

Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia

Report by Thang Ngo, 2002 Churchill Fellow

*Improving Relationship between
Police and Ethnic Communities, May 2002*

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Executive Summary

Cabramatta, one of the most multicultural communities in Australia is famous for all the wrong reasons. For over a decade, drugs and crime seem intrinsically linked with Cabramatta.

This reflects negatively on the predominantly hardworking and honest members of the local community. The findings of the recent NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Cabramatta Policing, handed down in July 2001, were not too flattering for the NSW Police Force either.

Yet we had the community complaining that Police were slow or unresponsive. While Police were frustrated at Cabramatta's "wall of silence" which severely hampered investigations.

It wasn't too hard to conclude that improving the relationship between Police and the culturally diverse local community would help make Cabramatta safer and improve the image of both NSW Police and the local community.

Now and again, media commentators, academics, Police, politicians raise suggestions on how we could improve relations between Police and ethnic communities. Language and cultural issues were frequently raised as barriers. However it seems these ideas were not consolidated into the one place.

Additionally, it seems we were learning through making mistakes, ignoring the experience of overseas communities.

I used this Churchill Trust Fellowship Award to identify and consolidate the key issues in improving Police and ethnic community relationship and to seek out overseas programs and experiences which may help overcome these issues.

The benefits of this Fellowship extends beyond Cabramatta given almost one in four people in Australia were born overseas. As such, I believe the findings may be beneficial the Australian community as a whole.

Key countries visited on my study include:

- **Singapore:** multicultural society, strong community, law and order emphasis.
- **Vietnam:** to understand reluctance of locals in dealing with authority.
- **France:** Europe's largest Vietnamese settlement.
- **UK:** study Metropolitan Police and community's response to ethnic policing issues which have been dominating media headlines.
- **USA:** Westminster, Orange County and San Jose are areas of high Vietnamese born concentration.

Language is the most obvious barrier but to my surprise, it is often understated in importance as I discovered out during my visit to France. Although, I have been described as an outspoken, assertive individual, my the lack of French language skills changed me into an introverted, quiet visitor.

While in Vietnam, I saw how locals go out of their way not to involve authorities in their everyday lives and gave me an insight into why residents in Cabramatta are reluctant to contact Police.

Singapore was an eye opener in terms of community involvement in policing and how an efficient, responsive Police Force earns a great deal of trust with the general community.

Community groups, especially the 1990 Trust in London, were inspiring in the way they organise and advocate on behalf of the black community. The impact of a racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence, a black youth and the subsequent Parliamentary Inquiry into his death reminded me how we need a crisis before "ethnic issues" are treated seriously.

The USA, especially San Jose Police Department, with 30 Vietnamese officers gave me hope that NSW may one day boast similar figures. The "Tran Truong" incident where a flag and a poster ignited a 53 day demonstration in Westminster, Orange County provided yet another reminder of the sensitive nature of policing ethnic communities.

What's clear from my Churchill Trust study is that everyone need to work together, including Police, local community groups and their members, as well as groups, government departments, government agencies and media.

I take this opportunity to thank everyone that has taken the time to meet, speak or correspond with me in relation to this study. Your generosity has been very much appreciated.

This report including recommendations will be distributed widely, including to Cabramatta Police and the office of the Police Commissioner, government and government departments, including NSW's Premier's Office, Upper House Parliamentary General Purpose Standing Committee looking into Policing, Community Relations Commission, ethnic community groups including Ethnic Communities (ECC) of NSW, Vietnamese Community of Australia (VCA) NSW, Vietnamese Elderly Friendship Association, Vietnamese Women's Association, Australian Chinese Community Association (ACCA) of NSW, Australian Chinese Charity Foundation (ACCF) as well as made available to the public on my website www.thangngo.com.

If some of these recommendations are adopted and they work, then we are a step closer to a safer community.

Acknowledgments: *First and foremost, I would like to extend sincere thanks to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia for giving me this invaluable opportunity to study the relationship between police and ethnic communities overseas.*

And I'd also like to thank everyone who has taken the time to share their ideas with me both overseas and in Australia.

Program

Singapore

Khoo Boon Hui, Singapore Commissioner of Police
Tan Puay Kern, Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police
Lock Wai Han, Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Police
Ng Guat Ting, Superintendent of Police
Lee Chee Chiew, Deputy Superintendent of Police
Tan Tin Wee, Assistant Superintendent of Police
Cheng Khee Boon, Assistant Superintendent of Police
Lim Poh Chee, Home Affairs Executive
Melinda Nathan, community activist

Vietnam

Anonymous interviews with residents

France

Nguyen An, Vietnamese community member

UK

Anthony M. Bennett, Metropolitan Police
PC Reg Greenacre, Metropolitan Police
Mohamed Mohamud, Member Police Multicultural Advisory Council
Vinh Quoc Hoang, BBC World Service
Hung Nguyen, BBC World Service
Karen Chouhan, Executive Director 1990 Trust

USA

James Cook, Chief of Police, Westminster
Julia Lim, Westminster Police
Councillor Tony Lam, Westminster Council
Katherine Nguyen, Orange County Register
Rocio Gonzales, Orange County District Attorney's Office
Linda Le, Orange County District Attorney's Office
Councillor Van Thai Tran, Orange Grove Council
Hong Cam Le, Vietnamese community member
William M. Landsdowne, Chief of Police, San Jose
Lt Scott Cornfield, San Jose Police
Capt Randal Cooper, San Jose Police
Tony Tran, San Jose Police
Thang Le, San Jose Police
Dat T. Nguyen, Executive Director, Vietnamese American Council

Background

There is very little trust between many sections of the Cabramatta community and the [Police] Local Area Command. People from a non-English speaking background feel particularly isolated from their local Police... There may be many who have positive experiences of policing in their area but they have remained silent during this inquiry.¹

This conclusion, from a year-long NSW Upper House Inquiry into Cabramatta Police summarises most succinctly the relationship between Police and the community they protect.

Cabramatta is the most extreme example of ethnic diversity, "... in NSW as a whole, only 23% of persons speak a language other than English. The situation is reversed in Cabramatta: more than 75% speak another language, and many are not fluent in English"².

The key issues in terms of relationship breakdown between Police and the ethnic communities have been discussed from time to time by different commentators.

The objective of my Churchill Trust report is to consolidate many of the key issues in 'one place' and use the learning from my Churchill Trust Fellowship to suggest potential answers.

If these answers are applied and prove to work for Cabramatta, then I hope they would also work in other parts of Australia.

How do Police and Ethnic Communities relate?

Interaction between Police and the community can be segmented into two categories, direct and indirect.

Direct interaction involves personal contact between resident and Police. For example to report a break-in, or in the opposite case, Police needing the assistance of the community to solve a crime.

The party seeking assistance has an expectation about the response from the other party. For example, when a resident reports a break-in, they expect a certain level of service from the Police.

Judgements about the success or otherwise of the interaction are made relatively quickly and creates a longer impression because the contact is more personal.

Indirect interaction occurs when the parties are not in direct contact. For example, a Police representative is seen by locals at a cultural or religious event or when the community reads reports about Police activities in the media.

¹ Upper House report on Inquiry into Cabramatta Policing, NSW Parliament, July 2001, p69.

² Ibid, p6.

Judgements about the other party build slowly over time reflecting the less personal contact.

Indirect interaction is not necessarily less important in relationship building. For example, media reports of Police 'dropping the ball' in Cabramatta in the wake the Cabramatta Inquiry have damaged the confidence in local Police.

The reverse is also true. Police officers seeing media reports of 'ethnic' crime waves form an impression about members of that community.

These two categories are also not mutually exclusive, the responsive conduct of a Police representative at a cultural celebration may encourage a member of the community into direct interaction, by coming forward to report crimes in the future.

Similarly, a positive direct interaction may encourage a member of the public to speak of his or her positive experience to a family member leading to a positive indirect interaction experience for the family member.

The implication of this is that the community and the Police need to ensure all interactions, whether they are direct or indirect, be positive. That is, while Police should be 'out there' fighting crime, it is also important for Police walking the beat to behave in a culturally sensitive way.

What are the key issues?

The table below summarises the key issues impacting on the relationship between Police and ethnic communities. Some of the issues have been highlighted by the Cabramatta Inquiry³, the remainder are from my two and a half years of experience as the only Vietnamese-speaking councillor in the Cabramatta ward of Fairfield council.

Issues	Impact
<i>Direct</i>	
Language	Can't communicate.
Ethnic Police	Improve communication, breaks down cultural barriers.
Culture	Fear/mistrust of Police/community, awareness of policing, judicial system, fear of reprisals.
Competency	Inspires confidence and trust
<i>Indirect</i>	
Community Consultation	Improve communication, breaks down cultural barriers, empowers community, builds trust.
Media	Improve communication, understanding, builds trust.
Research/survey	Identifies key issues and assists in strategically addressing them.

³ Ibid, p77.

Direct Interaction

Language

More than half of Cabramatta's population speak either Vietnamese or Chinese⁴. In terms of English proficiency, two in five Vietnamese and Chinese speakers in the area claim to speak English poorly or not at all⁵.

Poor language skills is a key barrier which deters residents from reporting crimes and makes Police investigations relatively more difficult and time consuming. The obvious importance of language can often be understated. After one week in France, I experience a strong sense of disempowerment due to language problems; most nights I would go without dinner because I did not feel confident enough to negotiate a meal at a restaurant in French. Other times, I would go to a fast food place or the supermarket to get dinner because it requires little French. If the language barrier can prevent me from eating, the most basic human need, I could see how it prevents others from reporting crimes to Police.

Language is a universal problem for all Police Forces around the world that serve residents from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Chief Cook, head of Westminster Police in California recalled a recent incident where a Vietnamese resident left an old fridge outside for the council to collect and dump. Police were concerned that a child could climb into the fridge and get trapped inside so a Policeman advised the resident to turn the fridge so that the door was against the wall of the house. It took Police 45 minutes to explain this simple request.

All Police jurisdictions visited nominated recruitment of ethnic Police as the most important strategy in addressing language barriers. However almost they also acknowledged practical difficulties in recruiting officers from ethnic backgrounds.

While recruitment of ethnic Police is still a considerable obstacle, recruitment of administrative staff from ethnic background is considerably easier. Police Commissioners from San Jose and Westminster identified this strategy as one way to overcome the language problem. Having multi-lingual staff, especially at the front counter, is particularly helpful in the absence of ethnic Police.

All Police departments contacted had access to third party telephone interpreting services, as does NSW Police. This is used when a non-English speaking resident comes to the Police station to make a report. However, a phone translation service, while useful, is not ideal according to Dat T. Nguyen, Executive Director of the Vietnamese American Council in San Jose. There is often a wait to get an interpreter and some issues are just too difficult to describe over the phone. His response is consistent with Cabramatta resident experiences⁶.

⁴ Ibid, p6.

⁵ ABS, 1996 Census.

⁶ Cabramatta constituent responses during the course of Council work.

When it comes to calling the Police, Captain Cooper from San Jose Police Department's specialist community relations unit cites locals' dissatisfaction with 'phone trees' where residents have to select different options, including language options using their touch phone. For the Latino and Vietnamese communities, San Jose Police Department issues direct phone contact numbers for officers who speak the relevant language.

At the request of Cabramatta Police, the local TAFE has run a basic Vietnamese language course for some of its officers. This option has not been seriously considered by overseas counterparts. When discussed with community groups in UK and USA, it was generally recognised as a positive initiative but some said most serious interaction between Police and residents require a greater command of the language than a short language course.

The language problem should not be solely the burden of Police. Some interviewed said they preferred greater access to free or low cost English classes because it will help them with all mainstream services, not just Police. All mentioned that English classes should be flexible and appropriate to the needs of different segments in their communities, for example, the elderly and mothers not in the workforce.

Ethnic Police

In NSW, almost one in four were born overseas and 15.7% were born in a non-English speaking country. In Cabramatta more than 75% of residents speak a language other than English at home and more than 60% were born overseas⁷.

In NSW, exact numbers of ethnic Police are not known. Statistics reported in NSW Police annual reports each year are based only on information volunteered by officers. These figures, shown below, indicate the numbers of ethnic Police have started from a low base and are declining.

Uniformed Officers	98/99	99/00	00/01
NESB	280	268	234
Total Police	13,471	13,483	13,614
NESB % Total	2.08%	1.99%	1.72%

In terms of improving Police and community relationship, this initiative was mentioned by almost all Police and community groups consulted. Often it was the first to be mentioned.

Our ethnic Police figures contrast with the successful efforts of Singapore Police, where minorities account for 36% of the 8,000 strong Police Force⁸. Singapore Police attribute this success to the country's long history of multicultural policies

⁷ Upper House report on Inquiry into Cabramatta Policing, NSW Parliament, July 2001, p6.

⁸ Singapore Police Force, Public Affairs: minorities include Malay, Indian, Others.

and strong level of community support for the government and Police, as well as compulsory national service, which could involve placement with local Police.

I expected to find widespread community dissatisfaction in the Singapore "Police State" instead the response from most community advocates, taxi drivers, bus drivers, hotel staff and store keepers was very positive towards the Singapore Police Force. Ms Melinda Nathan, a local Indian community activist says the confidence comes from community perception that their local Police Force is efficient, responsive in dealing with the community, has fair and balanced recruitment policies and is strongly seen as not corrupt.

Singapore Police has limited need to advertise to attract recruits. Their main recruitment activities are running job fairs and advertising during holidays to attract school and university leavers.

In Westminister California, home of 'Little Saigon', Vietnamese-born alone make up over 30% of the population of 88,000. Of the 105 strong uniformed Police Force, three are Vietnamese officers and two are administrative staff.

In comparison, Cabramatta LAC serves a population of 57,557 with 111⁹ uniformed officers. At the time of the Parliamentary Inquiry, there were no Vietnamese or Chinese speaking officers.

Westminster Police Chief James Cook says there are particular issues in relation to recruiting Police from Vietnamese background. He believes some cultures are not disposed to a machismo oriented occupation such as policing. According to Chief Cook, this explains why it is easy to recruit Police from a Latino background compared to those from an Asian culture.

Westminster local government councillor, Tony Lam says ethnic Police recruitment and retention issues are only paid lip service. He is frustrated at the number of times he has had to raise it with the City Manager. In most US states, Police responsibility has been delegated to the local councils. Police Chiefs are appointed by local council and report directly to the City Manager.

The City Manager of neighbouring Garden Grove says Police officers based in schools as a positive crime prevention initiative as well as improving relationship between Police and NESB youth, removing some impediments for them to join the Police Force in the future.

San Jose with over 78,000 Vietnamese born residents has recently taken over the Westminster/Orange Grove area (62,500) in terms of Vietnamese population. In the Force of 1,350 uniformed officers, 30 are from a Vietnamese speaking background.

Contrary to the generally accepted rule that ethnic Police are placed under pressure from both community and Police, Officer Le from San Jose Police

⁹ Report on Inquiry into Cabramatta Policing, July 2001, p35-36.

Department says he does not experience any more pressure than his non-ethnic colleagues. He estimates his beat is 50% Vietnamese, many with poor English skills.

For the Police Departments discussed above, no targets are set in terms of recruitment of NESB Police.

In the wake of the racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence in the UK, which sparked a parliament inquiry, targets were set from April 1999 by the home secretary, Jack Straw¹⁰. At the time, 2% of all UK police were from an ethnic background and the overall target set was 7%. Recruitment targets were set down to the Police Force Areas and mirrored the ethnic make up of that Area. For example, the Metropolitan Police serves a population where 25% were from an ethnic background and the target for ethnic police were 25% of the Metropolitan Police force¹¹.

In hindsight, the Metropolitan Police has found out these targets are long term ones and in the short run, they have proved to be unrealistic.

Most Police Department believes they will be eventually successful in reaching young ethnic recruits. However, the majority of young ethnic recruits are not fluent in their parents' tongue. The issue is to attract recruits who are fluent in both English and their parent's language.

In Australia, the problem goes beyond attracting ethnic Police. It is difficult to attract recruits even from the mainstream community. And this is not just the case for the Police Force but also for armed forces such as the Navy, Army and Airforce. However, the active TV and cinema advertising presence of the defence force contrasts with NSW Police activities.

With the events of September 11 there appears to be a renewed interest in the defence and Police Forces in the US. Singapore Police have reported no major impediments with attracting recruits.

There did not seem to be strong NESB Police support and retention policies in place in the Police Forces visited, with the exception of Singapore Police, where the distinction between "mainstream" and "ethnic" police seem less obvious.

Cultural

The NSW Parliamentary Inquiry found that the Cabramatta community and their local Police were moving in parallel lines, being kept apart by a cultural and linguistic gap.

¹⁰ Race Equality – The Home Secretary's Employment Targets: Staff Targets for the Home Office, the Prison, the Police, the First and the Probation Services, 28 July 1999.

¹¹ Ibid, p12.

For many communities, the Police Force is an authority to turn to as a 'last resort'. In Vietnam today, traffic accidents are sorted out by the individuals as the parties do not often have insurance and bringing Police into the picture only means extra red tape and potentially extra penalties.

Similarly in the previous Vietnamese government there was a perception that Police were corrupt and bribes were required to get action. Now, in their new Australian homeland, many migrants are simply unaware that the local Police and judicial system is completely different to their homeland.

This lack of awareness leads to a community perception that local Police are too soft. There is little appreciation of the need to get a search warrant before conducting home searches, a bail system which sees alleged criminals freed pending the trial and the onus of proof 'beyond a reasonable doubt' etc.

Many are unaware that witnesses may be required to give evidence in court. When many find out, they withdraw their statements for fear of reprisals causing Police efforts to be frustrated.

Police often claim that the local community put up a 'wall of silence' when Police need assistance in solving crimes.

On the other hand past Police practices, while unintended, have contributed to the gap between the community and Police. For example, the practice of strip searching community members in public has humiliated not just the person being searched but all members of the community who witnessed it. The action of Police officers stepping into shops uninvited to build a relationship with shopkeepers have been mistakenly interpreted as Police looking to issue fines.

Westminster Police Chief Cook provided a good example in the 'Tran Truong' incident. During January 1999, Mr Tran Truong a local video shop owner displayed the communist Vietnamese Flag and picture of Ho Chi Minh in the his window of his video shop, Hi Tek¹².



Members of the local Vietnamese community staged a blockade of the shop demanding the offending material be taken down. Tran Truong was attacked several times by protesters. Protests even spread to San Jose.

¹² Ho Chi Minh Poster and Flag visuals courtesy of cnn.com.

Protesters felt the Police could have forcibly taken down the offending material apparently unaware of America's First Amendment rights which protected Tran Truong's right to display the material and also guaranteed Police protection.



News coverage of Tran Truong beaten by anti-communist Vietnamese in Westminster on February 11, 1999¹³.

Westminster Police Captain Andrew Hall said city officials don't have the right to remove the items from private property. "It's political speech," Hall said. "And because it's political speech, law prevents the government from interfering with it."¹⁴



Anti-communist protesters¹⁵.

As the protest dragged on, up to 30 protesters were arrested. And with each passing day the relationship between members of the Vietnamese-American community and Westminster Police deteriorated.

The relationship was strained further on February 26th with media reports that Police may have directed racist language towards demonstrators during

¹³ CBS TV, 11 February 1999

¹⁴ "Ho Chi Minh poster angers Vietnamese Americans", cnn.com, 21 January 2001.

¹⁵ Protesters visual courtesy of cnn.com.

confrontations the previous weekend¹⁶. The Police Chief held a press conference the same day to announce an inquiry into the incident.

The blockade ended on March 11 when Tran Truong was formally evicted by his landlord.

While it may be difficult to know how to deal with emotive issues such as this one, it is clear that cultural issues could turn a flag into a 53 day protest.

Improving awareness of local laws, Police and judicial systems will only help to encourage greater participation, break down the wall of silence and enhance relationship.

Rocio Gonzale and Linda Le from the Community Liaison office of the Orange County District Attorney's Office says their community education program does just that. Orange County covers Westminster and neighbouring Garden Grove. They conducted focus groups with target communities such as Latino and Vietnamese to identify key policing and law and order concerns. The research identified key awareness gaps which became the basis for a 60 page booklet called "Community Education Services".

The booklet covered key policing issues such as rape, domestic violence, gang violence, business extortion and outlined what residents can do about it. Importantly the booklet also explains the process involved in a criminal prosecution from the time a crime is reported. The booklets were produced for key community languages including Spanish and Vietnamese.

To ensure the message gets across, the District Attorney's Office employs Latino and Vietnamese liaison officers. In addition, the DA's Office is assisted by some 100 volunteers of different cultural backgrounds who also help to spread the message to their communities as required.

To assist Police in understanding diverse communities some general cultural awareness training is conducted, mainly in the Police academy. However, in the countries visited, there doesn't seem to be formal, ongoing training for Police to deal with specific communities that are over-represented in their local command.

Service Standard

Relationship and trust are also built on a successful track record. A responsive, efficient Police Force encourages greater confidence and trust by the community.

Without a set of clear service standards it is difficult for new migrants to know what to expect and for the community to evaluate the performance of their Police Force.

¹⁶ kikon.com/s chronology of the Tran Truong flag protest.

Of the Police departments visited, Singapore Police and UK's Metropolitan Police are the most explicit and comprehensive in terms of articulating a service standard.

Singapore Police "Service Pledge" is a core part of its Mission and Core Values statement.

Key service pledges include¹⁷:

- Answer '999' calls within 10 seconds (3 rings) in at least 90% of cases.
- Arrive at urgent incidents within 15 minutes and non-urgent incidents within 30 minutes for at least in 85% of cases.
- Respond to letters from the public within 5 working days in 90% of cases. Residents will always be given the name and the telephone number of an officer to contact if further assistance is required.
- Update victims of crime on the outcome of cases within 28 days in 90% of cases.

It's not surprising, given these enviable service standards that the Singapore community trusts and highly values its Police Force.

Other Programs

The San Jose Police Department approach to overcoming cultural and language issues rely on their ethnic officers. Citizen Protector community outreach program is driven from their Community Services Division and involves promoting ethnic officers as the key contact for their community, becoming the crucial linguistic and cultural conduit.

The Citizen Protector for the Vietnamese community is Officer Tony Tran of San Jose Police Department. Officer Tran is featured on Police posters, swap cards, business cards and other support materials which are distributed to the community.

Officer Tran attends community functions, answers questions on local Vietnamese TV and radio each month as well as attend job fairs to encourage young Vietnamese-Americans to consider the Police as a career option.

PC Reg Greenacre from the Chinatown Unit of UK's Metropolitan Police Force fulfils a similar role. Fluent in Chinese, he is the face of the Metropolitan Police for London's Chinatown.

These programs involve sworn officers, while NSW's Ethnic Community Liaison Officer (ECLLO) program employ administrative officers. Generally, residents prefer dealing with sworn Police officers because they believe the officers can deal directly with their problem and may not have to refer the matter on.

¹⁷ Further information: Singapore Police website – spinet.gov.au.

Indirect Interaction

Advisory Committees

Like NSW, most Police departments visited have some form of ethnic advisory committee. London's Metropolitan Police Multicultural Independent Advisory Council is made up of many critics of Police. According to one of the members, Mohamed Mohamud, they may not agree with the Police all the time and they may not get 100% of what is requested, however, the community feels they have had an opportunity to raise important issues. While the Council meets monthly, Police and members of the Council are in more frequent contact.

Singapore Police's committee model works on the local command level or Neighbourhood Police Centre (NPC) level. Chaired by Police and with membership from relevant business, community and government agencies, the committee comes up with local solutions for local problems.

Rochor NPC, one of the most multicultural areas in Singapore, covers both 'Little India' and 'Little Thailand'. On weekends members of these communities converge on specific areas in the NPC creating traffic and noise issues for locals. The Little Thailand Working Committee, chaired by local NPC commander ASP Cheng Khee Boon comes up with a local solution, which involves organising sporting and cultural Thai activities at Kallang Riverside Park, away from residential properties where there is space and parking. Each member of the Committee plays a role; Thai community groups take responsibility for organising sporting competitions and cultural shows, Council regularly washes floors outside shops on main street to deter groups from congregating, Police assist to direct traffic.

The UK's 1990 Trust is a community organisation which advocates for the 'black' community. 1990 Trust is focussed at analysing the impact of government policy and legislation and feeding back community response to governments and their agencies, including the Police. This model is different from traditional ethnic community groups which are predominantly focussed on providing migrant welfare and settlement referral services.

Media

While it is impossible for Police to reach every member of every ethnic community personally, ethnic media is an effective way to get through to many at the one time.

Ethnic media traditionally have high penetration because it is often the only way migrants with limited English can get news about politics, sport and current affairs in their homeland.

In the case of Citizen Protector program in Westmister California, local Vietnamese TV and radio stations have offered San Jose Police free weekly segments because they feel the content is of great value to their audience.

However, due to Police resource constraints the segment is only produced monthly.

In many countries media are obliged to dedicate some airtime to community service messages which have been used by the Police to communicate with the local community.

London's Metropolitan Police have worked successfully with Carlton TV network's Community Programs Unit to produce the award winning "Guns on our Streets" series an initiative to break the cycle of youth gangs and guns in London.

Guns on our Streets was an opportunity for Police, ethnic communities and the media to work collaboratively on an important community safety issue and get that message across on TV.

The issue of media ethnic stereotyping is an issue with many community groups who argue media coverage of their community has focussed, almost obsessively on the negative. In general they distrust the media and do not feel equipped or prepared to deal with them. However, there was an appreciation that mainstream media coverage drives the mainstream perception of their community and that it was important to engage with the media to counter balance negative stereotypes.

Participation in Community Events

All Police Departments identified participation in key community cultural and religious events as an important strategy for Police to understand the community and to breakdown barriers.

Beyond just being there, California's Westminster Police participated in Lunar New Year Parade and Markets by taking out floats and stands to provide in-language information to the local ethnic communities.

Research and Surveys

In California, both Westminster Police and Orange County DA's Office have found research helped their understanding of the local ethnic communities.

As outlined earlier, in Orange County, research has helped to identify awareness gaps in relation to the local justice system and helped to drive content and the strategy of their community awareness campaign.

For Westminster Police, research was undertaken after a breakdown in Police and Vietnamese community relationship in the wake of the "Tran Truong" incident.

In this case the research benchmark community attitude towards Police allowing them to monitor success of campaigns to repair the damage.

Youth Issues

Young people from some ethnic communities seem to come into contact with Police more frequently.

As young people of ethnic background grow up and absorb local culture, they are seen by their parents and their respective community, as being more Australian. While the Australian general community still sees them as ethnic.

It was clear that the ethnic youth community needed their own group to advocate on their behalf. It's hard to say if these groups existed and if they did I was not able to contact them.

The complex nature of ethnic youth issues and their sometimes, tenuous relationship with Police warrants a separate study and I have not explored them in this Report.

Conclusion

Almost one in four people in Australia were born overseas.

Improving the relationship between Police and ethnic communities will only help create a safer, more harmonious Australian community.

It can only be achieved by everyone working together.

Some of the key issues have been identified in this report as well as the approach taken by Police overseas to address them. Some may work locally, others may not.

This report including recommendations will be shared with Police, government and ethnic community groups. If some of these recommendations are adopted and works then we are a step closer to a safer community and even if they do not work, at least we would have the satisfaction of knowing that we've tried.

Recommendations

1. **English Classes:** greater availability of free or affordable English classes. Class hours and content to be flexible enough to cater for key segments of the NESB community such as mothers, elderly.
2. **Cultural Awareness Training:** to be part of induction program for new officers at the LAC and to be specifically relevant to that LAC.
3. **Multilingual Counter Officers:** at least one front desk staff proficient in a major language of the area for all shifts.
4. **Administrative Staff:** essential criteria for job descriptions should be the ability to work with staff and customers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Desirable criteria should include proficiency in a relevant local language.
5. **Targets for Ethnic Police:** for NSW and LACs with high proportion of ethnic residents.
6. **Ethnic Recruitment:** NSW Police Force to conduct study of overseas ethnic recruitment initiatives, in particular San Jose, UK, Canada and Singapore. NSW Police to consider recruiting overseas officers.
7. **Recruitment Budget:** greater budget allocated for recruitment for both ethnic and mainstream.
8. **Development of retention and support policies:** for ethnic Police, with clearly defined objectives and targets. Also study overseas experiences.
9. **Bridging Courses:** to equip new migrants with relevant skills to join the Police Force, for example, intensive English programs. This attracts recruits who are proficient in another language.
10. **Community Outreach Programs:** to improve community's understanding of the Police and judicial system in NSW. NSW Police to further study the Citizen Protector and Orange County's Community Education Services programs.
11. **Review existing NSW Police and Ethnic Advisory Council (PECAC) and CityWatch Programs:** against other community consultation models overseas.
12. **Policy and Advocacy Group:** local ethnic community groups to consider setting up their own policy and advocacy organisations in addition to current welfare and settlement groups. 1990 Trust model to be studied further.
13. **Ethnic Media Strategy:** NSW Police to develop detailed media strategy with clearly defined objectives and targets.
14. **Media Training for Community Groups:** to empower them to interact with mainstream media.
15. **Establish Service Standards:** for common response times similar to Singapore and UK models. Ensure community is aware of these standards.
16. **Research:** benchmark ethnic community perception and attitude towards NSW Police and develop explicit strategies to address concerns. Follow up research to monitor success of strategies.
17. **Youth Strategies:** Further study conducted specifically on ways to improve the relationship between ethnic youth and Police.