and Analysis Unit.



Detective Senior Constable Rob Seaman has supplied a detailed report which is attached and his conclusion is;

- Based upon the initial NAFI map hotspots identified by Bass, the corroboration of the NAFI map from the fly over and observations by Cox & Trust it is my opinion that the probable area of origin for the fire is in the vicinity of the Wuggubun Community.
- Based upon the fire scene examination and all the information available to me at the time of writing this report, I have not been able to form an opinion to determine the cause of this fire.

There appears no criminality around the lighting of the fire however; there are many unanswered questions on the management of these events by Racing the Planet and the circumstances of how the competitors were able to be burnt in the fire.

### **Other Event Management**

Many events that fall within Tourism WA and Eventscorp evaluation criteria are held in Western Australia. Some are held as a single event and others continue as annual events.

WA Police have established a Major Events Coordination Unit (MECU) that will be responsible for coordinating the police response to Major Events and to ensure appropriate Risk Management arrangements are in place. A Major Event is defined in the Police Amendment Act 2011.

For Regional events that are not classified as a 'Major Event' like those sponsored by Tourism WA or Eventscorp, e.g. Kimberley Ultra Marathon, the Local Government Authority should include in their deliberations for approval a requirement of the event promoter or organiser for the LEMC to be briefed and an advice note sent to the DEMC (see conclusion).

Tourism WA, as part of their advice to event organisers is for them to engage the local police in early planning for the event, for example Red Bull Australia when holding the Red Bull Air races in Perth engaged the local community, local government, all emergency services and business.

A large part of their approach was to conduct an extensive risk assessment in conjunction with emergency services and from this establish a robust Emergency Plan aimed at providing a coordinated approach to incident management during the Red Bull Air Race, including all practice sessions.

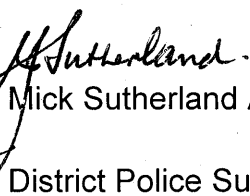
There were also extensive safety, traffic management, public health, evacuation, and medical plans to name a few. All of these plans were developed in conjunction with appropriate representatives from emergency services, support agencies and local government. The arrangement is exercised to ensure all involved are aware of their responsibilities, test communications and enable the event to be adequately staffed and logistically supported.

The plans produced by the event organiser in this example, the Red Bull Australia have been developed in conjunction with the responsible authorities, emergency services and support areas. The communications from the event organisers exists from inception to completion.

## CONCLUSION

As District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) and the District Police Superintendent it is recommended that with events of a commercial nature that fall within Tourism or Eventscorp, such as the Kimberley Ultra Marathon or similar, an application / notification in writing to the Local Authority could be made to enlist the services of the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC), with an advice slip to the District Emergency Management (DEMC).

The LEMC would then provide a coordinated approach to incident management of the event, allowing local input into the planning stage covering local hazards.

  
Mick Sutherland APM  
District Police Superintendent

Kimberley

24 MARCH 2012