

We The People
Program 34
To Serve and Protect



When I was growing up at The Entrance in coastal NSW we lived in a modest fibro home next to a retired policeman named Fred Fuller. Sergeant Fuller or Mr Fuller as we called him was a big man and to me at 9 he was very old, maybe even 60. Mr Fuller had a stock whip and grew vegetables in his back yard and tomatoes on a trellis behind his tank stand. His chook run produced plenty of eggs and the chook poo fertilised all our gardens. He would crack that stock whip now and again and believe me my mates and I were always very polite to him. Mr Fuller got on very well with my Dad and looking back I think Dad may have asked him to crack the whip within earshot just to let my mates and I know there was order and authority just over the fence. The town was small but swelled in number over Christmas as all of Sydney seemed to arrive with marquee tents and plywood caravans for the summer holidays. The local copper Sergeant Tilly was the only policeman in town and he too was not afraid to clip a boy over the ear or give someone a swift kick in the backside, well that was how the story went anyway. So between Sergeant Tilly and Mr Fuller there was law and order and very little crime and a general high level of respect for police especially among the boys in town. The girls of course never put a foot wrong anyway just as they don't today.

Those early days were indeed wonderful even though we didn't have many physical possessions and how wise and neighbourly people were and how wonderfully the community held together for the good of itself. Even during our holidays our front door could be easily opened as the key was jammed in the lock. No one ever broke in and life was good and simple and we went to church twice on Sundays which was a bit much but I managed.

Now move forward in time to today which is 55 years later and I too am very old now having clocked 60 and a bit. Funny I don't feel it and really 'old' is still a long way off yet. However, how have we changed in society and is it for the better. Science, medicine and technology have come a very long way and we enjoy unbridled leisure but it seems to me we are not happy or content. I can't leave my house unlocked for 5 minutes now because of the fear of being burgled and I get the distinct impression that if the street lights went out for a week the Gold Coast would descend into anarchy. The local Council is dodgy and everyone seems to be in it for themselves and in a dreadful rush. A couple of years ago I was physically assaulted by a new Australian and for no good reason. The Mudgeeraba police came and the policeman who followed through on the case was a terrific bloke who issued a warrant and about 9 months later caught the offender and he went to court to hear the ghostly crack of Sergeant Fuller's stock whip. Mudgeeraba's Senior Constable Greg Josephson is a modern day Sergeant Tilly or Fred Fuller at heart and he held a balance for priorities and good sense. He acted in good faith and with dignity showing authority in proper measure.

The point is that we have lost much and gained little in society since my early days at The Entrance and yet within the police force there is still the driven desire to serve and protect. The vast majority of police men and women attend unspeakable crimes and witness the worst of humanity and events. They must be able to direct traffic, break up a domestic or seek out criminals and if you think that's easy then think again. They put their lives on the line and yet society wants an account of their every move and god help them when they have to defend themselves and then attend an Inquisition to satisfy the needs of the minority voices that drive this country. Civil liberty doesn't favour police.

Now it's my opportunity and yours to say thank you to the police on the Gold Coast and please make a point of it whenever you can because generally no one thanks them. It's our democratic responsibility to acknowledge their contribution to society and their work on the Gold Coast for We The People. From myself and all at 4CRB I say thank you for the thin blue line and please know that we are grateful to all police for their unselfish and dedicated work.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley