



## National Officer Exchange

(Melbourne Exchange)

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Parking and Information Officers

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. We were briefed by the Parking Manager and Team Leaders to participate in the National Officer Exchange program in Melbourne from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 1998. The requirements were to report back on the various operations and procedures of the City of Melbourne's Law Enforcement officers.

## 2. FINDINGS

- 2.1. A listing of various topics was provided to give us a basis to document a report, as outlined below:
  - 2.1.1. **Rosters.** The Day Workers work on a ten week roster cycle. In the ten weeks they receive one block of 7 days off as well as RDO's and other specified days (see attachment A). Each team is rostered in a particular area for the ten weeks and the officers receive a roster each day to work a section of the designated area. There are also shift workers who operate separately to day workers.
  - 2.1.2. **Alternate Duties.** The Melbourne Officers main focus is on parking operations and traffic control for major events in and around the city i.e., football at MCG, Grand Prix, concerts etc. This includes barricading streets to divert traffic and closing some streets at certain times of the day due to heavy pedestrian usage. The only real variety that exists is whether they operate out of a vehicle or by foot patrol.
  - 2.1.3. **Ticket Issuing.** Melbourne's officers have the same Autocite System as ours at present. The procedure for issuing tickets is very similar to ours but they tend not to have a good look around or give customers any grace period. The officers would regularly cross the street to issue a ticket on the other side of the road. If patrolling in a vehicle the officers drive around until an infringing vehicle is sighted, they would then pull over nearby and get out of the vehicle to issue an infringement. Once a ticket is issued they mark the tyre of the vehicle. They are currently doing trials on a new machine called "Ticket Man" which they hope to put into operation by mid April. Ticket man is around half the size of an Autocite and very light weight, it uses a cursor to scroll through menu options instead of a key pad. We thought that the machine did not carry enough tickets and would require extensive training, however from a size, weight, explanation of circumstances, portability and user friendliness point of view we found that once in use "ticket man" could become a valuable asset to its user.

- 2.1.4. Work Conditions.** Vehicles are highly utilised for patrols. Officers with back problems are issued with marking sticks to make chalking easier, the marking sticks were especially designed for this purpose. Each team leader has a computer that is linked to the Internet and the officers are free to use the system in their own time. The officers crib room has a pool table and table tennis table to keep officers occupied during breaks. They have basic kitchen facilities and they have male and female toilet and shower facilities in their base station. Care of equipment is not necessarily of a high priority. They are currently undertaking tests in heat stress and its effect on officers. They also have a wet weather policy where they do not work in the rain at all. They are not issued with any wet weather gear, although their leather jackets are waterproofed.
- 2.1.5. Dress Code.** The officers are given a dress standard and expected to comply by it. The dress code is virtually the same as the code being implemented presently by the Hobart City Council. It is operated by their uniform committee. There is one representative from each team on the uniform committee
- 2.1.6. Employment Needs.** They are seeking to employ friendly natured and approachable people with good communication and customer skills as well as motivated people with a good work ethic. Staff are expected to work as a team and give above average performances. They are encouraged to always be a visual presence in their area.
- 2.1.7. Radio Procedures.** These are similar to our procedures. They have code systems, for example a code 1 is for an abusive or threatening situation, they have a button on their radio/phone that when depressed sets off an alarm in their base station so officers can gain assistance. They also have a software program on the computer system that records the duration of the call, the time and from which Officer the call was received. Each officer is allocated their own radio which they use all the time.
- 2.1.8. Bench Marking.** Each officers performance is bench marked against other Team Members, as is each team against each other, on a weekly and monthly basis (see attachment B). A copy of the benchmarking is issued to each officer and openly displayed. I feel this gives the individual officer an understanding of how he/she is performing as a member of their team. It encourages some officers to work harder and measure up to the standard their team mates are setting, but, on the same token it opens up opportunities for officers to criticise each other, and thus create tension in the workplace. It appeared that Melbourne did not have this problem. Each officer performs to his or her own standard

and use the benchmarking as an indication of how their individual performance is going.

**2.1.9. Shifts.** They have four teams of shift workers. The shift workers work 4 days on and 4 days off, two nights and two days in each shift. Each shift is 12 hours. Day shift is broken up into an early and a late day shift as is the night shift (see attachment C)

**2.1.10. Training.** Upon initial employment, officers receive 4 weeks of theory training in the act. They are then sent out on the road with another officer to learn all other aspects of the job for as long as necessary. They are also encouraged to learn how to use the computer to do up the pays and other various duties that are more commonly the Team Leaders duty. They will receive training in the operation of "ticket man" when it is implemented for a trial period later in the year.

**2.1.11. Teams.** They have eight teams, four shift teams and four day teams. Each team consists of a team leader, a class 4 and approximately 12 officers. Class 4's are 2IC to their Team Leader and take over all of their Team Leaders duties when they are unavailable or on leave. They are also the training officer for any new employees assigned to their team, as well as performing various other functions. The Team Leaders frequently go out on the road with their officers and issue tickets themselves. As well as this, they patrol their teams area by vehicle to ensure everything is operating effectively. Officers are encouraged to stay out in their area for breaks, the team members often meet and have breaks together as a team. The officers seem to get along well with their Team Leaders on a personal level. If a Team performs well for the month and exceeds its budget of tickets, the Team Leader will reward that team by having a BBQ or pizza night.

**2.1.12. Rounds.** Each team is allocated an area for the ten week roster which is colour coded on a map. This larger area is broken up and colour coded into sections on a smaller scale map, each section is allocated a name and the officers are given a roster each day with the section they are to patrol for that day (see attachment D). Most rounds are operated out of vehicles and officers usually work in pairs. The rounds do not overlap and the officers are responsible for their particular section only. Each officer is given a list of clearways they are expected to deal with and the times they operate as well as a list of the high complaint areas in their section. Any other complaints are relayed over the radio. On the spot complaints are dealt with straight away and the other areas of high complaint are dealt with at the officers own discretion.

2.1.13. **Complaints.** If an officer gets a complaint on the street by a customer that he/she cannot deal with, the customer is advised to write a letter of complaint. The Correspondence Section receive all letters of complaint. One person in "corro" will deal with all the complaints of one team, they will often go to team meetings and discuss any problems with the teams operation as a whole or any other re-accruing problems with individual officers. When a letter is received it is scanned onto the computer system and a copy is e-mailed to the corresponding teams Team Leader. The Team Leader then discusses it with the officer involved and any additional information is relayed back to the correspondence officer for his/her reply. Those people arriving at the Correspondence Section are given a Penalty Infringement Objection Form (see attachment E) to fill in therefore all objections to the Section are in writing.

2.2. **Other Findings.** Apart from the list of topics we were to address we found some other issues we thought should be addressed. These are summarised below.

2.2.1. **AutoCite.** Their AutoCite programme is utilised to its full extent. Any permit holders (disabled, ancillary, residential, doctors etc.) are entered into the AutoCite system so that if a vehicle is not displaying a permit and is being issued on the AutoCite will beep and a code will come up on the screen.

2.2.2. **Signs.** The Loading Zone signs actually have the time limit displayed i.e., 15min, 30min or 1 hour. In voucher areas the word "ticket" is printed on the sign with an arrow pointing in the direction of the nearest voucher machine.

2.2.3. **ID No's.** ID no's only are used over the radio when contacting other officers. The ID no's are displayed on the rosters. ID no's are also displayed on their badge on their hats.

2.2.4. **Abandoned Vehicles.** The parking section deals with abandoned vehicles themselves from their base station.

2.2.5. **Marking Vehicles.** If a section of road is being blocked off or meters hooded they mark the tyre of the vehicle so other officers know that the vehicle was there when the road was blocked or the hoods went on.

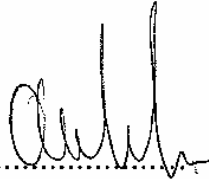
2.2.6. **Faulty Meters.** Any complaints, faults and repairs on meters is accessible on the computer system. Any one meter will show a history of faults, when they were called in and the date and time they were fixed.

**3. CONCLUSION.**

3.1. In summery, we both had a great time in Melbourne and were treated exceptionally well by our hosts. We found that in some areas Melbourne operated more effectively and in others Hobart operations were better suited to our needs. We both found the trip to be a great learning experience and feel that it has given us a better understanding and a greater knowledge of our roles as Parking and Information Officers. We feel this has been a fantastic initiative by the Hobart City Council and the Action Learning Committee. Finally, we are grateful for the opportunity to be able to participate in such a programme.



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Micheal Hall



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Chantel Whelan

# National Officer Exchange

## Dress

Hobart City Council Uniform

## Conduct

Officers should remember at all times that they represent the Hobart City Council as well as their Section and Unit.

## Information Exchange

Below are listed those areas you should investigate whilst on exchange. A report will be required on the findings.

### Rosters

- *How are rosters set.*
- *Who does what.*

### Ticket Issuing

- ñ *Compare Melbournes procedures with ours.*

### Alternate Duties

*What variety of work is available.*

### Work Conditions

- *Examine and compare general work conditions*

### Dress Code

- *What code exists and how is it operated.*

### Employment Needs

- *What types of people are they seeking to employe.*
- *What are the expectations on staff.*

### Radio Procedures

- ñ *What types of procedures exist.*

### Benchmarking

- *Does any Benchmarking take place at the Team level*

### Shifts

- *What shift system is operated*

### Training

- *What initial and ongoing training is received*

### Teams

- ñ *How does the Team system in Melbourne operate*

### Rounds

- ñ *How are the rounds operated*
- ñ *How areas of higher complaint dealt with*

# **National Officer Exchange**

## **Dealing with Complaints**

- ñ *How do Officers deal with complaints on the streets and on receipt of a call from Base*

*Officers should take note of any other item that may be considered of interest to the organisation or staff.*

*Any feedback to make future exchanges more productive or better managed should also be noted.*