Vandalism: The Activity Of Queensland Police Service

Introduction

It has come to the attention of the Queensland Police service that an urgent crime problem has been affecting the west end district of Brisbane. Brisbane has seen an increased 24,000 graffiti tags over the past year, making it a growing problem for the residents of this area. It is presumed, the council invests over three million dollars in a single year to prevent and remove this vandalism ('The writing's on the wall: joint forces to fight graffiti across Brisbane', 2019). In order to help resolve this rapidly growing problem, members of the police service will be developing an operational plan to address the crisis.

The following written proposal will address the graffiti problem within the Brisbane community. This will be done by providing an in-depth description of the subject as well as a justification for the urgency of this problem. In addition, one operational police strategie specific to vandalism will be used, namely Problem Oriented Policing (POP). This approaches will be applied to the problem. Finally, a critique will be developed to test the likelihood and effectiveness of both strategies in reducing the graffiti problem in the west end of Brisbane.

Definition

Vandalism is a term used to described as a crime which involves the intentional destruction or damage to either private or public property (Gomes, Dionísio & Pozo-Antonio, 2017). One of the most common types of vandalism is graffiti. Graffiti is an action which involves the deliberate writing or drawing on another's property without their permission. This crime can be carried out using a rang of materials, including: paint, molotow markers or the scratching of a surface with a sharp object. Graffiti generally takes place in public areas and is known as a vandalism offence (Gomes, Dionísio & Pozo-Antonio, 2017). Currently, multiple cities worldwide spend millions of dollar on cleaning projects, and it is announced that of all reported crimes, graffiti accounts for a massive 40%. Although graffiti sounds relatively black and white, there are different types. The four main types of graffiti include: gang graffiti, tagger graffiti, conventional graffiti and ideological graffiti. Gang graffiti is generally present within areas of high levels of graffiti (Weisel, 2002). This graffiti generally consists of gang names or symbols and is motivated by marked territories and threatened violence. Furthermore it can also symbolise a fallen gang member and represent gang achievements (Weisel, 2002). Another common type of graffiti is tagger graffiti. This is sub categorised into two areas: common tags and artistic tags. Common tags are done to symbolise status and a defiance of authority. This type of graffiti is high-volume and takes place in areas which are accessible and high visible to the public. In comparison to this is artistic tag, this graffiti represents identification and artistic prestige. Artistic tag graffiti generally consists of colourful pictures which are defined as complex. Another common type of graffiti is convention graffiti. This generally consists of using anything from pens to car keys. Most offenders who commit this type of graffiti usually have an impulse or are excited, bored or have resentment. Lastly is ideological graffiti. This graffiti usually occurs due to anger or hate towards a specific group of people. The graffiti is generally offensive and mostly consisting of racial, ethic and religious slurs (Weisel, 2002).

Problem Oriented Policing (POP) A common police strategy used throughout Australia and much of the world is Problem Oriented Policing or POP. The main focus of this approach is to identify and minimise specific patterns of a crime. POP does in fact use third parties to help reduce crime and disorder problems. The main objectives of this strategy is to eliminate a crime problem by reducing the enormity of the issue, reducing harm caused by the crime problem and lastly providing an effective police response. In order to succeed with these objectives a model called 'the basic POP model' has been developed (Rogers, 2009). This model comprises of three elements in order for a problem to occur. These include: an offender, a victim and a location. The basic idea of this model is to attempt to influence one or more dimensions of the three elements (Rogers, 2009).

Equally as important is the SARA model. This model is used within the problem oriented policing strategy. SARA stands for scanning, analysis, response and assessment. Each of these four elements link together and ensure the process works effectively (Rogers, 2009). The first element is scanning, and involves the use of a wide range of police data in order to identify a crime problem. The most common types of data sources used include: public information, intelligence logs, crime reports and the local police (Rogers, 2009). The next element is called the analysis, which requires a more detailed form of data. The type of data collected includes: the times and possibles dates when the offences occurred, as well as the methods, types of property, witnesses and suspects. In addition any other relevant information for other agencies will be included (Rogers, 2009). The third element is called response and requires the police to implement a suitable action/resolution to resolve the identified problem. This can involve changes to geographic features at a location, victim support or the polices action against a suspect. The use of lighting and CCTV camera can also be used (Rogers, 2009). Finally is the assessment element. This can be defined as the evaluation phase, involving an evaluation of the effectiveness of the response to the initial problem. During this stage the police will decide if all the objectives were met and how the solution was managed (Rogers, 2009). The POP approach has become an exceptionally well carried out strategy for solving crime problems. There are a number benefits for the police service, such as: allowing the police to use this approach on all types of crime problems and using partnership work to eradicate community issues. It also allows police to asses solutions and evaluate ways they can improve for future crime initiatives. Lastly, this approach uses a scientific analysis's in order to guide officers in the right direction for possible solution which can them be implemented and assessed for effectiveness (Rogers, 2009).

Applying the strategy

As stated above, it is evident that a crime problem exists within the west end Brisbane area. Graffiti has been identified as a growing problem, especially within parks and public spaces. This crime problem requires urgent attention from the Queensland police service. In order to help resolve and minimise this issue, the police service will be using a specific strategy known as problem oriented policing (POP). This will involve the use of officers as well as community members.

The first step to tackle this problem will be to using the community. This will be done by implementing community awareness campaigns which will ensure members of the Brisbane community are aware of graffiti problem. The benefit of this strategy is using the community to identify when the crime is occurring, by reporting to crime stoppers police are able to grasp and

idea into the places and time in which graffiti is taking place. In addition foot patrols and increased informal surveillance can be implemented.

The use of the SARA model is extremely important when using problem oriented policing. This will be applied by using the four elements discussed earlier. Firstly the scanning element would be applied. This will involve identifying to recurring issue of graffiti and recording its severity. Data such as intelligence logs, crime reports, public information, and the local police will be looked at to recognise the growing crime problem. This will be followed by the analysis stage. This involves the police analysising data collected in the scanning stage. This data includes: primary locations of the crime and the common time occurrence. For the graffiti problem in the west end of Brisbane it has been identified that community parks are the typical location for the crime to occur. In addition the offences generally takes place between 9pm - 1am. This data is helpful as it allows the police to determine the areas and times they should be targeting. The response will be the next element applied to the graffiti problem. This will require a suitable action plan to be constructed. Specifically for the graffiti problem in the west end of Brisbane the police service will be implementing more adequate lighting within parks and public spaces. This is aimed to deter criminals. In addition the use of CCTV camera’s as well as occasional police portals will be used. Finally an assessment of the above action plan will be carried out. This will include determining if the objectives of the plan were achieved using qualitative and quantitative data. This will be done over a 12 month basis to see if the above resolutions have made a significant difference to the graffiti problem.

Conclusion

The Queensland Police service were given an urgent crime problem (graffiti) which was affecting the west end district of Brisbane. In order to help resolve this rapidly growing issue, members of the police service developed an operational plan to address the crisis.

The above written proposal addressed the graffiti problem. This was done by providing an in-depth description of the subject as well as a justification of the urgency of this problem. In addition, an operational police strategy was used, namely Problem Oriented Policing (POP). This approach was applied to the graffiti problem and an action plan was proposed. The action plan included the installation of adequate lighting within parks and public space in and area the west end of Brisbane. In addition the use of CCTV camera’s and occasional police portals were proposed. These resolution are thought to deter criminals from the area. Finally, a critique was developed to test the likelihood and effectiveness of strategy in reducing the graffiti problem in the west end of Brisbane.