



Griffith Criminology Institute

REPORT

Review of the Queensland Police Service Wandering Trial August 2022

*Janet Ransley
Nadine Connell
Margo van Felius
Shannon Walding*

Project Team

Professor Janet Ransley (*Griffith Criminology Institute, Griffith University*)

Associate Professor Nadine Connell (*Griffith Criminology Institute, Griffith University*)

Ms Margo van Felius (*Griffith Criminology Institute, Griffith University*)

Ms Shannon Walding (*Griffith Criminology Institute, Griffith University*)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, legislation was passed in Queensland to enable the trial of metal detecting wand use by police in two trial sites. The goal of the legislation is to improve detection of, and reductions in, knife carrying, primarily by young people. Reduced knife-carrying is intended to lead to reduced serious violent offending involving bladed weapons, particularly by young people and particularly in crowded late night entertainment districts.

The legislation imposed a sunset period with the intention that an evaluation be conducted of the impact, effectiveness, efficiency and equity of the trial. This is the final report of that evaluation of the first 12 months of the wandering trial, which took place in two safe night precincts (SNPs) at the Gold Coast from 1 May 2021 to 30 April 2022. The evaluation was conducted using a mixed methods approach that included quantitative analysis of Queensland Police Service (QPS) administrative data, and qualitative analysis of interviews, focus group discussions, and governance documents about the trial.

The analysis was constrained by the following important limitations:

- a. the trial period overlapped with COVID-19, which markedly affected crime, the size of crowds in public places, and policing operations, meaning that the observed trial outcomes cannot be directly compared with pre-COVID patterns, or necessarily generalised for the future.
- b. because of the legislatively imposed sunset period, the evaluation was confined to a 12-month trial period, which is generally regarded as too short a time to accurately identify any longer term outcomes, such as changes in offending patterns or possible deterrent effects. Hence the evaluation is largely confined to short term outcomes.
- c. during the evaluation it became apparent that the QPRIME data extract provided by QPS (see Chapter 3) did not reliably record ethnicity and particularly First Nations status. While steps were taken to address this as much as possible, this aspect of the evaluation data continued to be problematic.

Key findings

Based on the evaluation data and analysis, the following are the key findings of the evaluation:

Key Finding 1. In the Surfers Paradise SNP, but not in the Broadbeach SNP, the wandering trial contributed to **increased detection** of knife carrying.

Key Finding 2. This variability in outcome between the two sites suggests that any continuation of **wanding should be targeted** at only those **areas where data shows a proportionately higher prevalence of knife offences** occurring over a sustained period.

Key Finding 3. While wanding has been useful to better detect weapons (in one site only), there is **no evidence as yet of any deterrent effect**, given that there has been an increase in detections at one site, and no change at the other. A longer term follow up may be needed to better assess these effects.

Key Finding 4. There is also **no evidence to suggest any significant effect from wanding on various non-weapons offence types, including crimes of violence, apart from an increase in detected drug offences** in the Gold Coast SNP. There is also **no evidence of displacement of offending** to other parts of the Gold Coast, or of any diffusion of the benefits of wanding beyond the Gold Coast SNP. While more knives have been detected in Surfers Paradise, as yet this has not led to a statistically significant drop in violent crime during the trial period. Despite this, both police officers and community stakeholders reported feelings of public safety had improved as a result of the trial. These feelings may potentially be attributable to increased visibility of police in the two areas due to extra resourcing, increased public engagement, and positive media coverage of wanding during the trial.

Key Finding 5. The **wanding equipment is overwhelmingly seen as effective and appropriate**. However the notification wording used by officers may require review and rewording.

Key Finding 6. The current process by which **senior officers authorise wanding operations serves little useful purpose**, either for accountability or for evidence-based or strategic decision-making.

Key Finding 7. In terms of equity, **wanding has been inconsistently used across different groups in the community**. While the targeting of young people was clearly intended under the legislation, and there is an evidence base for selecting more males than females, there is some evidence of inappropriate use of stereotypes and cultural assumptions by a small number of officers in determining who to select for wanding.

Key Finding 8. The recording of **First Nations status in QPRIME** requires attention to ensure that the data better reflects police interactions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Consideration might also be given to careful recording of Māori and Pasifika status due to the demographic composition of Queensland.

Key Finding 9. Given the **increased number of drug detections** linked to wandering in Surfers Paradise, care needs to be taken to ensure that wandering does not lead to a by-passing of reasonable suspicion safeguards, and **net-widening** among minor offenders who are not carrying weapons, but nevertheless come to police attention purely because of wandering practices. The entry of larger numbers of these individuals into formal criminal justice processes could have many adverse flow-on effects.

Suggestions for future directions

Based on these key findings, we make the following suggestions should wandering be extended past its current sunset date:

1. There is limited justification for the intrusiveness of wandering in areas without evidence of higher than usual counts of weapons crime. In the future, wandering should only be used in places where the evidence suggests weapons are more likely to be carried.
2. The current authorisation process serves little purpose. One option is to retain authorisations but require them to be given only when there is evidence to suggest a heightened risk of weapons carrying, based on some form of evidence. Alternatively, the need for authorisations could be removed, wandering made permissible at any time but only in areas of proven high risk, and stronger safeguards introduced to govern how officers use their discretion to select people to be wandered.
3. The legislation requires that officers give a verbal and, if requested, written notification to people being wandered. The current form of wording is not user-friendly for either officers or individuals being wandered, and should be revised.
4. While overall most users were satisfied with the current wands, when there is a need to order new or replacement equipment, the suggestions made by some officers for improvements should be considered.
5. The wandering training for officers needs to explicitly identify underlying objectives, and how people should be selected for wandering. This includes reminding officers the goal is reduced violent crime, not the better detection of any other type of behaviour.
6. Training should also specifically discuss how wandering can impinge human rights protected under the HRA. Specific mention needs to be made of the human rights

implications of the use of stereotypes to guide decision-making. Officers should be directed not to select people for wandering based only on race or cultural identification, or because they are part of a group perceived as troublesome. Evidence-based guidelines on risk factors for knife carrying should be produced to guide officer discretion.

7. QPS should formalise the current audit process used by senior officers to review wandering operations. In particular, there should be random audits of a proportion of all officers who participate in wandering, specifically focused on whether they are over-targeting any particular categories of individuals (rather than simply focusing on compliance with policy). These audits can draw on BWC and CCTV footage, but also involve analysis of both offence and street check data in QPRIME to identify any patterns suggesting bias.
8. QPS should address the unreliability of data recorded in QPRIME specifically relating to First Nations people. Given the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the criminal justice system, and state and federal government commitments to Closing the Gap, it is crucial that QPS can accurately record and retrieve this important information. Consideration might also be given to careful recording of Māori and Pasifika status due to the demographic composition of Queensland.

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Abbreviations

BWC	Body Worn Cameras
CBD	Central Business District
EBP	Entertainment Business Precinct
HRA	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i>
PPRA	<i>Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000</i>
QPRIME	Queensland Police Records Information Management Exchange
QPS	Queensland Police Service
SNP	Safe Night Precinct

1 Introduction

The *Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2021* was passed by the Queensland Parliament in April 2021. Among other matters, it amended the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* (PPRA) to enable police to trial the use of handheld metal detecting wands in the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach safe night precincts. The Minister for Police and Corrective Services and for Fire and Emergency Services gave the following rationale for the trial:

The primary policy objective of these powers is to detect and deter the unlawful possession of knives to keep the community safe ... The harm, and potential harm, that goes along with possessing a knife in a public place is very real. In 2019–20, over 4,300 people were dealt with by Queensland police for unlawfully possessing a knife in a public place or a school... In the last 18 months this has been evidenced in two separate tragic deaths involving knives within the Surfers Paradise safe night precinct (Hon. M. Ryan, 20 April 2021, 988).

And:

We know there is a tendency for some young people to carry knives in public spaces. This places the community and the youths themselves at risk of serious harm or death. Enabling police to quickly identify and seize these knives not only prevents them being used to cause harm but also creates a strong disincentive for people to carry them in the first place ... Safe night precincts are entertainment and socialising hubs where many, particularly young people, like to gather. The high concentration of people in these areas makes any unlawful carrying of knives a particular risk to safety. A trial of these new powers, procedures and overarching safeguards will help the police and the cabinet committee to identify and address any unforeseen impacts (Hon. M. Ryan, 25 February 2021, 238).

This rationale recognised that the carriage of knives in public places poses a significant risk to community safety, with the potential for altercations to quickly escalate to the use of a weapon with risks of serious injury. The inclusion of the trial's enabling provisions in a package of measures aimed at youth offending was also significant, with the Minister confirming that the overall aim of the package was to reduce harmful crime committed by young offenders (Ryan, M., 2021, 986). **The overall goal of the metal detecting wand trial is the reduction of knife carrying, and related violent offences, primarily by young people.**

1.1 The evaluation

The legislation authorising the trial of handheld metal detecting wands includes a sunset provision by which the amendments will expire after two years (PPRA section 39H). The purpose of this provision is to enable an evaluation of the scheme's first 12 months to be conducted, to review the impact, effectiveness, equity and efficiency of the use of wands. The trial and its evaluation will inform the decision as to whether the provision should be extended.

In September 2021, Griffith University was contracted by the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to conduct the evaluation of the wandering trial. The evaluation was conducted in stages with an evaluation framework and three interim reports already accepted by QPS. The evaluation relates to the **12 months trial period which ran from 1 May 2021 to 30 April 2022 inclusive**.

This is the final report of the evaluation. This introductory section has provided a brief background to the evaluation. Next will be a description of the trial and its parameters. After that, the evaluation's agreed methodology and data sources will be outlined, followed by the presentation and discussion of the main findings. We conclude with some suggestions for improving the operation of the wandering scheme should it be extended, especially aimed at the strengthening of safeguards.

1.2 The wandering legislation and policy

The police powers enabling the use of metal detecting wands apply only to the Surfers Paradise Central Business District (CBD) and Broadbeach CBD Safe Night Precincts (SNPs). SNPs were created as a Queensland Government initiative to reduce late-night drug and alcohol-related violence in entertainment districts. There are currently 15 SNPs in key entertainment areas across Queensland. The SNPs are legislated under the *Liquor Act 1992* Part 6AB. Wandering powers have been extended to only the Surfers Paradise CBD (shown in Figure 1) and Broadbeach CBD SNPs (shown in Figure 2).

Under the amended PPRA legislation, a senior police officer may authorise a wandering operation. This authorises police in the relevant SNP to require, without a warrant, that a person in a public place stop and submit to the use of a handheld scanner for the purpose of ascertaining whether the person is carrying a knife (PPRA section 39C). The scanner may be used in close proximity to the person and their belongings (PPRA section 39B). If the scanner indicates the likely presence of metal, the officer may require the person to produce the object and then submit to re-scanning (PPRA section 39D). Authorisations may be given by a

senior police officer, defined as at least the rank of inspector or alternatively a senior sergeant authorised by the commissioner of police to give authorisations (PPRA section 39E). The authorisation must state the day, time, duration and prescribed area to which it applies, and has effect for 12 hours after it starts (PPRA section 39E).

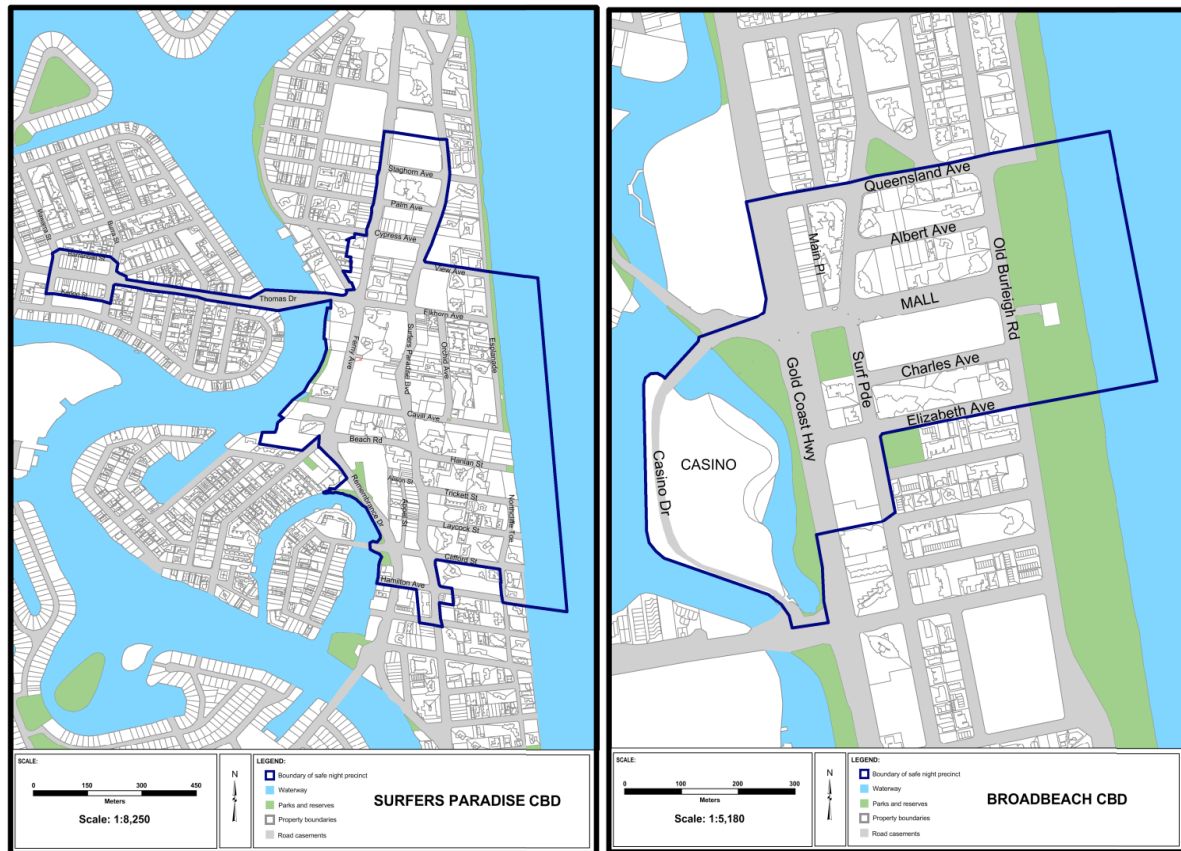


Figure Map of Surfers Paradise CBD SNP Figure 2: Map of Broadbeach CBD SNP

Section 39F of the PPRA sets out safeguards. These include requirements for officers to use these powers in the least invasive way practicable, and if requested to do so, to provide their name, rank and station to persons stopped; to do so in writing if requested; to produce their identity card unless they are in uniform; to inform the person they are required to submit to use of the scanner; and to offer and, if requested, give the person a written notification. The Act stipulates that if reasonably practicable scanning should be conducted by officers of the same gender as the person stopped.

Section 39F(3) provides officers may detain the person for so long as is reasonably necessary to exercise the power. Section 39(5)(c) makes clear that it is an offence for a person not to comply with the requirement to be scanned without reasonable excuse. Section 39G

specifically preserves the power of officers to search without warrant on the basis of reasonable suspicion, under section 29 of the Act.

The overall effect of the legislation is to permit senior officers to issue 12-hour wandering authorisations in either or both SNPs. Those authorisations permit any officer to conduct handheld scanning of any person without the requirement for a warrant or the need for there to be reasonable suspicion of the person engaging in unlawful conduct. The person and their belongings can be wanded and persons can be detained for that purpose. Failure to comply is an offence. Safeguards include that police must give verbal and, if requested, written, notifications and that where practicable, the scanning officer must be of the same gender as the person.

The legislation has been supplemented by measures introduced by QPS, set out in Gold Coast District Instruction 1/2021 “Use of Handheld Metal Detector (Wands) within the Gold Coast Safe Night Precincts.” The District Instruction includes written directions for officers conducting wandering. It further outlines that all officers must familiarise themselves with wandering and complete the 5Mile associated training module. Additionally, QPS has mandated that officers are required to activate their body worn cameras (BWCs) during community interactions to record any use of wandering powers. Where practical, officers are also required to request support from the City of Gold Coast Safety Camera Network. In addition, all wandings must be recorded by way of a Street Check and then linked to a Master QPRIME Occurrence. The QPS has further developed an Aide Memoire for officers containing all relevant legislation, and administrative and policy directions, as well as a Metal Detection Protocol Guide outlining the procedure for using wands.

In its review of the bill before its enactment, the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee of the Queensland Legislative Assembly received submissions raising concerns about the wandering scheme. These included that there is no evidence of any special threat posed by young people using knives, there is no evidence that the use of wandering will be effective in reducing knife-crime, and that because most people carry keys or other metal objects, most people stopped will be searched without warrant (Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, 2021, 51). Further, concerns were raised that the wandering powers would lead to breaches of principles under the *Human Rights Act 2019*, especially rights relating to privacy, freedom of movement, equality before the law, liberty, and children’s right to protection (Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, 2021, 52).

The Committee noted that the requirement for authorisation by a senior officer did not realistically amount to a safeguard, given the lack of any prescribed criteria for the issue of authorisations, meaning they can be 'entirely arbitrary' (Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, 2021, 78). Nevertheless, the committee determined that the impact of the legislation on human rights was justified in the circumstances, given the objective of reducing knife related harms.

Any evidence relating to these concerns has been considered where appropriate throughout this evaluation.

2 Methodology

This chapter sets out the design for the evaluation of the wandering trial, based on the *Evaluation Framework* previously accepted by QPS. The chapter begins with the agreed key questions, then moves on to describe the approach taken to conduct the evaluation.

However, it should be noted that the evaluation has been constrained by two factors:

- Covid-19 and the response to it caused major disruptions to both public activity and policing operations. For much of 2020–2021, the number of people present in public places declined sharply due to the imposition of lockdowns and other restrictions, and continued to be affected during subsequent infection waves. Border restrictions reduced crowds in public places, and also affected policing when officers were diverted from many other duties to border and health regulation enforcement. These disruptions limit the extent to which activity during the trial period can be compared with previous patterns, and hence the generalisability of evaluation outcomes.
- The stipulated timeframe of a 12-month trial evaluated only months after the completion of the trial restricts the analysis of outcomes expected to be achieved over a longer period, such as changes to recidivism and displacement. This limits the evaluation to the assessment of short-term outcomes only.

2.1 Key Questions

The aims and objectives of the evaluation are translated into four main evaluation aims: trial impact, trial effectiveness, trial equity and trial efficiency. These aims are divided into a number of sub-aims and questions as shown below.

Aim 1: Trial impact

Sub-aim 1.1 Change in reportable offences during the trial period at the trial sites

Key question 1a: Has there been a change in the number and rate of recorded non-DV related offences of:

- Possession of a weapon?
- Armed robbery?
- Going armed in public?
- Assault involving weapons?

Key question 1b: Has the proportion of these offences involving knives compared to all other weapons changed?

Key question 2: Has there been a change in the type of weapons detected by police? This includes but is not limited to:

- Changes in the types of knives detected (e.g. ceramic);
- Other metal weapons e.g. knuckledusters; and
- Changes in the detection/use of other weapons, including replica firearms, gel-blasters, syringes and broken glass.

Key question 3: Have there been any changes in:

- Detection of non-weapons related offences (e.g. drugs, public order offences)?
- Rates of incidents resulting in charges of higher or lower severity (e.g. common versus serious assault, grievous bodily harm etc)?
- Age or demographic profile of people found carrying weapons in the trial area?

Sub-aim 1.2 Assessment of displacement and diffusion of benefits

Key question 4a: Has there been a change in the number and rate of detected non-DV related offences in the non-SNP areas of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, or in other non-SNP areas of the Gold Coast as a whole, particularly for the following offences:

- Possession of a weapon?
- Armed robbery?
- Going armed in public?
- Assault involving weapons?

Key question 4b: Has the proportion of such offences involving knives changed?

Key question 5: Have there been any changes in:

- Detection of non-weapons related offences (e.g. drugs, public order offences)?
- Rates of incidents resulting in charges of higher or lower severity (e.g. common versus serious assault, grievous bodily harm etc)?
- Age or demographic profile of people found carrying weapons in the non-trial area?

Sub-aim 1.3 Changes in community and stakeholder perceptions of safety

Key question 6: Have perceptions of safety changed as a consequence of the trial for:

- People who visit the Safe Night Precinct?
- Local residents?
- Local business owners?
- SNP Liquor Accord members, and members of other relevant stakeholder groups?

Aim 2: Trial effectiveness

Sub-aim 2.1: Effectiveness of the process

Key question 7: How effective is the process?

- At each site, how many wands are available for use, is there any training for their use, and what guidance is given (written or verbal) on how, when and why to use the wands?
- How often / frequently are senior officers authorising wand operations?
- Are there patterns of use (e.g. at particular times, days of the week, locations)?
- What is the duration of each wand operation? How many individuals are wanded during each operation? How are individuals selected for wand operation?
- How many police officers are involved in each wand operation? What are their ranks?
- What is the demographic profile of people subject to each wand operation?
- What records are kept of who is wanded, why, and any outcomes, e.g. detections?
- Are wand operations being deployed consistently across the two sites and by different personnel?

Sub-aim 2.2: changes in behaviour of young people carrying weapons

Key question 8: How effective has the trial been in changing the behaviour of young people?

Key question 9: Has there been a change during the trial in how young people respond to or engage with police?

Aim 3: Trial equity

Sub-aim 3.1: Equity of application

Key question 10: Is wand being applied equitably to people of different demographic groups? Is there any evidence of over-use or discrimination against some groups?

Key question 11: Is wand being conducted in accordance with the legislation and QPS operational procedures? Are all relevant officers aware of appropriate operational policies and procedures?

Sub-aim 3.2: Safeguards applied to people being wanded

Key question 12: How appropriate is the process of wand with regard to human rights considerations? What training/guidance do officers receive in relation to human rights considerations?

Key question 13: Are the legal rights and protections of people being wanded being observed? What processes are in place to ensure this?

Aim 4: Trial Efficiency

Key question 14: Are wanding operations being conducted efficiently (what are the costs of overtime worked, rostering changes, unscheduled leave etc)?

Key question 15: Do wanding operations deliver efficiencies for local police (what savings result from wanding)?

Key question 16: Do the benefits of the trial outweigh the cost?

Key question 17: Are there any unintended consequences arising from the wanding trial?

2.2 Evaluation Approach

The evaluation was conducted in five stages.

2.2.1 Stage 1: Evaluation Framework Development and Project Planning

In this stage, the evaluation framework, scope, data, and data collection methods were identified. This stage was informed by a stakeholder workshop including the evaluation team and key representatives from QPS. This workshop provided an opportunity for senior officers in the evaluation sites to understand the scope and the timings for the evaluation and to identify data sources and key contacts to facilitate data collection at each site.

Also, at this stage research ethics applications were submitted to the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GU ref 2021/865, see appendix D), and approval was obtained; and a QPS Research committee application was lodged (QPSRC-1221-1.01, see Appendix E), with the Committee agreeing to provide data for this evaluation. This stage culminated in the delivery and QPS acceptance of the Evaluation Framework.

2.2.2 Stages 2, 3 and 4: Interim Status Updates

As per the evaluation framework, three status updates on the progress of the evaluation were delivered on 9 February 2022, 18 May 2022 and 1 July 2022 respectively. These took the

agreed form of brief infographics, setting out progress to date and any preliminary findings. Each status report is included in Appendix C.

2.2.3 Stage 5: Final process and outcome evaluation

This report summarises the findings from all stages. The next section of this chapter briefly describes data collection for each of these evaluation components listed above.

2.3 Data Sources

To address the evaluation questions set out earlier, data were obtained from the sources described in the following subsections.

2.3.1 QPRIME data

A data extract from the QPRIME database of police occurrences¹ was provided by QPS which advised that all occurrences linked to an authorised wandering operation were identifiable by a specific code in the database. The data extract included all occurrences where the operation number assigned to the wandering trial was linked in the QPRIME system for the trial period. These data enabled us to analyse the number, duration, and location of wandering occurrences, and any offences related to them. It also contained information about who was wandered, including their age, gender, postcode for area of residence and, where available, race.

It is important to note that, as with all administrative data recorded for operational purposes, there are significant limitations with QPRIME data. The most important of these is that it is entered in the field by thousands of individual officers who have many other tasks to complete and are often time-pressured. Its quality is therefore highly variable, and this is particularly so with the recording of demographic information like racial or cultural identification. There are many gaps and errors as a result, and we return to this when discussing our findings.

We supplemented the wandering data extract from QPRIME with data collected by the QPS officers tasked with administering the wandering trial from Gold Coast District. This extra

¹ An occurrence in QPRIME data refers to an entry into the database by an officer. Occurrences may be intelligence reports or offences either reported to or detected by officers. Each occurrence may include multiple offences, offenders, and/or victims, multiple items of property seized, and/or multiple subjects of wandering. Occurrences may occur at one point in time or over a time period, but generally not at multiple discrete times.

information was limited to occurrences linked to wandings which involved property seizure, and demonstrated that the extraction based on the wanding code within QPRIME was incomplete, resulting in the manual extraction of multiple records in addition to our original extraction. It is possible therefore that additional occurrences linked to wanding have not been included in the data extract from the QPRIME database.

People scanned as part of the wanding trial were not compelled to give their names and other details, although many did so voluntarily. It is important to note that this also means that the analysis of who was wanded is likely to be affected.

In addition to wanding data, we obtained data on all occurrences involving offences, including those relating to weapons, drugs, public order, property offences, or offences against the person. Within those categories, we selected particular offence types because they are most relevant to the wanding trial – for example, they enabled us to identify what proportion of weapons offences were detected by wanding as opposed to other policing measures. We selected the other offences because they are most commonly associated with SNPs and would allow us to assess the extent to which other, non-weapons offending was affected by the trial, particularly in light of societal and operational upheaval during COVID-19 (see Appendix L for the full list of offences included).

These occurrences involving offences were extracted for the 24 months prior to the beginning of the wanding trial and the first 12 months of the wanding trial, for both Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach SNPs, and also a list of other QPS divisions. By obtaining the prior 2 years of offence data we could examine any changes in offending patterns within the SNPs (although subject to the limitation of COVID-19 disruptions identified above). This informs whether the trial reduced weapons offences and whether it also reduced other types of crime.

We obtained offence data for other division areas near to the trial sites, to determine if there was any displacement of offending from the SNPs, meaning that potential offenders had simply re-located to other sites. We also examined whether there was evidence of diffusion of benefits from the trial sites, which would indicate a possible general deterrence effect and an overall reduction in offending. The selected division areas were: Broadbeach non-SNP, Surfers Paradise non-SNP, Pimpama, Palm Beach, Robina, Southport, Coolangatta and Coomera.

However, the SNPs are by their nature different from the surrounding areas, because they welcome thousands of visitors (both overnight and day-trippers) per week and encompass entertainment and dining precincts. The non-SNP areas surrounding the SNPs could be sites

of diffusion of benefit or displacement, but they tend to be more residential in nature. Meanwhile, Coolangatta was selected as another nightlife and visitor hub as a possible comparison site, on a smaller scale than Broadbeach or Surfers Paradise, but this area was strongly affected by border closures with New South Wales. Southport, while geographically proximal to Surfers Paradise and therefore a possible area of displacement, is not a visitor or nightlife hub. Pimpama, Robina, and Palm Beach were selected for their proximity and therefore ability to act as controls, although only Palm Beach retains some of the nightlife characteristics similar to Broadbeach and could therefore be a potential destination for displacement. Coomera as a transport hub and youth assembly area gave us the possibility of both displacement and control for changes in offending over time.

As the wandering trial began on the 30th of April 2021, occurrences from that date are included in the month of May for each year of the administrative data except for the end of the trial (30 April 2022), where they are included in April of that year. Similarly, the trial period encompasses 30 April 2021 through to and including 30 April 2022 in our analysis, meaning that the year prior to the trial includes 30 April 2020 through 29 April 2021, and the previous year 30 April 2019 through 29 April 2020.

As noted previously, both the wandering trial period and the year prior to the trial period were affected by COVID-19 public health measures and border closures. Business and movement restrictions were first announced by the federal Health Minister on 23 March 2020, while Queensland-specific restrictions on movement and closure of the border to New South Wales began at midnight 25 March 2020. While restrictions began to ease within 6 weeks, border closures persisted until early 2022 and localised restrictions and lockdowns impacted tourism from day trippers and overnight visitors throughout the trial. In addition, events such as the Supercars and schoolies were either cancelled or strongly restricted across the trial period and immediately preceding its implementation².

Occurrences are aggregated by month and by year per location, with Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise SNPs aggregated separately from those suburbs' corresponding non-SNP zones. While each location has a different geographical size and population, and we might usually expect to compare rates of offences per population numbers, population estimates of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach are not delineated according to SNP area, making rate calculations in those areas of questionable utility. Additionally, population size in the SNPs at any given time is unknown when considering the large transient population, and likely not relevant due

² Detail on timelines of COVID-19 restrictions can be found through the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Parliamentary Library.

to the SNPs' nature as places that people living elsewhere visit. During the period of the pandemic, visitor numbers have been volatile. As a result, we report raw counts of occurrences throughout this report, and focus on the comparison over time within each location.

In general, occurrences recorded by police are counted once in our data. However, occurrences often include multiple offences, with the most serious offence labelled the principal offence. This means that offences relevant to our analysis sometimes appear as secondary offences in QPRIME administrative data. Where this occurs, we flag that occurrence as including the other type of relevant offences. If, for example, an occurrence included both a public order offence and a weapons offence, where comparison between types of offences is drawn, that occurrence will be counted in both the count of weapons offences and the count of public order offences. Offences are categorised using their offence label in QPRIME.

Weapons offences in our analysis include:

- Going armed so as to cause fear or alarm
- Possession/use of dangerous article (other weapon)
- Robbery (armed) (this offence is also counted within robbery offences, because they were specifically referred to by officers in interviews and focus groups for the evaluation of the trial)
- Unlawful Possession of concealable firearm
- Unlawful Possession of firearm (other)
- Other breaches of the Weapons Act 1990 (no further detail).

Both weapons and drugs offences were counted when that type of offence was the principal offence, or when it was a secondary offence from the occurrence. Drugs offences were counted in this way because of the likelihood that they would be detected as a by-product of the wanding trial. Offences categorised as drugs offences consisted of possession, use, or supply of dangerous drugs, or possession of utensils, all in quantities likely to be found on someone while in public.

Offences against the person included all types of assault, sexual assault, and homicide except driving causing death, and these offences are collectively referred to as "assault" in tables and figures. Where an offence is categorised as assault with a weapon, this encompasses offences where the primary offence was an offence against the person and the indicator for a weapon having been used in the commission of the offence has been activated by the officer (as distinct from whether there was a weapons offence as part of the occurrence: offenders

may use a weapon in the commission of an offence without committing a weapons offence). Assault without a weapon includes all other assaultive offences. Assault, public order, and robbery offences were counted as such when the principal offence from the occurrence was in that category. Armed robbery is nested within robbery where that is the principal offence.

Additional data limitations

Which SNP a wandering occurrence is linked to is determined using the location data entered by the QPS officer at the time of the occurrence. If the officer did not enter the location, but the officer is stationed either in Surfers Paradise or Broadbeach, we have elected to associate that wandering occurrence with the officer's home station. However, if the officer was seconded to the trial and did not enter the location of the occurrence, that occurrence cannot be clearly associated with a particular SNP (relevant for 133 wandering occurrences).

2.3.2 Interviews and focus groups

In each SNP site key QPS personnel were identified who had operational, administrative or supervisory experience with the wandering trial. They were also asked to provide names of agencies and contacts of external stakeholders from relevant community and/or legal aid groups, and others who could be contacted for interviews. This was done to ensure that community views were also captured.

All potential interview and focus group participants were contacted by email with an invitation to participate in a semi-structured interview or focus group (for frontline officers). Participation was voluntary. All participants were provided with written information about the purpose of the evaluation and the nature of their involvement. Those who participated in an interview or focus group provided informed consent (see Appendix F and G). The interviews and focus groups were guided by a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix H, I and J). The same schedule was used across all participating QPS staff, with a similar adjusted schedule used for external stakeholders. The schedule was informed by the aims and objectives of the evaluation.

All interviews were conducted via Teams or in person, and all focus groups were conducted face-to-face. With consent, interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed. All transcripts were de-identified. The typed interview transcripts were returned to the interviewees for review. The transcripts were subjected to qualitative inductive thematic analysis using specialist qualitative analysis software (NVivo).

In total, four focus groups with front line officers were conducted, with a total of 16 officers participating (focus groups were coded as FG1 to FG4). In addition, 9 interviews with senior

officers were conducted (coded as QP1 to QP9). These officers were selected either because they were assigned duties in the trial sites, worked adjacent to the trial sites or had an overseeing role. A further 6 interviews were conducted with external stakeholders, with 8 participants agreeing to participate (coded as ES1 to ES6). The results reported here are based on these interviews and focus groups.

2.3.3 Observations

To better understand the operationalisation of the wandering powers and safeguards, the evaluation team conducted unobtrusive observations of police operations on four separate occasions. Observations were scheduled with senior QPS staff based on wandering operation authorisations. Senior QPS staff made arrangements with for team members to accompany small groups of officers as they patrolled the SNP sites. Observations were scheduled for different authorisation times in an effort to ensure that a cross-section of wandering experiences were observed. Prior to observations, all team members attended QPS shift briefings to see how officers were prepared and advised around wandering operations.

Observations were conducted between 20 January 2022 and 11 April 2022 during afternoon and evening shifts. Each observation involved two evaluation team members accompanying a wandering group in the Surfers Paradise SNP for a period of two to four hours. During the observations, team members took notes and recorded brief details of each wandering interaction observed. The observations were guided by a protocol (see Appendix K), but this was applied reflexively in order to remain responsive to the particular needs reflected in the time and location of the operation. Observations took place during the later afternoon, evening, and night hours. The observations also took place during school holidays, when larger numbers of young people are normally expected to be in public areas at the Gold Coast. This was done in light of the trial's goals that specifically revolved around the decrease of knife-carrying by young people.

The purpose of the observations was to enable the evaluation team to gauge how wandings occur in practice, understand the extent of invasiveness, identify any potential themes in community response, observe the operation of the safeguards and in general become familiar with wandering operations. This understanding and analysis informs our interpretation of the data from QPRIME, interviews and focus groups.

2.3.4 Governance and Administrative Documents

QPS were requested to provide access to all internal documents, procedures and manuals relevant to the wandering evaluation. These included:

- all instructions, guidance and training materials relating to the use of wands, in either written or online formats
- details on the recording of wandering occurrences in QPRIME and other relevant sites.

These documents were analysed to understand the internal governance arrangements for the use of the wands. They were supplemented by observations of briefings by senior officers of front-line officers at the commencement of shifts, to observe the instructions on wandering given to those officers. This understanding and analysis informs our interpretation of the data from QPRIME, interviews and focus groups.

2.3.5 Community survey

A component of the agreed evaluation framework was that an online community survey would be conducted, with an express target of people residing in or near the two SNP areas. The purpose was to gauge public perceptions of any improvements to community safety during the trial.

The survey was initially deployed in April 2022. Initial efforts to promote the survey included posting printed posters in various business locations around the SNPs and promotion through targeted Twitter and Facebook advertisements. This advertisement aimed to boost visibility of the survey link to accounts located in the SNP and neighbouring areas. Despite these efforts, there was a very low response to the survey, which was then exacerbated by the fact that many of the responses were unusable due to the fact that respondents were actually “bots” and not visitors or residents to the SNPs. In order to attempt to gather more usable data, the community survey was re-deployed with new advertisements and increased safeguards again in June and July 2022. This included for paying for additional advertising and adjusting targeting parameters to better identify potential participants. Unfortunately results were still poor and reflected an overabundance of spam accounts so we did not have enough responses for any useful analysis.

In order to account for the fact that the community survey was not effective, we boosted the number of interviews conducted with community representatives, including from local government, business operators, other government departments, and various stakeholder groups. We asked them similar questions to those posed on the online survey and were able to obtain much deeper and more developed responses. This understanding and analysis informs our interpretation of the data from QPRIME, interviews and focus groups.

In summary, a mixed methods approach was adopted to answer the agreed evaluation questions. All elements of the evaluation were drawn on to identify the suggestions for improvement.

3 Trial Impact

This chapter answers questions regarding the impact of the wandering trial **on recorded offences**. This addresses the overall evaluation objective of whether wandering has helped reduce harmful offending in the trial areas and other areas nearby. It addresses the following key questions:

In SNPs:

- 1a: Has there been a change in the numbers of recorded non-DV related offences in specified categories?*
- 1b: Has the proportion of these offences involving knives compared to all other weapons changed?*
- 2: Has there been a change in the type of weapons detected by police?*
- 3: Have there been any changes in detection of non-weapons related offences, the rates of incidents resulting in charges of higher or lower severity, or the age or demographic profile of people found carrying weapons in the trial area?*

In nearby areas:

- 4a: Has there been a change in the number and rate of detected non-DV related offences in the non-SNP areas of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, or in other non-SNP areas of the Gold Coast as a whole, particularly for the specified offences?*
- 4b: Has the proportion of such offences involving knives changed?*
- 5: Have there been any changes in detection of non-weapons related offences, the rates of incidents resulting in charges of higher or lower severity, or the age or demographic profile of people found carrying weapons?*

In both SNP and non-SNP areas:

- 6: Have community perceptions of safety changed as a consequence of the trial?*

To answer these questions, we compared detected offence numbers for the trial period with detected offenses from the two years prior, in both SNPs. We did this for weapons offences and other offences related to SNPs, to test for spillover effects on other types of offending or in other areas. This analysis must be read subject to caveats expressed earlier about the difficulty in disentangling the effects of the wandering trial during periods affected by COVID-19.

3.1 Weapons and possible weapons seized

Through wandering processes, 68 bladed articles were recorded as having been seized by police during the wandering trial. Of those, 8 were household knives, 59 were other types of knives,

and 1 was an axe. No further detail on blade material was available. Other weapons seized included a baton, 2 hand tools, 5 knuckle dusters, 1 screwdriver, 1 handgun replica, and one other type of unidentified tool. Police also seized 2 antipersonnel devices through wandering, 1 acoustic and 1 electric.

In the trial year, records indicate that police seized a further 72 bladed articles separately from the wandering process in the two SNPs. These included 4 household knives and 68 other types of knives, including flick knives and single hand release blade knives. Four knuckledusters, mace, a baton, Nunchaku and 2 screwdrivers were also seized, along with 9 firearms and 6 replica guns. Thirty-seven anti-personnel weapons and substances were seized (almost all in distinct occurrences, mostly in Surfers Paradise SNP), and one explosive identified and seized.

Numbers of bladed weapons seized fell in all locations in the trial year except for Southport and Robina, both of which increased but to levels comparable to that from the first two years of data extraction. Surfers Paradise SNP also saw an increase, where only the wandering process resulted in a rise in weapons seized (see Table 1). Weapons seized through occurrences other than wandering fell from 74 in the year prior to the trial to 62 in the year of the trial, while an additional 60 bladed weapons were seized through wandering efforts that were linked to offences.

Table 1: Bladed weapons seized by location and link to wandering

Location	30 April 2018- 29 April 2019	30 April 2019- 29 April 2020	30 April 2020- 29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022	
				Weapons seized (not wandering)	Weapons seized (wandering)
BROADBEACH SNP	8	11	20	10	4
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	47	54	74	62	60
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	36	50	79	60	
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	29	29	53	29	
SOUTHPORT	103	139	107	120	
PALM BEACH	20	23	24	12	
COOLANGATTA	10	17	19	14	
ROBINA	19	39	7	12	
PIMPAMA	22	35	32	22	
COOMERA	41	67	51	46	

We examined the percentage of bladed weapons as a function of the total number of weapons seized in order to determine whether changes were made in the types of weapons carried in the SNPs as a response to the wandering trial. There is no indication that there have been changes in the percentage of weapons carried that were bladed in response to the trial.

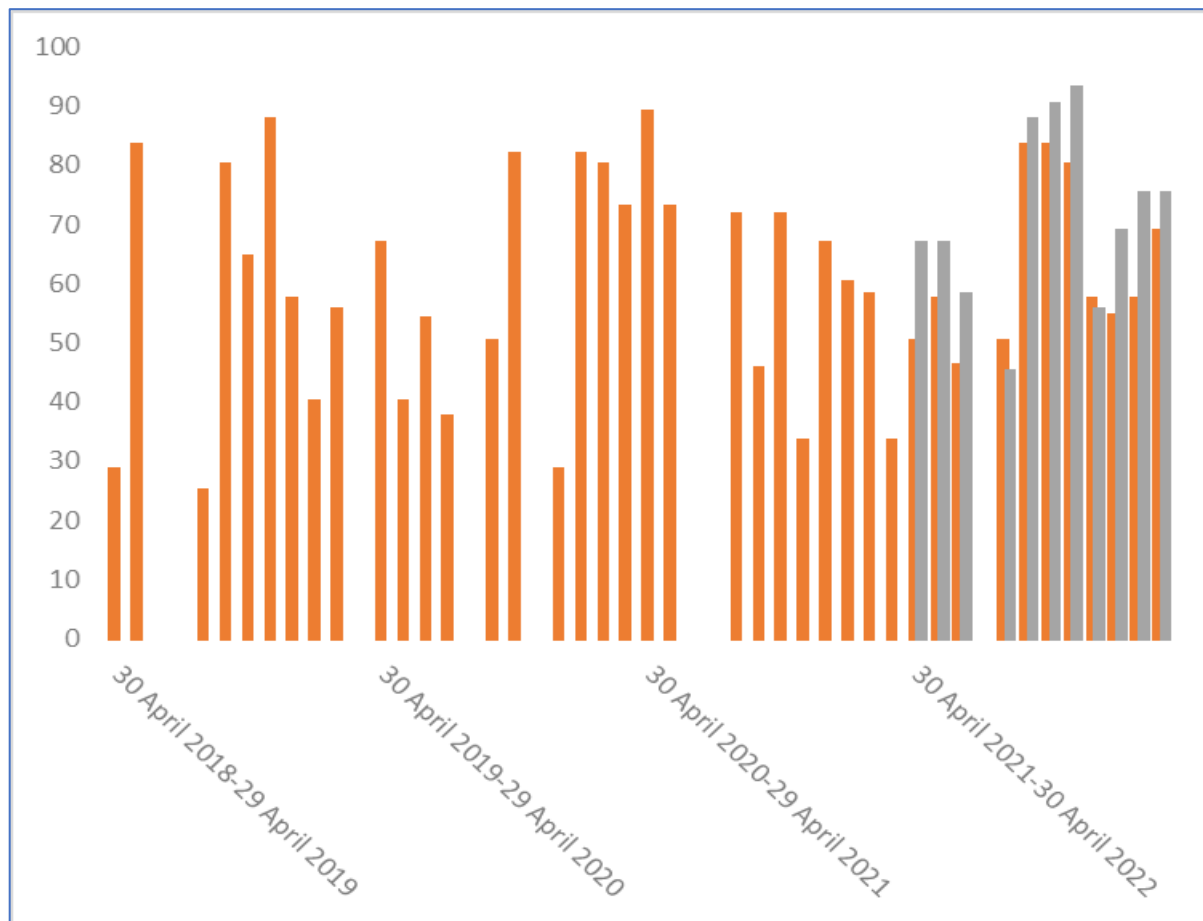
In order to see whether there was a longer-term pattern (for example, if people learned throughout the wandering trial not to carry bladed weapons in the SNPs), we then examined that percentage by month. While numbers of weapons seized in Broadbeach SNP were too low for such an analysis, percentages for Surfers Paradise SNP are shown in Figure 1, with the 12 months of the trial depicted both for weapons seizures including those detected by wandering (in grey) and without. No pattern that is in light of the trends in the three year period preceding to the trial is evident, leading us to conclude that the type of weapon carried in the SNPs have not been affected.

Table 2: Bladed weapons as percentage of all weapons seized by location linked to wandering

Location	30 April 2018-29 April 2019		30 April 2019-29 April 2020		30 April 2020-29 April 2021	
	No. weapons	% bladed	No. weapons	% bladed	No. weapons	% bladed
BROADBEACH SNP	17	47.06	17	64.71	27	74.07
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	79	59.49	91	59.34	118	62.71
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	79	45.57	85	58.82	119	66.39
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	64	45.31	59	49.15	91	58.24
SOUTHPORT	187	55.08	206	67.48	166	64.46
PALM BEACH	43	46.51	44	52.27	48	50.00
COOLANGATTA	23	43.48	24	70.83	30	63.33
ROBINA	40	47.50	63	61.90	22	31.82
PIMPAMA	49	44.90	79	44.30	56	57.14
COOMERA	112	36.61	117	57.26	97	52.58

Location	30 April 2021-30 April 2022					
	Not wandering		Offence from wandering		Wandering occurrence	
	No. weapons	% bladed	No. weapons	% bladed	No. weapons	% bladed
BROADBEACH SNP	15	66.67	4	100	0	-
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	104	59.62	71	84.51	5	80.00
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	82	73.17				
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	50	58.00				
SOUTHPORT	173	69.36				
PALM BEACH	18	66.67				
COOLANGATTA	23	60.87				
ROBINA	23	52.17				
PIMPAMA	49	44.90				
COOMERA	70	65.71				

Figure 1: Percentage of weapons seized per month that were bladed in Surfers Paradise SNP



Note: Bars in trial year are shown both with (grey) and without (orange) wandering occurrences; where $n < 5$, percentage was omitted.

3.2 Offence numbers and types in SNPs

Table 3 depicts offences detected in both SNPs by type and year, with counts in the trial year differentiated by those detected through wandering and those detected using other methods. From these data, it is clear that in Broadbeach there were very few offences detected by wandering, and very little change from prior offending patterns (although it should be noted that there was a large spike in drug offences in the year *prior* to the wandering trial).

Table 3: *Counts of offences detected in the SNPs over time, by link to wandering trial*

Broadbeach SNP	30 April 2018- 29 April 2019	30 April 2019- 29 April 2020	30 April 2020- 29 April 2021	30 April 2021- 30 April 2022	
				Wandering	Other detection
Weapons	8	7	8	3	5
Drugs	111	82	173	9	144
Robbery	1	3	4	0	5
<i>Armed Robbery</i>	0	1	1	0	1
Public Order	161	94	80	0	74
Assault (total)	60	43	52	1	91
<i>Assault (no weapon)</i>	56	41	44	1	83
<i>Assault (weapon)</i>	4	2	8	0	8

Surfers Paradise SNP	30 April 2018- 29 April 2019	30 April 2019- 29 April 2020	30 April 2020- 29 April 2021	30 April 2021- 30 April 2022	
				Wandering	Other detection
Weapons	31	29	42	50	34
Drugs	405	441	413	69	508
Robbery	24	21	22	0	15
<i>Armed Robbery</i>	7	9	8	0	3
Public Order	951	707	656	11	886
Assault (total)	203	163	225	5	263
<i>Assault (no weapon)</i>	177	139	199	5	241
<i>Assault (weapon)</i>	26	24	26	0	22

By contrast to Broadbeach, the data in Table 3 for the Surfers Paradise SNP indicates increases during the trial in detected offences for weapons and drugs, and a return to pre-COVID levels for public order offences (perhaps reflecting the re-opening of many businesses closed during 2020). In addition to the 50 weapons offences detected through wandering, 69 occurrences involving drug offending with a linked wandering occurrence were entered into QPRIME (weapons and drug offences were counted both when that type of offence was the principal or a secondary offence from the occurrence). The wandering operation also precipitated 11 public order offences and 5 offences against the person (public order and personal offences were counted as such when the principal offence was in that category).

There was also a reduction in armed robberies during the trial, from 8 to 3 occurrences. A high degree of caution must be exercised in drawing conclusions based on such small numbers of that offence. This difference is NOT statistically significant (see discussion of

Figures 7 and 8 at page 42), and has had no effect on monthly counts (see figures 4 and 5 below). Further, this small drop in armed robberies appears to be related to a general fall in this offence category across other areas of the Gold Coast (see Figure 9 and discussion at page 42). Based on this, there is no evidence linking wandering to any decline in armed robberies, although this is something that should be re-investigated after more time has elapsed.

In Surfers Paradise SNP the overall number of weapons offences detected doubled during the trial, with about 60% of the total number of weapons offences detected by wandering. While wandering was also associated with some drug offences detected, the great majority of drug offences were detected by other means. Similarly, the small drop in armed robbery offences is neither statistically significant, or likely attributable to wandering.

Assaults with and without weapons in SNPs

While assaults with a weapon remained similar in both SNPs in the trial year compared with the three years previous, assaults without a weapon almost doubled in the trial year in Broadbeach SNP when compared with the previous year, and increased by almost 25% in Surfers Paradise SNP. **Both SNPs recorded their highest number of assaults without a weapon in the trial year compared with the previous three years.**

We also conducted analysis to determine any change in the numbers of types of assaultive offences involving weapons that could be attributed to the wandering trial. Selected assaultive offences are shown in Table 4, demonstrating little change in the different types of offence over time (counts do not sum to total number of assaults with weapons from Table 4 because only selected offences are included). The average seriousness of assault per SNP was calculated using the National Offence Index, and did not change significantly over time.

Table 4: *Assault with a weapon in SNPs*

Surfers Paradise SNP: Assaults with weapons by type					
	Assault occasioning bodily/ grievous bodily harm	Wounding	Rape	Murder	Average NOI [#]
30 April 2018-29 April 2019	14	6	1	0	25
30 April 2019-29 April 2020	17	2	1	2	23
30 April 2020-29 April 2021	11	6	3	1	23
30 April 2021-30 April 2022	14	1	1	0	26

Table 4 cont.

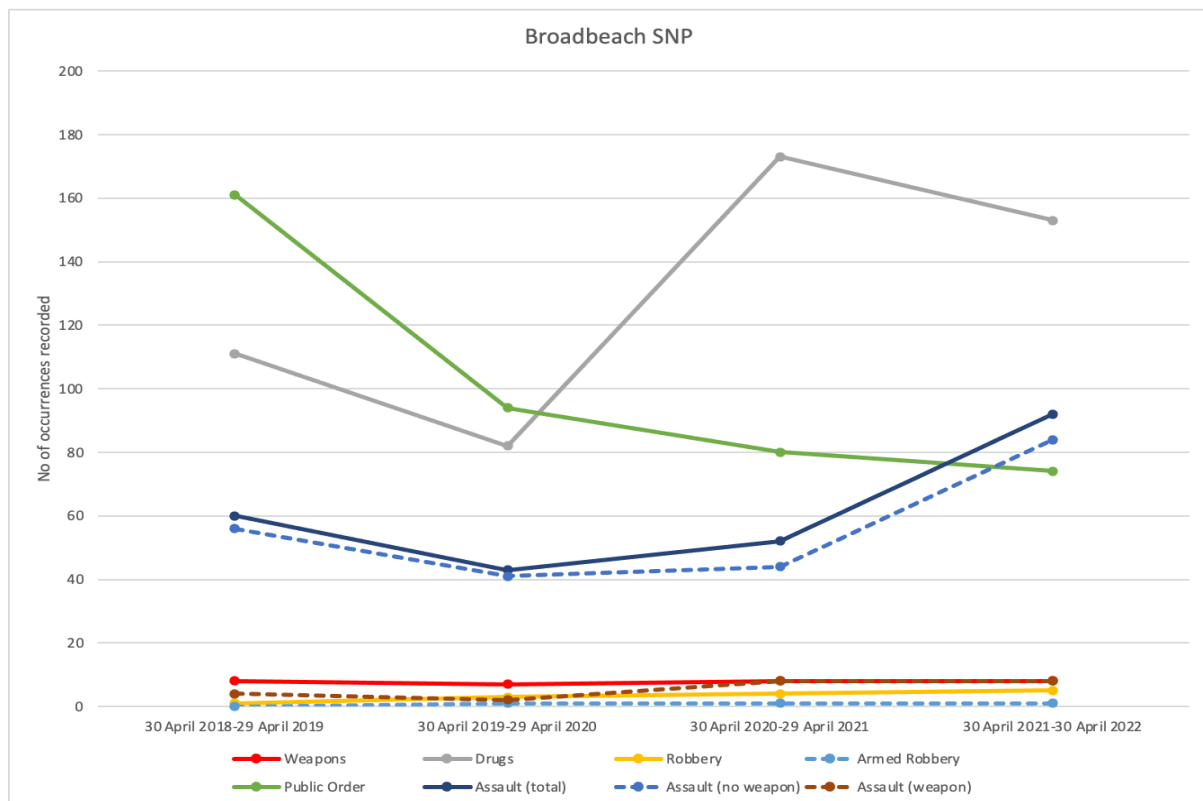
Broadbeach SNP: Assaults with weapons by type

	Assault occasioning bodily/ grievous bodily harm	Wounding	Rape	Murder	Average NOI#
30 April 2018-29 April 2019	2	0	1	0	22
30 April 2019-29 April 2020	1	0	0	0	28*
30 April 2020-29 April 2021	7	0	0	0	26
30 April 2021-30 April 2022	3	4	0	0	26

#Lower number=more serious offence on the National Offence Index; *Only two offences; Note: Counts do not sum to total number of assaults with weapons from Table 1: selected offences included only.

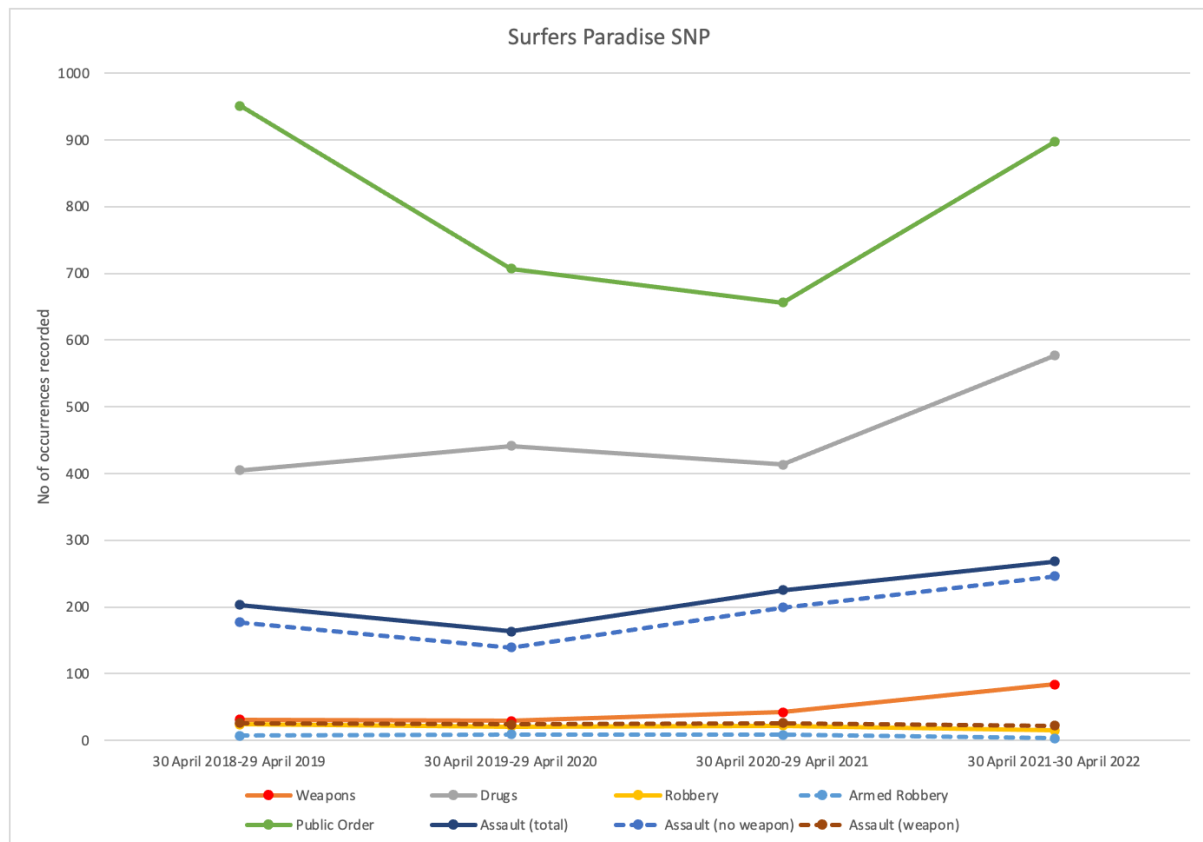
Figure 2 displays the trends in offence numbers by category in Broadbeach, showing a dip in 2019–2020 most likely related to COVID-19, but otherwise relatively little change, especially given the very low numbers in most categories. 3 presents the trends in different types of detected offences in the Surfers Paradise SNP. Note that for the trial period, the offences shown in both figures combines those detected by wandering and other means.

Figure 2: Broadbeach SNP count of recorded occurrences, including where detected through wandering (note y-axis scale differs from Surfers Paradise)



Note: Armed robbery nested within Robbery; Assault (no weapon) and Assault (weapon) nested within Assault (total); Weapons and Drugs offences include all occurrences with at least one of those respective offence types.

Figure 3: Surfers Paradise SNP count of recorded occurrences, including where detected through wandering

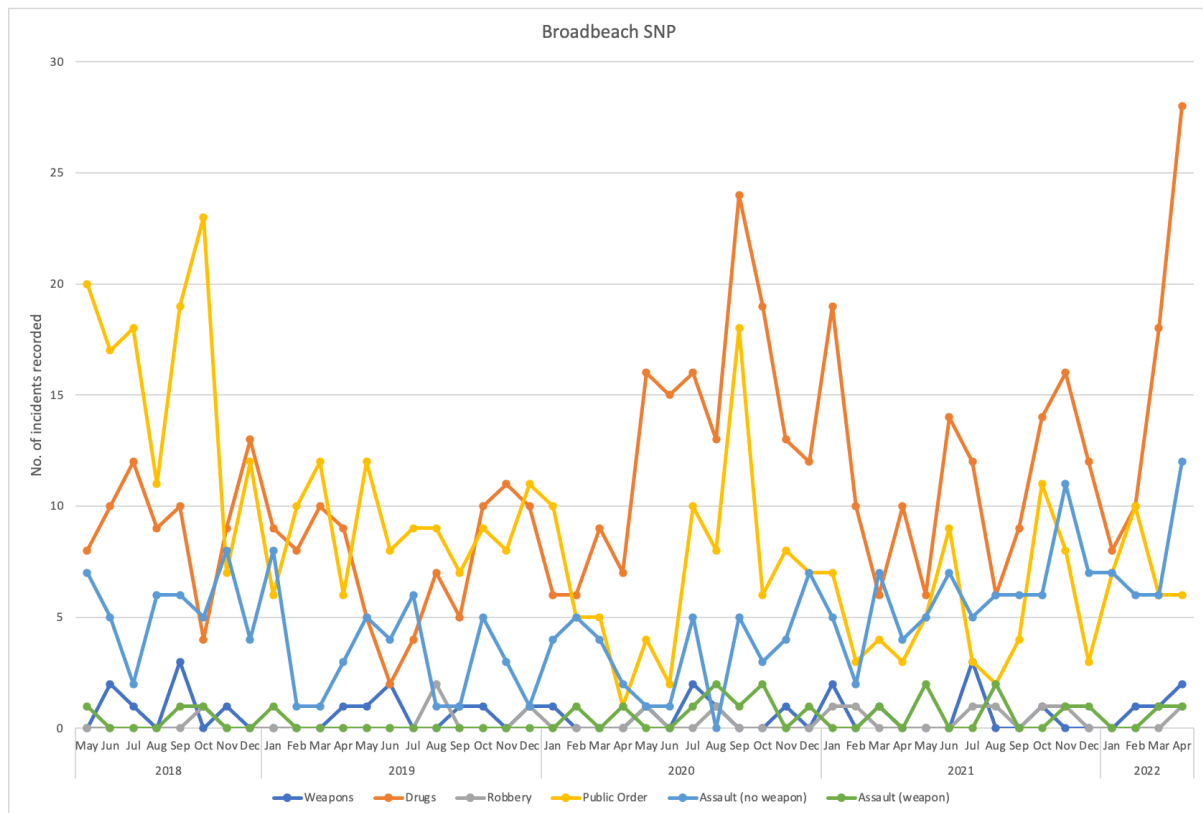


Note: Armed robbery nested within Robbery; Assault (no weapon) and Assault (weapon) nested within Assault (total); Weapons and Drugs offences include all occurrences with at least one of those respective offence types.

As evidenced by the data, robbery offences are very low across both sites. Robberies, both armed and unarmed, are relatively rare events, making trends difficult to discern over short time periods. Armed robbery is more likely to be affected by the wandering trial than unarmed robbery, as wandering is expected to decrease the carriage of weapons. As shown in Figures 2 and 3, incidents of robbery and armed robbery are generally very low in both SNPs, and there were minor fluctuations in occurrences during the trial period, but those reductions were **not** statistically significant. In Broadbeach robbery increased from 4 to 5 occurrences, and armed robbery from 0 to 1. In Surfers Paradise robbery dropped from 22 to 15 occurrences, and armed robbery from 8 to 3. Assaults with a weapon remained constant in both SNPs during the trial. All other types of offences rose during the trial period in Surfers Paradise, while in Broadbeach, drugs and public order offences fell and weapons offences remained constant.

We examined monthly counts of offences as shown in Figures 4 and 5 to identify any variations from usual patterns.

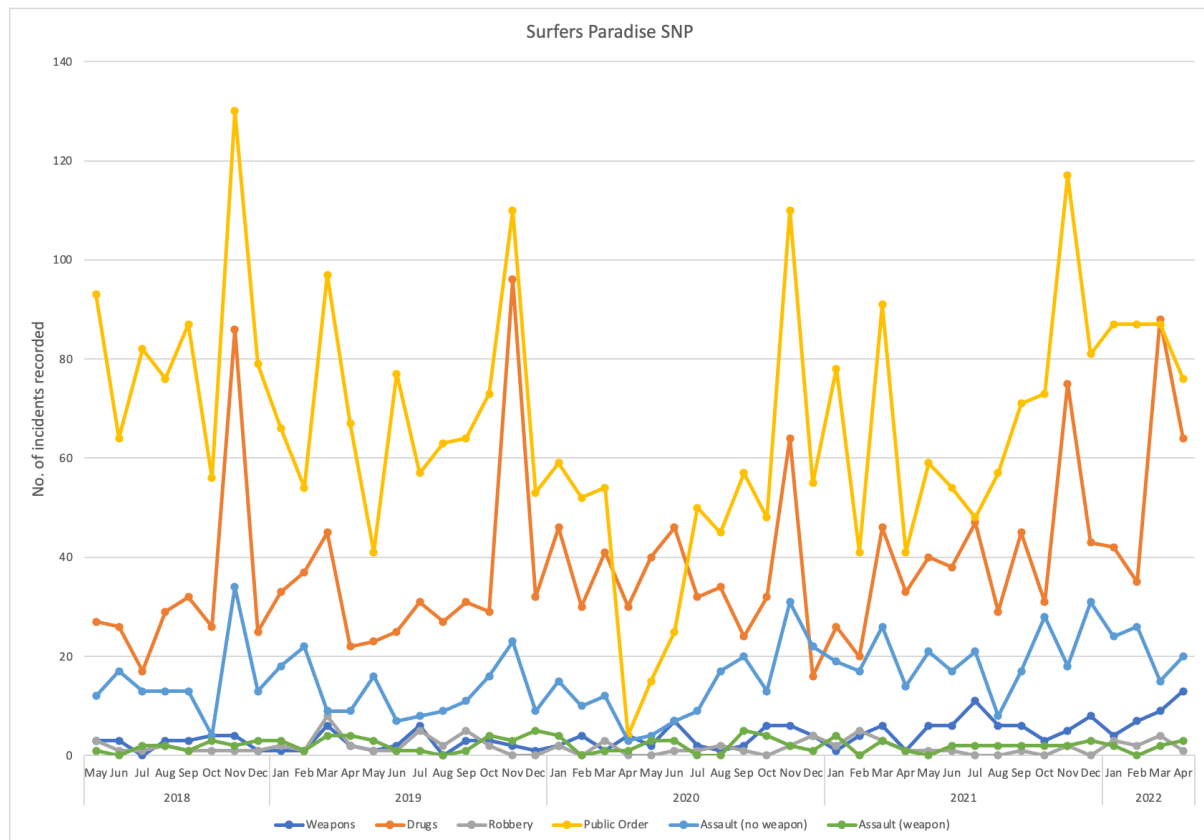
Figure 4: Broadbeach SNP count of recorded occurrences per month, including where detected through wandering (note y-axis scale differs from Surfers Paradise)



Note: Armed robbery nested within Robbery; Assault (no weapon) and Assault (weapon) nested within Assault (total); Weapons and Drugs offences include all occurrences with at least one of those respective offence types.

These figures indicate, firstly, that weapons offences maintain no clear persistent trend over the 4 years of data, despite the wandering trial operating in the final year. Drugs offences trended in an upwards direction in Broadbeach across the 4 years, despite the fall in the trial year, while in Surfers Paradise SNP, drugs offences appear to be fluctuating around a higher level from May in 2020 (when stay-at-home orders eased) compared with the two years previous. Assaults with no weapon have similarly been trending upwards since May 2020 in both SNPs. Public order offences have trended slightly down in Broadbeach SNP from the beginning of our data extract.

Figure 5: Surfers Paradise SNP count of recorded occurrences by month, including where detected through wandering

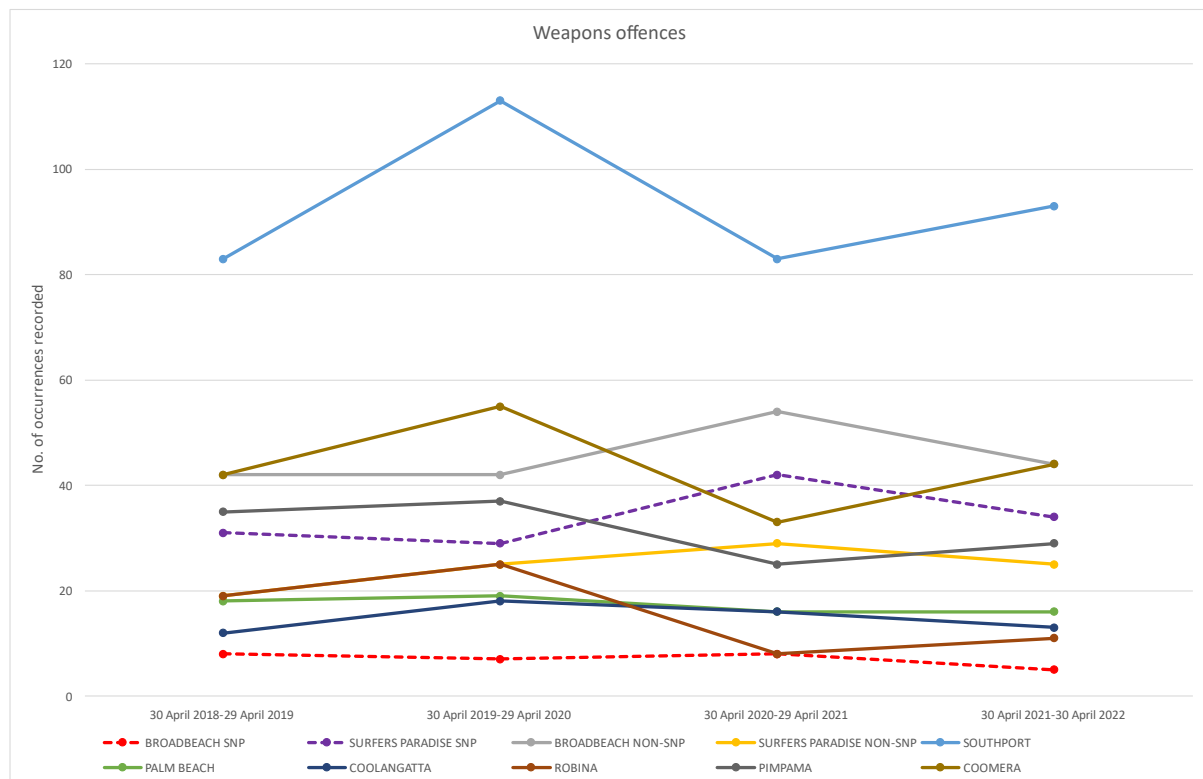


Note: Armed robbery and Assault (total) omitted for ease of interpretation; Weapons and Drugs offences include all occurrences with at least one of those respective offence types.

Offences detected by means other than wandering

We also examined trends in offences that were not detected by wandering operations. This was to help indicate whether any trends observed in SNPs were caused by factors other than the wandering trial. Occurrences which included a weapons offence but which were not detected through wandering according to QPRIME records fell in both SNPs during the wandering trial, as well as in the neighbouring non-SNP areas as shown in Figure 6. Weapons offences also fell in Coolangatta while remaining steady in Palm Beach. Weapons offences rose in Southport, Robina, Pimpama, and Coomera. However, no differences were statistically significant, and all changes in level could be interpreted as natural variation around the mean.

Figure 6: Weapons offences by area, not including those detected through wandering operations



When weapons offences specifically linked to wandering are included in counts during the trial period, Broadbeach SNP records the same number of offences involving weapons in the trial period as the previous three years, while Surfers Paradise SNP records an extra 50 weapons offences in addition to those detected through wandering. **In the Surfers Paradise SNP, the wandering trial therefore coincides with a doubling of weapons offences from the year prior to the trial and the year of the trial itself, from 42 occurrences to 84 occurrences.**

Assaults with a weapon followed similar trajectories as weapons offences in most areas (Figure 7), with changes appearing to be fluctuations around an average. Assaults without a weapon, however, trended up in many areas across the 4 years. However, in the trial year, the non-SNP areas of Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise recorded decreases in assaults without a weapon, while the SNP areas distinctly increased, as did Southport (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Assaults flagged as a weapon having been used by area, not including those detected through wandering operations

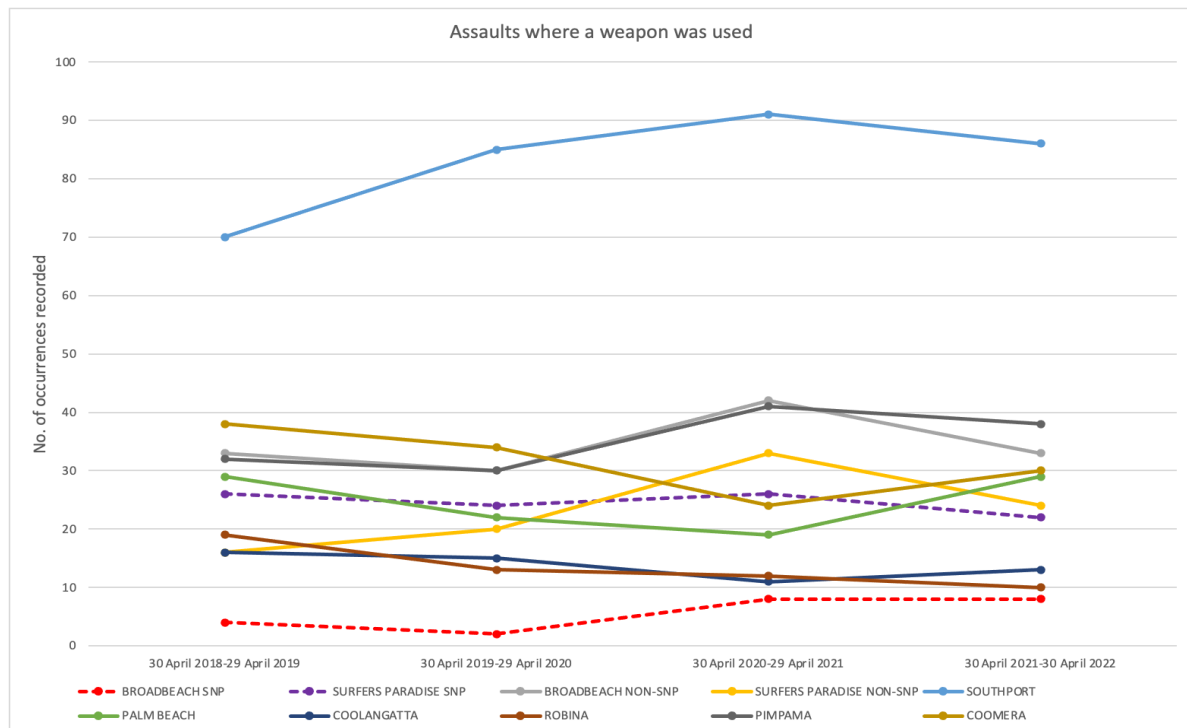
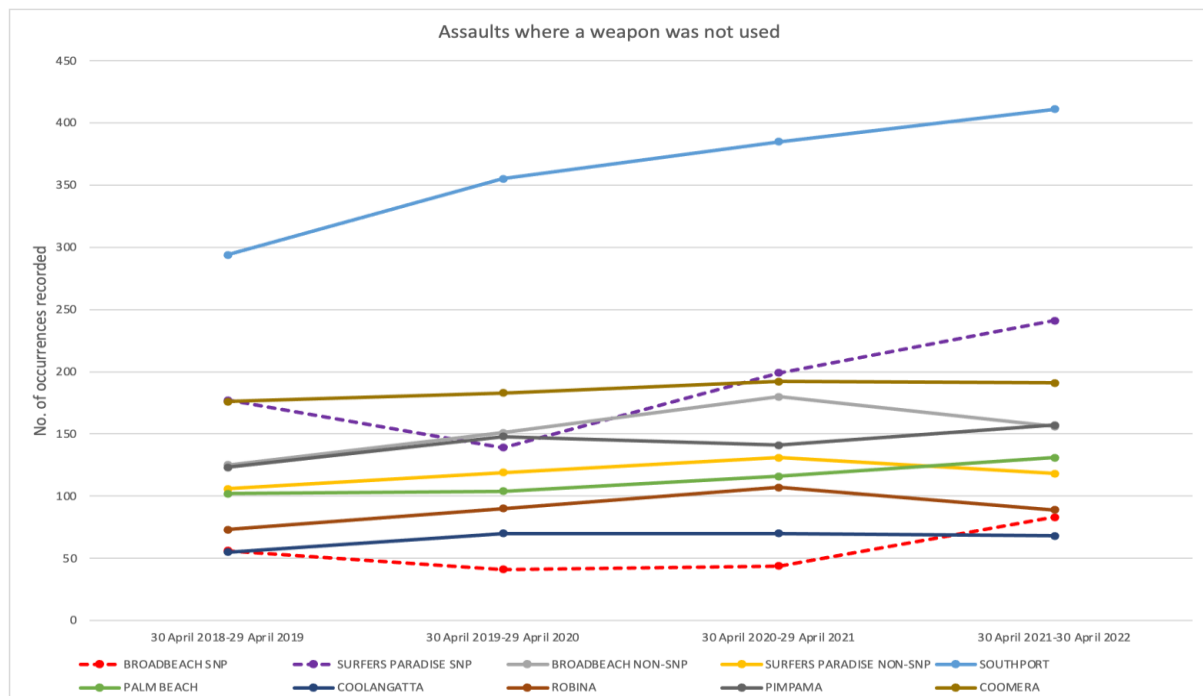
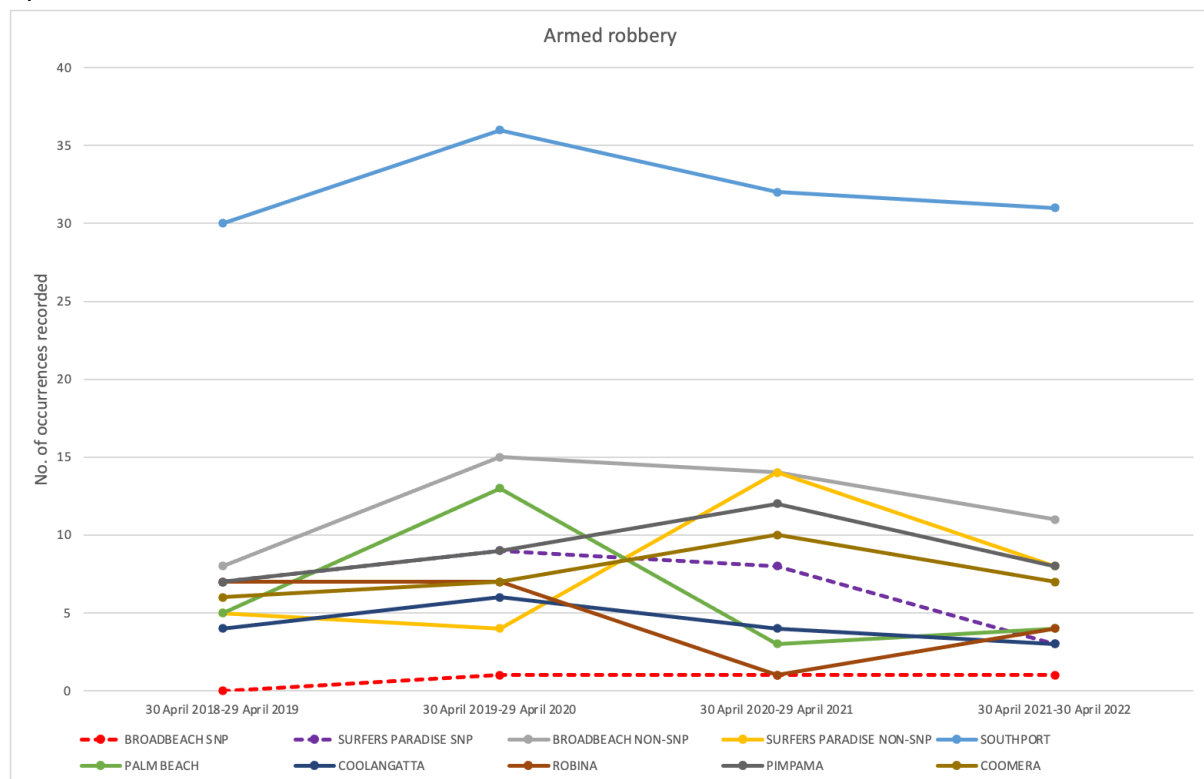


Figure 8: Assaults not flagged as a weapon having been used by area, not including those detected through wandering operations



Armed robberies reduced in the SNPs and in their surrounding non-SNP areas during the wandering trial period, as did counts in Southport, Pimpama, Coomera, and Coolangatta (Figure 9). Meanwhile, armed robberies rose in Palm Beach and Robina. However, no differences were statistically significant, including differences between the SNPs and the other areas; all differences are likely to be simple variations around the mean.

Figure 9: Armed robbery offences by area, not including those detected through wandering operations



Drugs offences have been decreasing over time in most areas examined, with the SNPs exceptions, even when occurrences detected through wandering are not included in the comparison (Figure 10: Drugs offences by area, not including those detected through wandering operations). Meanwhile, public order offences remained steady or trended downward across locations except Southport, where the trend moved slightly upwards across the 4 years, and Surfers Paradise SNP, where it trended down until the trial year and increased again markedly (Figure 11).

In summary, comparison with areas of possible diffusion of benefit from the trial or displacement of offending are mostly uninformative. Changes in offending within the SNPs and in other areas appear driven by the COVID-19 changes to movement, and otherwise

fluctuate normally. However, current upward trends in assaults without a weapon (with no corresponding decreases in assaults with a weapon) will be of interest to Gold Coast police.

Figure 10: Drugs offences by area, not including those detected through wandering operations

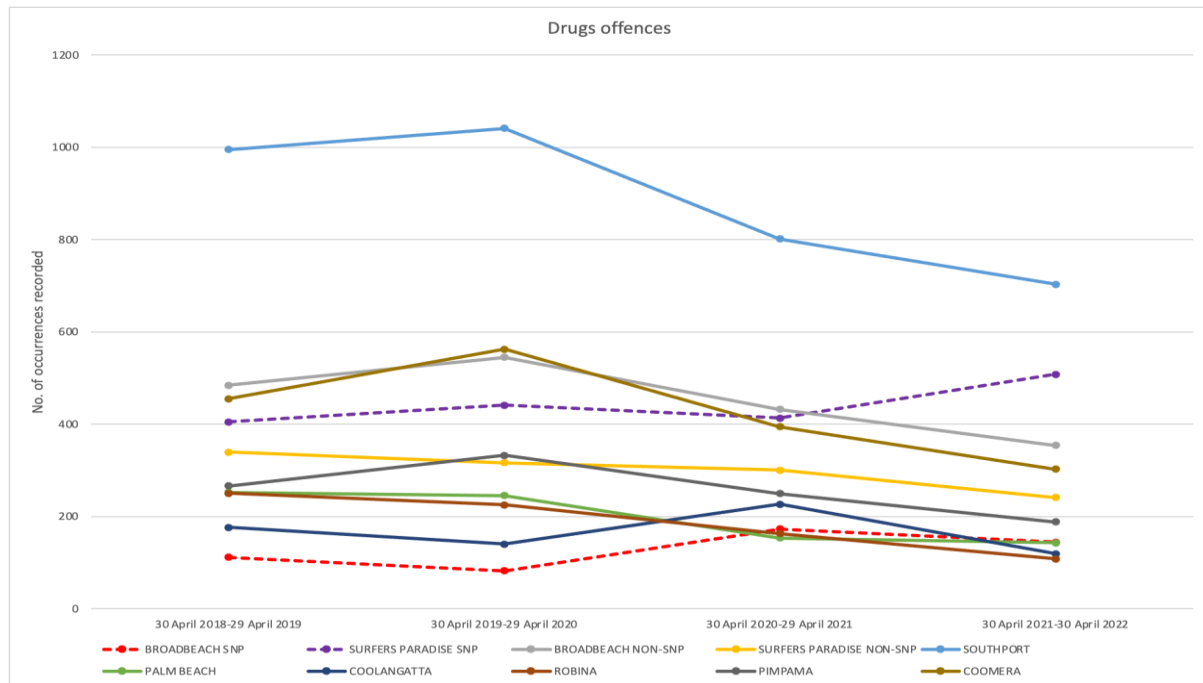
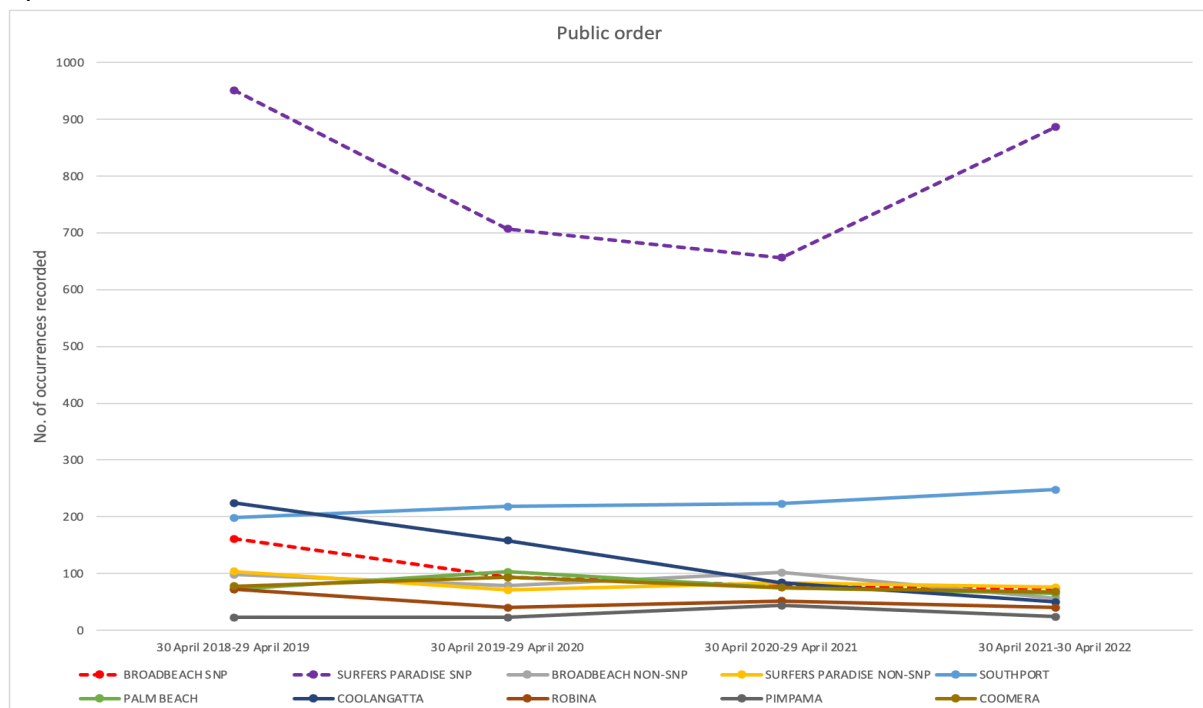


Figure 11: Public order offences by area, not including those detected through wandering operations



3.3 Who was wanded?

In Broadbeach SNP, 1,292 wanding occurrences took place during the trial, with 1,105 distinct single person identifiers recorded. Fifteen offenders were identified through wanding in Broadbeach SNP, of which 3 were charged with any weapons offence. Meanwhile, 11,679 wandings were carried out in Surfers Paradise SNP. These corresponded to 8,279 separate individuals, of which 28 were charged with possession of a dangerous article, and 29 more with further Weapons Act (1990) offences (no further detail available). We analysed demographic data relating to those people stopped for wanding in both SNPs where detail was available (sample sizes vary depending on which characteristic is under consideration).

In Broadbeach SNP, 23% of people wanded were under 18, while in Surfers Paradise SNP, 29% were in this age group. Only 15% of those wanded in Surfers Paradise were female, and 12% in Broadbeach. Almost three quarters of people wanded volunteered their postcode or other identifying information. Of all wanding occurrences, 9% of subjects were from the Logan/Beaudesert region, another 9% from Surfers Paradise to Benowa, and 8% from Southport. Only 6% were from Brisbane, and 2% from interstate³.

3.4 Who was detected carrying weapons?

We analysed demographic data relating to those people charged with offences relating to weapons. In this section we will review QPRIME data as well as the perceptions provided by officers during the focus group and interviews.

3.4.1 People carrying weapons

Table 5 provides counts of people who were charged with weapons offences by area and year, with those detected through the wanding process delineated in the trial year. This table is intended as a reference for the following tables, which display proportions of individuals with characteristics of interest in each category.

³ Area of residence was categorised using the postcode supplied in QPRIME for the person wanded. Categories were for each postcode in the Gold Coast area, and became progressively less precise according to distance from the Gold Coast. See Appendix M for details.

Table 5: *Number of offenders attached to weapons offences by area and linked to wandering*

Location	30 April 2018- 29 April 2019	30 April 2019- 29 April 2020	30 April 2020- 29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022	
				Offenders (not wandering)	Offenders (wandering)
BROADBEACH SNP	9	8	13	5	3
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	40	42	51	40	56
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	59	52	80	52	
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	26	34	49	29	
SOUTHPORT	111	143	100	103	
PALM BEACH	21	23	22	19	
COOLANGATTA	13	24	23	17	
ROBINA	23	32	9	17	
PIMPAMA	45	45	33	35	
COOMERA	54	66	45	52	

Age of people carrying weapons

As discussed in Chapter 1, the purpose of the wandering trial was to target weapons carrying by youth, which we have considered to be under people 18 years of age. As noted above, in Broadbeach SNP, 23% of wandings were carried out on people under 18, and no weapons offenders were in that age group. In Surfers Paradise SNP, however, 29% of people wandered were under 18, while 45% of weapons offenders were youths (see Table 6: *Proportion of offenders attached to weapons offences identified in QPRIME as under 18yrs by area and linked to wandering*). In the 2 years prior to the trial in Surfers Paradise SNP, around one third of weapons offenders were under 18; however, in the trial year, only 15% of offenders identified through methods other than wandering were in that age group.

Table 6: *Proportion of offenders attached to weapons offences identified in QPRIME as under 18yrs by area and linked to wandering*

Location	30 April 2018- 29 April 2019	30 April 2019- 29 April 2020	30 April 2020- 29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022	
				Offenders (not wandering)	Offenders (wandering)
BROADBEACH SNP [#]	12%	29%	23%	0%	0%*
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	19%	30%	33%	15%	45%
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	24%	30%	24%	38%	
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	20%	10%	30%	13%	
SOUTHPORT	17%	22%	22%	17%	
PALM BEACH	14%	41%	11%	7%	
COOLANGATTA	0%	22%	29%	0%	
ROBINA	30%	43%	33%	54%	
PIMPAMA	31%	28%	28%	4%	
COOMERA	27%	14%	46%	45%	

[#]n=38 across 4 years; *n<5.

Demographics of people carrying weapons

Female offenders made up between 16 and 30% of weapons offenders identified with means other than wandering in Surfers Paradise SNP across our data extract, but only 7% of weapons offenders identified through wandering (see Table 7: *Proportion of offenders attached to weapons offences identified in QPRIME as female by area and linked to wandering*).

Table 7: *Proportion of offenders attached to weapons offences identified in QPRIME as female by area and linked to wandering*

Location	30 April 2018- 29 April 2019	30 April 2019- 29 April 2020	30 April 2020- 29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022	
				Offenders (not wandering)	Offenders (wandering)
BROADBEACH SNP#	12%	14%	31%	0%	0%*
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	17%	16%	20%	30%	7%
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	10%	14%	27%	12%	
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	10%	16%	23%	13%	
SOUTHPORT	18%	17%	21%	12%	
PALM BEACH	14%	24%	11%	0%	
COOLANGATTA	0%	28%	29%	25%	
ROBINA	10%	21%	17%	15%	
PIMPAMA	24%	14%	10%	22%	
COOMERA	19%	14%	10%	21%	

#n=38 across 4 years; *n<5.

Table 8 depicts the proportion of offenders who were charged with a weapons offence who are identified in QPRIME as Australian First Nations. Low counts of weapons offenders in Broadbeach SNP artificially inflates those percentages, but similar volatility is seen in Surfers Paradise SNP across the four years of data extraction. While the percentage of weapons offenders who were First Nations decreased in Surfers Paradise SNP in the trial year, a similar effect was seen in Coolangatta, another nightlife area; while the proportion of weapons offenders who were First Nations simultaneously increased in Southport, Surfers Paradise non-SNP, and Robina, perhaps suggesting a different use of space by First Nations Australians during the trial year (that is unlikely to be linked to the trial).

Table 8: *Proportion of offenders attached to weapons offences identified in QPRIME as Australian First Nations by area and link to wandering*

Location	30 April 2018-29 April 2019	30 April 2019-29 April 2020	30 April 2020-29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022	
				Offenders (not wandering)	Offenders (wandering)
BROADBEACH SNP#	11%	0%	23%	20%	0%*
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	3%	0%	10%	3%	2%
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	2%	0%	5%	0%	
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	4%	0%	4%	7%	
SOUTHPORT	7%	1%	2%	6%	
PALM BEACH	10%	4%	0%	0%	
COOLANGATTA	8%	0%	4%	0%	
ROBINA	0%	0%	0%	12%	
PIMPAMA	2%	2%	3%	3%	
COOMERA	0%	5%	2%	4%	

#n=38 across 4 years; *n<5.

Assaults using a weapon

The number of offenders charged with any kind of assault using a weapon is shown in Table 9. None of this type of offence were detected through wandering, because officers would have reasonable suspicion to search if such an offence took place. Numbers of offenders fell in Surfers Paradise SNP, and also in Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise non-SNPs and Southport, which may suggest diffusion of benefit from the wandering trial in reducing assaults with a weapon. Numbers simultaneously rose in Palm Beach, Coolangatta, and Coomera, which might suggest displacement. However, all changes were within normal fluctuations seen in the previous three years and were statistically non-significant, indicating they are unlikely to be related to the trial.

Table 9: *Number of offenders attached to assaultive offences using a weapon by area and linked to wandering*

Location	30 April 2018-29 April 2019	30 April 2019-29 April 2020	30 April 2020-29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022	
				Offenders (not wandering)	Offenders (wandering)
BROADBEACH SNP#	4	2	10	8	-
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	36	33	38	24	-
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	45	36	50	37	
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	19	20	39	28	
SOUTHPORT	78	89	100	89	
PALM BEACH	33	27	22	30	
COOLANGATTA	19	16	11	15	
ROBINA	19	18	12	12	
PIMPAMA	37	38	53	42	
COOMERA	40	38	25	34	

No offenders charged with assault using a weapon in Broadbeach SNP across our data extract were under 18 (Table 10). The proportion of assault with a weapon offenders in Surfers Paradise SNP has fluctuated, but was considerably higher in the two years prior to the trial than the year of the trial itself. However, that proportion has only fallen to the same proportion as the year beginning 30 April 2018.

Table 10: *Proportion of offenders attached to assaultive offences using a weapon identified in QPRIME as under 18 by area and linked to wandering*

Location	30 April 2018- 29 April 2019	30 April 2019- 29 April 2020	30 April 2020- 29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022	
				Offenders (not wandering)	Offenders (wandering)
BROADBEACH SNP [#]	0%*	0%*	0%	0%	-
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	8%	35%	36%	8%	-
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	48%	21%	24%	14%	
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	0%	14%	8%	25%	
SOUTHPORT	26%	16%	16%	10%	
PALM BEACH	33%	32%	27%	31%	
COOLANGATTA	33%	33%	25%	0%	
ROBINA	50%	55%	0%	50%	
PIMPAMA	32%	36%	25%	25%	
COOMERA	38%	15%	17%	44%	

[#]n=24 across 4 years; *n<5.

Female offenders made up none of those charged with assault with a weapon in the SNPs during the trial period, where they had previously accounted for one third of offenders in Surfers Paradise SNP (see Table 11). They also did not factor in assaults with a weapon in Surfers Paradise non-SNP area. Meanwhile, First Nations offender proportions in assault with a weapon mirror the changes in that group's weapons offences detections, again suggesting a change in use of space.

Table 11: *Proportion of offenders attached to assaultive offences using a weapon identified in QPRIME as female by area and linked to wanding*

Location	30 April 2018- 29 April 2019	30 April 2019- 29 April 2020	30 April 2020- 29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022	
				Offenders (not wanding)	Offenders (wanding)
BROADBEACH SNP#	50%*	0%*	14%	0%*	-
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	31%	35%	29%	0%	-
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	13%	21%	24%	14%	
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	50%	14%	21%	0%	
SOUTHPORT	31%	16%	32%	26%	
PALM BEACH	11%	21%	9%	23%	
COOLANGATTA	17%	11%	25%*	11%	
ROBINA	50%	27%	50%	50%	
PIMPAMA	9%	22%	10%	20%	
COOMERA	25%	15%	25%	40%	

#n=24 across 4 years; *n<5.

Table 12: *Proportion of offenders attached to weapons offences identified in QPRIME as Australian First Nations by area and linked to wanding*

Location	30 April 2018- 29 April 2019	30 April 2019-29 April 2020	30 April 2020-29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022	
				Offenders (not wanding)	Offenders (wanding)
BROADBEACH SNP#	0%*	0%*	0%	0%	-
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	3%	12%	8%	0%	-
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	0%	0%	4%	0%	
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	5%	10%	0%	4%	
SOUTHPORT	3%	0%	1%	1%	
PALM BEACH	0%	0%	0%	3%	
COOLANGATTA	5%	6%	0%	7%	
ROBINA	0%	0%	0%	8%	
PIMPAMA	0%	0%	2%	0%	
COOMERA	3%	8%	4%	0%	

#n=24 across 4 years; *n<5.

3.4.2 Officer perceptions of changes in offending

In interviews and focus groups, police officer participants were asked their impressions of whether offending changes had occurred in the SNPs, other areas, or both. Comments included that some type of offences had reduced, such as robberies (FG1, QP3, QP4), threats (FG1), and unlawful wounding (QP6).

Police officer participants felt that wandering had resulted in an increase in knives detected (FG3, FG4, QP1, QP2, QP5). However they observed that it is not just young people detected carrying knives (QP2, QP5, QP6, QP7):

“we probably had in the back of our minds it was going to be a younger group that was more consistently involved in carrying knives where it’s been a greater spread of age than probably what I thought it would be” (QP6)

Officers were also asked if they thought that the severity of injuries resulting from weapons offences had changed. Most perceived that the severity had decreased (QP6, QP7, QP9), some even suggesting that the violence involving an edged weapon had gone down (QP1, QP4).

Participating officers were also asked if they had seen a change in the type of weapons detected or used in SNPs and surrounding areas. Most commented that they had not seen a change; however, if the weapons were not metal it would be hard to detect them (FG4, QP6, QP7). What they found surprising was the type of weapons located, including kitchen knives (FG1) flick knives (FG1, FG3, QP2), stanley knives (FG1), large combat knives (30cm long), machetes (QP2, FG3), tomhawks (FG3, QP4), axes (QP2), meat cleavers (QP7), tasers (QP4), hedging saws (QP4), knuckledusters (FG1, FG3), sharpened screwdrivers (QP9), and knives concealed as credit cards (FG4, QP4, QP7). Comments included:

“weapons located over the weekend were still consistent with what we were finding at the start, probably the surprise for us in terms of the weapons though is they’re not just knives, you’ve seen evidence yourselves of tomahawks and pruning saws that type of thing, sharpened screwdrivers” (QP7); and

“carrying a hedging saw secreted in your pants while you are going to Surfers Paradise on a Saturday night that’s there for one reason only” (QP4).

Officers also commented that because of wandering, increased engagement opportunities increased the detection of other offences. They noted that dother contraband is often detected during wandering, such as dangerous drugs (FG2, FG3, FG4, QP3, QP6, QP7), or stolen property (FG3, QP7). These items are often detected when officers ask persons selected for wandering if they would like to declare any items (FG2, QP1, QP2), or are located by chance (FG2, FG4). In addition, persons often provide names and addresses, so when police run an identify check, individuals might be identified as having an outstanding warrant, being wanted for questioning, or having a banning order (QP3, QP6, QP7, QP9):

“once we engage with them in terms of being wanted and going through that process whether we find other offences being committed, such as possession of a dangerous drug, and there’s been lots of those, people wanted on warrants, people wanted for questioning about domestic violence matters – a whole range of other offences being committed which actually exceed the number of offences that we’re detecting for the knives. So that’s been one of the real benefits, because we are able to engage with people in such a manner that you know reasonable suspicion isn’t required and because we’re engaging with them around the knives it’s just a lot of offences flow off the back of that and the way we’re going about that” (QP6).

This engagement also provided another benefit; more and closer engagement with any member of public has allowed for identification and referral to services for vulnerable people, such as persons suffering from mental illness or homelessness (QP6).

Some participants raised concerns that the problems had displaced to Southport (FG2, FG4, QP1, QP8), Coomera (QP2), the Pacific Fair Shopping Center (FG4), or the borders with the SNPs (QP2). Youth were perceived not to be travelling on the G-Link into the SNP’s anymore, but were rather travelling to Southport (FG2). Others suggested that the displacement had been limited (QP3, QP4) or only temporary, with everyone returning to the Surfers Paradise SNP post-pandemic due to its unique nature (FG3, QP6, QP7). The diversity of opinions is reflected in these quotes:

“I was even speaking to one the other night that’s moved away and he goes ‘I’ve got to get out of Surfers Paradise’ and I said ‘oh that’s a good idea’ and he goes ‘yeah because every time you know I get wanted and I get caught” (QP1);

“we were actually identifying people getting off trams here [Southport] and closer to the Surfers Paradise precinct and walking into the precincts” (QP8);

“I don’t think we really have a displacement effect, the Gold Coast is, Surfers Paradise is you know it’s a party precinct, there’s no alternative, if there was another party precinct up the road which had nightclubs and less police I would suggest we would displace a lot of people to that area, there’s no real other option” (QP4); and

However, some of the stakeholders believed that they had noticed displacement effects (ES1, ES2):

“Coolangatta I have major problems with the youth gangs down there, and Burleigh we’ve definitely got a lot more gangs, and I don’t know if it is because the gangs know

that they're going to get wanded up to a certain period of time so then they'll travel down to those other places" (ES2).

3.4.3 Perceptions of community safety

As discussed in chapter 2, we used interviews and focus groups to understand whether community perceptions of safety had changed as a result of the trial. Some police officers commented that they had received *'suprisingly a lot of positive feedback from the community'*, and no negative feedback (QP9). Officers noted that their interaction with young people seemed to have improved (QP7). Feedback received was around the wandering initiative itself as a positive initiative to enhance community safety (FG1, FG2, FG4, QP1, QP2, QP5, QP7), with the public indicating to officers that they felt safer as a result of wandering (FG1, FG2, QP1, QP2, QP3, QP4, QP6). This is reflected in these two quotes:

"after we finish wandering the convenience store comes out and just thanks us, thanks guys for doing this it's the best thing ever" (QP1); and

"a lot of positive feedback about the presence of police but also about you know they're not particularly worried there's a group of kids outside or a group of people outside of their business; before they'd be worried 'am I going to be held up, am I going to be – is there going to be a fight out the front sort of thing, or something's going to happen here of a serious nature" (QP6).

These positive effects were also expressed by some of the external stakeholders, who owned and/or represented businesses in the SNPs, as can be seen in their statements:

"before the trial: there was a lot more of the gangs, the kids hanging about, if that makes sense. So we've seen less of that. And like we had sort of a drama in the store with like a knife, like maybe 18 months ago, and different times, and we haven't had any problems in the last year" (ES2);

"we just haven't had any altercations with any of them or had to call police I would say in the last 12 months, to actually remove people" (ES2);

"a lot of the conversations even with other traders have been, those gangs are a lot more subdued as in they won't go and steal things and that, because a lot of the, there were lots of complaints where they would come by and someone would distract someone and then they would take things" (ES2);

“anyone that had been trialled or anyone that was involved in it there was no negative feedback, it was extremely positive even to the fact of everyone felt – it was more of a positive being monitored than not being monitored if they – even though it was targeted who they were going for no one had a problem with someone coming up and doing it because it was showing a positive” (ES3);

“since the trial in our particular area has been there’s been an improvement or a safety confidence in those areas since these trials have come in” (ES3); and

“most customers, well our good customers anyway they love having the police presence and love seeing our staff actively out there addressing these issues, because we’ve had again in the last 18 months our customer complaints went up significantly around mostly juveniles and complaining about other passengers, so that area of complaints has really skyrocketed where they’re ringing in complaining about the other person” (ES1).

3.5 Summary

In summary, overall we answer key questions 1 through 6 as follows: During the wandering trial there have been mixed patterns in detected offences in the two SNPs. In Broadbeach, the only observable change of any significance was in drug offences, but almost all were detected by means other than wandering. In Surfers Paradise, there were increases in both drug and weapons offences attributable to wandering. In both SNPs the overall number of detected offences involving weapons are historically very low. While there were very minor fluctuations in numbers, there were no significant changes to these offence counts in either area during the trial period. There is no quantitative data supporting changes in the nature of weapons carried or severity of offences, but officer participants considered that this had declined during the trial. There is no quantitative evidence of either displacement of offending or diffusion of benefits to adjacent, non-trial areas. There is no evidence to suggest significant community concerns with the operation of the wandering trial, and indeed, some evidence of improved perceptions both of police and of community safety.

4 Trial effectiveness

This chapter addresses whether the wand operations were effective, both in their deployment and in their impact on the behaviour of young people. It addresses the following key questions:

7: How effective is the process?

- *At each site, how many wands are available for use, is there any training for their use, and what guidance is given (written or verbal) on how, when and why to use the wands?*
- *How often / frequently are senior officers authorising wand operations?*
- *Are there patterns of use (e.g. at particular times, days of the week, locations)?*
- *What is the duration of each wand operation? How many individuals are wanded during each operation? How are individuals selected for wand operation?*
- *How many police officers are involved in each wand operation? What are their ranks?*
- *What is the demographic profile of people subject to each wand operation? (see also chapter 3)*
- *What records are kept of who is wanded, why, and any outcomes, e.g. detections?*
- *Are wand operations being deployed consistently across the two sites and by different personnel?*

8: How effective has the trial been in changing the behaviour of young people?

9: Has there been a change during the trial in how young people respond to or engage with police?

The data used in answering these questions is drawn primarily from observations, governance documents, interviews and focus groups.

4.1 Effectiveness of the process

4.1.1 Wand operation equipment

Participants were asked about the number of wands available in both SNPs with all saying that there were sufficient wands available. They were also asked about the functionality of the wands. All participants thought they were efficient and easy to use (FG2, FG3, FG4, FG1, QP1, QP2, QP3, QP5, QP7), and were sufficiently sensitive to pick up the smallest items of metal, and even syringes (FG1, QP9):

“if you find someone or you suspect someone, yeah then definitely it's a good little extra tool to have for sure” (FG2); and

“it's far more efficient to search somebody or their bag or something like that with a wand, you know like versus doing a, putting your gloves on and doing a search or a pat down search and this pocket that pocket” (FG2).

The wand indicates with a red light and vibrates when it detects a metal object, rather than giving an audio sound. This was primarily for safety reasons:

“it doesn't give an audible signal and that's really important for the officer's safety so it just vibrates in their hand and the light changes from green to red so that side works really well as well” (QP9).

However some officers commented that they would prefer some audio sound as well:

“it vibrates when you are wandling someone but I think maybe a thought might be of maybe like an audio sound because sometimes if you are in a bit of a heightened state I don't know maybe the sound as well as the feel and the light maybe that is something that could be of assistance” (QP3).

While the wand itself was considered efficient and effective, the pouches were considered an issue:

“wands got lost though, they're not very good pouches, because they literally just sit in the pouch, so if you're involved in a wrestle or something, because it's not tied down, they do come out pretty easily” (FG4).

4.1.2 Notification requirement

Some officers commented that the wording of the required notification should be simplified, that it was too lengthy (FG2, FG3, QP1, QP2, QP4, QP6, QP7), very masculine (FG2) and confrontational (FG2, QP7). Significant concerns were raised that people would take offence (FG4, QP1, QP6), or be distracted by the wording (FG2, FG3, QP6), especially since many officers suggested that one of the advantages of wandling should be the positive interaction and engagement with people:

“It is lengthy, and the general public when you're trying to have a normal conversation with someone, they'll switch off as soon as you start talking verbatim robot directions” (FG2);

“the wording used is absolute alpha male, you will stop, you will submit, when everything else that we've ever used in the past is you're required, you're directed.

Why, why weren't those two phrases implemented for this. Stop and submit, like ooh that is really confrontational language" (FG2); and

"we actually have to make it really easy for the person we're saying it to, if they don't understand it, then they're going to baulk" (QP6).

4.1.3 Training provided

Participants commented that there was a significant amount of training available and that it was 'really good' (QP2). The wands are so easy to use that some participants commented that training was not necessary (QP4). However it was noted that there were plenty of opportunities for training (FG1, FG3, FG4, QP9), and if a member signed up to do over-time specifically for wanding, completing the training package was a requirement (QP7, QP8). When allocated for overtime duties, officers were sent an email with the requirement for training, and a link to the training package (FG4, QP7). In addition, there were options for personalised one-on-one training (FG1, QP6, QP7). Regular compliance checks were completed to ensure that officers conducting wanding had completed the training (QP9).

Besides using the wand, the other component of the training package was the legislative requirements (FG1, FG4, QP5, QP6, QP8, QP9), especially around the powers of stopping people for wanding, the wording to use, and requirements around identification particulars. One participant group commented that they were given small laminated cards with the requirement, which was seen as convenient (FG4):

"when we're training our people we need, they need to know okay just because they don't tell us their name, doesn't mean they've committed an offence, they can run as long as they want, we haven't found a weapon, end of story. That's a really strong example of good training and good experience going so far and then stopping" (FG1).

The training's effectiveness was addressed in this comment:

"there hasn't been a lot of non-compliance [around asking identifying particulars] which has been refreshing, and I think that came back to the training and the reinforcement about how we were going to do it" (QP5).

However, as this participant also suggested, if the trial is extended, the training should be revisited to incorporate all lessons learnt (QP5).

4.2 Authorisations during the trial

As discussed in Chapter 2, all uses of wandering need to be authorised by senior officers, with such authorisations then valid for 12 hours. Participants commented on this, including that if authorisations cannot or are not obtained in a timely manner, officers may be able to stop people by relying on their search powers rather than the wandering powers (QP3). In contrast to the wandering provisions, however, this use of search powers can only be justified where the officer has reasonable suspicion of offending behaviour. Hence the authorisation process is important in empowering officers to conduct searches without having to satisfy the reasonable suspicion requirement.

Some interview participants perceived that there was a very limited decision – making process around issuing an authorisation (QP3, QP4), other than the availability of resources (QP6):

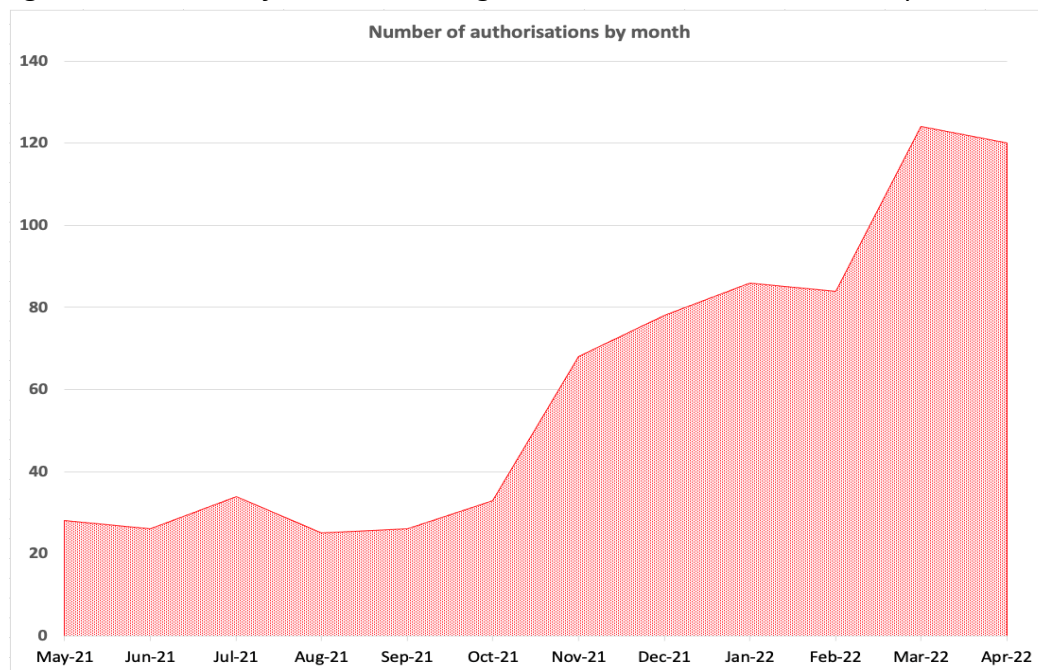
“he doesn’t have to really justify it, he doesn’t have to make some sort of risk management decision to authorise it why have it then like – so I think that’s probably just an extra piece of red tape, not red tape but it seems superfluous now” (QP4).

Between the 1st May 2021 and 30th April 2022, 732 authorisations were given for wandering. On 8 occasions between May 2021 and October 2021, wandering operations were provided for Surfers Paradise alone. On all other occasions, wandering authorisations were issued for both Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach SNPs. As can be seen from Figure 12 below, the number of authorisations have steadily increased over the duration of the trial. From 21st February till the end of the trial period there was a continuous authorisation in place (e.g. from 6am–6pm and 6pm–6am), indicating that there was indeed limited decision making regarding authorising wandering operations.

On average 15⁴ persons were wandered per authorisation, 10.6 adults and 1.4 juveniles; or 13.4 male persons and 1.6. females. Most wandings were conducted on Friday night when the authorisation commenced at 6pm.

⁴ One authorisation recorded 675 persons being wandered. This figure was removed to provide a more accurate picture.

Figure 12: Number of authorisations given across both SNPs over trial period



Most authorisations were given later in the week, especially for Fridays and Saturdays, and commenced at 6pm, as is seen in Figures 13 and 14.

Figure 13: Frequency of wandings authorisations per day of week

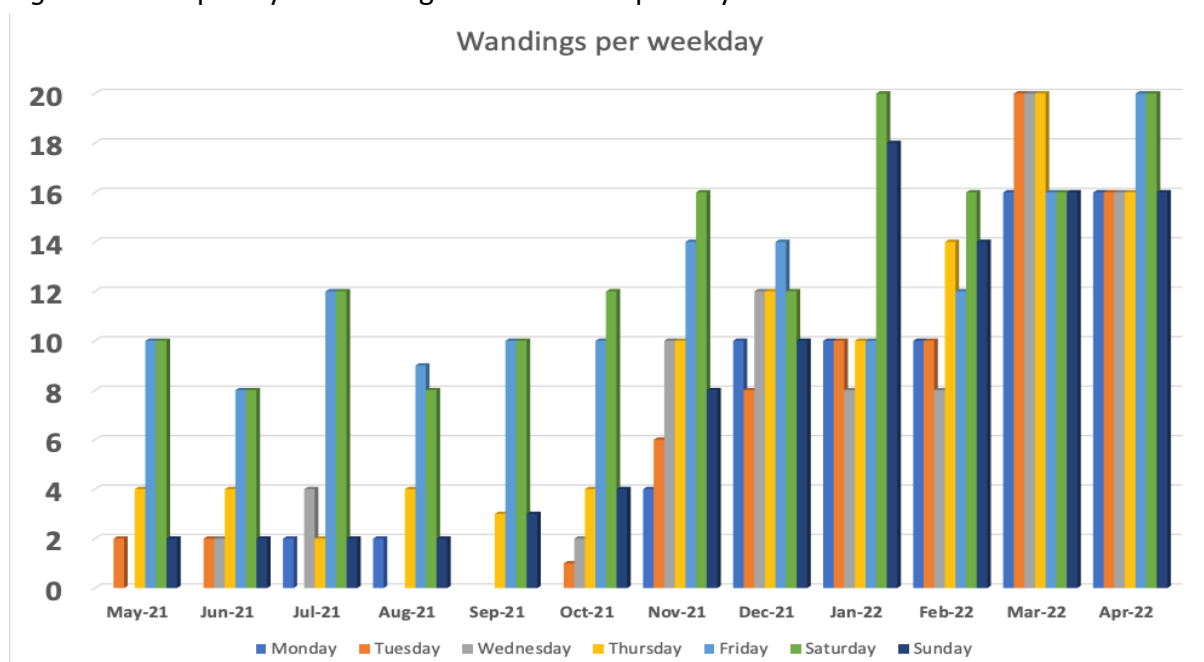
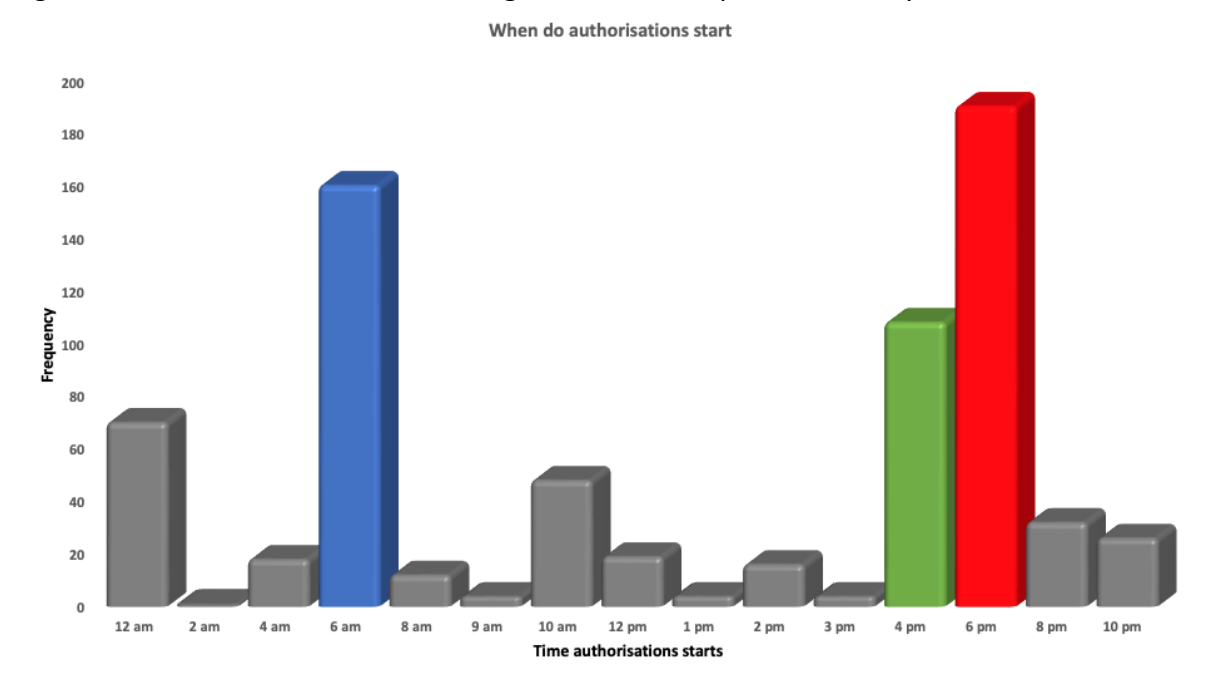


Figure 14: Commencement of wandering authorisations per time of day



4.3 Wandering records

In accordance with the District Instruction and Aide Memoire, an officer was required to submit a street check (on their Qlite device) every time a person was wanded. A street check is an intelligence record stored in QPRIME that records the personal details of an individuals (who may not have committed any offences), along with location details. The Aide Memoire suggests that:

“An individual street check must be created for all persons, or groups of persons (i.e. if a group of individuals are clearly and closely associated with one another and the application of the powers is not associated with any other persons or groups)”

However, persons in groups were individually recorded, e.g. for every person, a new street check was created. This led to some frustration by officers, who felt that it was unnecessarily time consuming to record persons on individual street checks rather than group street checks, as expressed in this quote:

“that is really time consuming, whereas if it was you know – there was a dropdown box where you would just hit wandering or whatever it was you’d be able to pull that data out of the QPRIME just by search rather than going through each and every one now to make sure that you know it’s sort of one person per street check type thing,

and that is I guess the only thing that I would say probably needs to change because when you have a group of people – if you just have one street check that is much quicker and I guess that maybe would put some people off because it takes time on your Qlites to do a group of 10, 10 individual street checks” (QP3).

To facilitate the street check requirement, all persons stopped for wandering were routinely asked for their name and other identifying details. There is no legal obligation for compliance, and during our observations no officer advised people of this fact. Despite this, the great majority of individuals volunteer this information. Street checks are used to identify persons of interest or witnesses to any offending that may occur. For persons wanted who did not volunteer their details, a street check was still performed and included descriptions of the person and their clothing. All street checks were created from wandering had to be linked to a Master Occurrence in QPRIME.

4.4 Changes in behaviour of young people carrying weapons

Interview and focus group participants were asked if they had observed changes in behaviour among the young people they interacted with. Responses noted that the two SNPs are very different and this had led to different tactics during the wandering trial:

“they were two totally different SNPs, the Broadbeach safe night precinct specifically during the day and the early evening there was a lot of diners, Surfers not so much. Even into the evening you’ve got a lot of the locals that would come out for a drink, not necessarily the night club. It’s just a totally different demographic. So we’ve treated it a little bit differently in that regard, well I have, I don’t know if Jim was necessarily so happy about that, but we’ve explained it” (QP5).

It was observed that in Surfers Paradise, there are more juveniles and 18- to 25-year-olds, while in Broadbeach the average visitor mainly consists of families (FG3, QP5, QP6). It was observed that especially on Friday and Saturday nights, the precincts are very different, requiring a different way of engaging with people (FG1). In addition, Surfers Paradise SNP constitutes a whole police division, while the SNP in Broadbeach is only a part of the division (QP5). Police officers in Broadbeach have competing priorities.

Most participants observed positive changes in the behaviour of young people in the SNPs for the duration of the trial. They perceived that there were: 1) fewer youth groups overall in the SNP (FG1, QP7); 1) fewer groups that were carrying knives (FG2); 2) a reduction in the size of the groups (FG2); 3) fewer youth gangs (FG2, FG1); 4) changes in attitudes towards police

(FG2, FG3, FG4, QP1, QP3, QP6); 5) fewer local youth in the SNPs (FG2); 6) fewer pre-arranged fighting (FG2, QP7); and 7) and a reduction of knives in the SNP (FG2, FG4, QP1):

“there's certain groups who did come into Surfers Paradise quite regularly, and were the ones who would be found with these weapons and that sort of stuff, or involved in other altercations, who don't come into Surfers Paradise anymore” (FG2).

Some of the deterrence effects were believed to extend to the severity of injuries (FG2, QP7, QP9):

“its given a long term gain, it's a big picture thing. You get out there, you obviously prevent people from bringing knives into your safe night precincts, you're preventing potentially serious assaults, you're also preventing an on flow from this is that you've somehow dissuaded large groups of troublemaking youths from hanging out in your division, which means you then get less work” (FG2).

Other participants were more sceptical. They suggested that youth were still carrying knives (FG3, FG4, QP2, FG3), as expressed in these quotes:

“ it makes the adults think twice, but after they've been done and they're made aware about you know the SNPs and the wandering, but with the juveniles they don't really don't care”(FG2);

“That people really think about ‘oh well I'm not carrying, I'm not going to carry a knife because I might be wanded?’ No, no, as we keep saying like this juvenile justice act is so watered down and the punishments, there is no deterrent” (FG3); and

I don't think there's been that much of a change to be honest Margo, I think honestly that even for those that have been caught with knives, a lot of them reoffend and get caught with knives again ... it's an accepted practice these days for a lot of these people to think that a knife, carrying a knife is quite fine. And generally you know it's just in the bum bag or with a lot of the juveniles it'll be in the bum bag they're carrying at the time. And a lot of the responses they'll give you on it's for my protection, it's my protection you know. So a little bit flippant with their attitude towards carrying knives” (QP2).

However, a significant number of participants did comment that the interactions between police and youth had changed positively (FG2, FG3, FG4, QP1, QP4, QP6):

“it's more of a positive engagement now and not yeah not the standoffish, aggressive behaviour that they used to get” (QP4); and

“if you do catch them with knives they're not very argumentative now because they knew they pretty much, it was a sure thing that they were going to get wanded as soon as they came into Surfers” (FG2).

The positive engagement that occurred due to opportunities provided by the wandering legislation was also perceived to be extended around homeless people:

“around our homeless people, so starting the wandering conversation can be a different way of engaging with elements in a non-confrontational way because the professionalism and the way the officers interact with them in the first place, and then refer them on for other services” (QP9).

4.5 Summary

In summary, as noted in the previous chapter, many of the anecdotal observations about perceived changes in young people's behaviour are not borne out by the quantitative data, at least so far as it relates to offence data. However, our observations did in general confirm largely positive interactions between the police officers we accompanied and the young people with whom they interacted, although of course this may have been affected by our presence. Nonetheless, observations by police officers about positive engagement with community members was consistent with observations by the evaluation team members.

The evidence on the deployment of wandering suggests two major findings; first, that the tactic was used more intensively in Surfers Paradise SNP compared to Broadbeach SNP. But as noted in chapter 2, this is consistent with the overall offending patterns in the two sites and appears appropriately distributed given police priorities in the two locations.

Secondly, and of more concern, is that the change in the pattern of wandering authorisations created a situation at the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach SNPs where wandering was authorised on a virtual saturation basis. This practice negates the purpose of the authorisation process. If wandering is to operate on a 24/7 basis, this needs to be made transparent to the community.

5 Trial equity

This chapter addresses how wandering was implemented and whether this was done equitably. It addresses the following key questions:

- 10: Is wandering being applied equitably to people of different demographic groups? Is there any evidence of over-use or discrimination against some groups?*
- 11: Is wandering being conducted in accordance with the legislation and QPS operational procedures? Are all relevant officers aware of appropriate operational policies and procedures?*
- 12. How appropriate is the process of wandering with regard to human rights considerations? What training/guidance do officers receive in relation to human rights considerations?*
- 13. Are the legal rights and protections of people being wandered being observed? What processes are in place to ensure this?*

The chapter draws on data relating to wandering operations and on the interviews, focus groups and observations conducted for the evaluation.

5.1 Equity of application

We used QPRIME records to analyse details of who was wandered, specifically looking for breakdowns of age, gender and First Nations status, as displayed in Tables 13, 14, 15, and 16. We consider the proportion of the characteristics of interest for those people wandered and compare them with both the proportion of offenders identified through wandering and offenders not identified through wandering across the three years prior to the beginning of the trial as well as the year of the trial. Our purpose is to examine any changes in proportions over time, differences between locations, and differences as identified through the wandering trial.

It is important to note that only 15 offenders were identified through wandering in Broadbeach SNP, while 138 were identified in Surfers Paradise SNP.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the primary policy rationale for the wandering trial was to reduce knife carrying by juveniles and young people. Table 13: Proportion of individuals identified through QPRIME as being under 18; not including unknown shows that the overall proportion of offenders who are under 18 in the two SNP areas has remained steady across our data extract when detection involved traditional methods. While 6% of offenders detected without wandering were under 18 in Broadbeach SNP during the trial year, almost 4 times that

proportion of people wanded were under 18. In addition, the proportion of offenders under 18 who were identified through wanding in Broadbeach SNP doubled. In Surfers Paradise SNP, while 9% of offenders detected through traditional means were under 18 in this time period, one-third of wanding subjects and offenders detected through wanding were under 18. Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise have 4% and 5.5% of the population aged between 10 and 19 respectively according to the 2021 Census⁵, indicating that wanding is disproportionately directed towards young people.

Table 13: *Proportion of individuals identified through QPRIME as being under 18; not including unknown*

Location	30 April 2018-29 April 2019	30 April 2019-29 April 2020	30 April 2020-29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022		
				Offenders (not wanding)	Offenders (wanding)	Wanding occurrences
BROADBEACH SNP	3%	6%	7%	6%	13%	23%
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	12%	10%	11%	9%	33%	29%
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	13%	12%	16%	18%		
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	14%	9%	8%	8%		
SOUTHPORT	12%	9%	10%	12%		
PALM BEACH	17%	15%	17%	15%		
COOLANGATTA	6%	9%	8%	6%		
ROBINA	22%	23%	18%	30%		
PIMPAMA	20%	19%	22%	20%		
COOMERA	23%	19%	24%	22%		

The gender of offenders recorded in QPRIME was either “other” or unknown in 31% of cases not linked to wanding. Where the occurrence was linked to wanding, gender was recorded as “other” or unknown only 4% of the time. This indicates problems in data recording in QPRIME that we return to below. When cases of other or unknown are excluded, Table 14 suggests that the proportion of females being wanded is lower than the general share of females identified in SNP offending statistics. From this, we can conclude that wanding operations are not identifying additional offending by females, beyond what is already discovered through standard police practices. .

⁵ <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/SAL32702>; <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/SAL30380>

Table 14: *Proportion of individuals identified through QPRIME as being female; not including other/unknown*

Location	30 April 2018-29 April 2019	30 April 2019-29 April 2020	30 April 2020-29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022		
				Offenders (not wandering)	Offenders (wandering)	Wandering occurrences
BROADBEACH SNP	16%	11%	19%	22%	15%	12%
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	18%	15%	18%	17%	11%	15%
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	23%	27%	23%	25%		
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	25%	23%	22%	24%		
SOUTHPORT	29%	27%	27%	29%		
PALM BEACH	23%	20%	20%	17%		
COOLANGATTA	14%	15%	20%	20%		
ROBINA	24%	28%	33%	29%		
PIMPAMA	25%	27%	22%	27%		
COOMERA	27%	27%	26%	26%		

Having identified that young people and males were more likely to be subject to wandering than adults or females, we considered the possibility that wandering disproportionately affects young males in the SNPs. Table 15: Proportion of individuals identified through QPRIME as being male and under 18; not including other/unknown demonstrates that while the proportion of offenders in this group did not change systematically across the locations sampled in the trial year compared with the previous years, young males made up one quarter of people wandered and one quarter of the offenders identified through wandering in Surfers Paradise SNP. In Broadbeach SNP, one-fifth of wandered individuals were young males, and 7% of offenders identified through wandering were identified as part of that group. **This suggests that the wandering process is being used to specifically target males under 18.**

Table 15: *Proportion of individuals identified through QPRIME as being male and under 18; not including other/unknown*

Location	30 April 2018-29 April 2019	30 April 2019-29 April 2020	30 April 2020-29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022		
				Offenders (not wandering)	Offenders (wandering)	Wandering occurrences
BROADBEACH SNP	2%	6%	5%	4%	7%	19%
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	8%	7%	7%	6%	26%	24%
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	10%	8%	13%	13%		
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	10%	7%	6%	6%		
SOUTHPORT	9%	7%	6%	8%		
PALM BEACH	13%	11%	13%	12%		
COOLANGATTA	5%	6%	6%	5%		
ROBINA	15%	17%	12%	18%		
PIMPAMA	16%	14%	17%	16%		
COOMERA	16%	14%	17%	16%		

An important consideration in assessing equity is ensuring that wandering is not used to disproportionately affect marginalised people, and particularly First Nations people who are already disadvantaged by many aspects of the criminal justice system. As discussed in Chapter 1, this issue has been commented on by the Committee considering the changes to the PPRA prior to the beginning of the wandering trial. Unfortunately our analysis of this issue was significantly affected by the quality of data recording in QPRIME. This database relies on data entered by police officers every time an individual has an interaction with police. Our understanding is that police rely on individuals to self-identify their ethnicity and cultural background. However, if there are prior interactions recorded on QPRIME, that data may be auto-populated or copied, resulting in the repetition of any initial errors. The opportunity for repeat entry also allows for conflicting ethnicity records for the same individual. Thus, QPRIME data on First Nations status is extremely unreliable. In addition, Australia's 2021 Census indicates that a higher percentage of Gold Coast residents were either born in New Zealand or had a parent born in New Zealand than other residents of Queensland, suggesting that more careful recording of Māori and Pasifika background in QPRIME might be considered as appropriate⁶.

Our initial analysis indicated that the proportion of people wandered who identified as First Nations was much higher than relevant population rates. This was based on a data extraction that labelled as First Nations any individual who had been described that way at least once in

⁶ See <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA33430>.

QPRIME. We queried the data with QPS, who re-ran the data extraction. This time a person was determined to be First Nations only if 50% or more of their QPRIME entries reflected this status, to rule out those cases where an error had been made. This is still a very imperfect measure and means we can only make very tentative observations on this issue. For example, in some cases QPRIME data records First Nations status as being different from the more detailed data field of ethnicity. Additionally, data on First Nations status is not stated in around 15% of cases. Nevertheless Table 16 displays the results of this analysis.

Table 16: *Proportion of individuals identified through QPRIME as being Australian First Nations*

Location	30 April 2018-29 April 2019	30 April 2019-29 April 2020	30 April 2020-29 April 2021	30 April 2021-30 April 2022		
				Offenders (not wandering)	Offenders (wandering)	Wandering occurrences
BROADBEACH SNP	2%	3%	4%	1%	0%	1%
SURFERS PARADISE SNP	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%
BROADBEACH NON-SNP	3%	2%	3%	2%		
SURFERS PARADISE NON-SNP	3%	1%	2%	2%		
SOUTHPORT	3%	3%	3%	3%		
PALM BEACH	3%	2%	2%	2%		
COOLANGATTA	4%	5%	5%	4%		
ROBINA	2%	2%	2%	3%		
PIMPAMA	2%	2%	2%	3%		
COOMERA	3%	3%	1%	3%		

While Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples make up only 1.2% of the population in Surfers Paradise (according to the 2021 Census), they consist of 3% of the wandering occurrences in Surfers Paradise SNP. This is commensurate with the percentage of offenders from First Nations backgrounds identified in Surfers Paradise SNP for the past four years. In Broadbeach, Aboriginal Australian and/or Torres Strait Islander people make up 1.3% of the population, and that percentage was reflected in the wandering percentage in Broadbeach SNP. No increase in the proportion of offenders was noted in either the SNPs or surrounding locations during the trial.

It was evident in both the focus group and statistical data that the same individuals have been wandered multiple times across the trial period due to their likelihood of using the same SNP space. Specific individuals were subject to wandering between 1 and 54 times, with 82% of people wandered once in the trial period. This means that the remaining 18% of people wandered accounted for 38% of wandering occurrences. The average number of times an individual was wandered was statistically significantly higher for under 18s, males, and young males than for

their opposing groups. There were no differences in the average number of times Australian First Nations people were wanded compared with non-Indigenous people.

To further understand equity issues in wanding, we asked interview and focus group participants about how they decided who to wand. They gave a range of factors, such as age, whether the people were in a group, what people were wearing, general appearance, whether they were known to police, the time of day, behaviour, and what individuals were doing at the time officers were in the vicinity (QP1, QP2, QP4, QP5, QP6, QP7, QP9) as is explained in this quote:

“as police our job is to read situations, read people, not form an opinion or a predisposition on a certain person or anything like that, but we are definitely trained to look for certain things and look for I suppose visual cues that assist us in our work. Part of that is who is the person, where are they at and what time of night it might be. What are they doing, how are they moving, how are they walking, what are they doing, what are they carrying with them?” (QP2).

In relation to the fact that more males are wanded, officers observed that this was because there were more male police officers available to conduct wandings (FG2) and the PPRA suggests that wanding should preferably be conducted by an officer of the same gender as the wanded person, and every effort was made to adhere to this recommendation throughout the wanding trial (FG1, FG3, FG4, QP1, QP3, QP4). Officers also commented that many females were wearing clothing that did not allow for the concealment of weapons (FG1, FG4, QP1, QP3, QP6).

Other officers pointed out that some groups were seen as not within scope of being wanded, such as the elderly (FG2, FG1, QP5) or families with young children (FG3, FG4, QP1, QP6, QP7). Two participant groups specifically suggested that they perceived it was not appropriate to wand the elderly (FG1, FG3). Officers reported using discretion to wand homeless people, but also noted that this group may carry a knife used for food preparation or other legitimate reasons (FG1, FG3), QP5, QP6).

Officers commented that they generally chose to stop young people, especially those in groups (FG1, FG2, FG4, QP3), coming off the tram (FG4), or perceived to be youth gang members (FG1). In addition, some officers looked for groups of young people of certain ethnic backgrounds that they believed had been found with edged weapons previously (FG1, FG3). Officers also identified some individuals as more likely to be targeted if they were thought to be members of outlaw motorcycle gangs (FG1), or generally just loitering around (FG3, FG4).

However, it should be noted that many officers commented on the fact that the selection of people for wandings was not perceived to be discriminatory, but rather to seek out the most efficient use of limited police resources. Not everyone could be wanded, and especially as the objective was to stop knife crime, persons or groups that were perceived to be unlikely or less likely to carry knives were not prioritised for wandings (FG2, FG3, FG4, QP6). As these comments reflect:

"I find it saves me time in my line of work. You can pick them, once you've been a copper you can pick them. Those that avoid eye contact with you, tends to be the younger more people that arrive in gangs" (FG2); and

"definitely got to pick your people you think might be carrying. That's essentially what it's for isn't it, you don't want, there's no point wanding people that you think aren't going to carry anything" (FG3).

Some participants commented that there were incidents when individuals being wanded misperceived police attention as bias:

"we can do let's say 15 to 20 wandings on Caucasians and do a person of colour and they'll say, 'well you picked me because I'm black'. Well no I haven't, I picked you because you're male, young, and do you know what I think you possibly could have a knife, period. So we do have that, and you've got to be really careful there. So that is an obstacle" (FG1); and

"to avoid any sort of confrontations from people who will question you about it, you know saying well why are you targeting me, or why are you picking on me, to avoid that as well you know you'll still share it out and still do it amongst the broader community as well to sort of avoid those situations" (FG2).

Overall, the participants commented that the broader community appeared positive about the wanding trial (FG1):

"you'll get the flip side of that will be you know the genuine person that just doesn't have an issue with it and goes hey that's great, I love what you're doing" (FG1) .

Most participants felt that the wanding experience has been positive (FG1, QP1, QP6), due to the delivery of the message (QP1), training (QP3), and communication in general (FG1, QP1, QP3). This was further reflected in the fact that there were very few complaints against police over the wanding (QP2, QP3, QP4, QP6, QP7, QP9). One person was believed to have made a complaint because the wanding had resulted in a 'possession of dangerous drug' charge, however this was early in the trial (QP5). Since then, no other known complaints have been

received. None of the external stakeholders had received any complaints from their customers or constituents or the broader public about the wandering trial, either in general or by those who were subjected to wandering.

In interviews with external stakeholders, we asked if concerns had been raised in their relevant communities regarding wandering, including who was selected for it. While this participant commented that no direct complaints regarding wandering from within the CALD community had been received, some concerns were expressed:

“I think they would be targeted and already they’re having a very rocky relationship with the police and giving police those extensive powers and everything I think they would probably be abused by some of officers, I am not saying generally by those that have that intention of targeting that kind of behaviour – so I think it would be adversely affecting CALD communities and Indigenous [sic] communities than it would for the other cultural backgrounds” (ES4).

This participant also noted that as a result of the wandering, people were changing their behaviour:

“I think people are becoming aware of that and for that reason they’re actually cooperating and yeah they’re changing their behaviour when it’s come to wandering” (ES4).

5.2 Safeguards applied to people being wanded

The PPRA provisions stipulate wandering safeguards as set out in Chapter 1, notably the requirement for verbal and, if requested, written notice to be given to people who are wanded. In addition, people who are wanded have all of the individual protections available under the *Human Rights Act 2019* (HRA), and the normal criminal justice protections available under law. Finally, QPS has introduced additional safeguards, including the requirement for body worn cameras (BWCs) to record interactions, accessing Gold Coast City Council’s CCTV for additional coverage, and to some extent, the auditing of footage by senior officers to check for officer compliance.

The legislated safeguards in the PPRA relate only to requirements to identify the officer operating the wand, and the giving of notice. In our observations, all officers were uniformed, and the notice was routinely given verbally. Written notice was only given when requested, in conformance with the Act.

However the PPRA contains no other safeguards against, for example, discriminatory targeting of certain people to be stopped for wandering. Here, the HRA is relevant, and it is highly likely that the inequitable or unfair selection of people for wandering based on selected attributes (e.g. race, gender, age) could contravene certain protected rights. The absence of clear guidelines for how officers should use their discretion in selecting wandering targets could be problematic, and we return to this issue in our final section on suggestions for the future.

We asked police officer participants in interviews and focus groups their views on powers and safeguards. Participants acknowledged that the wandering powers had the potential to lead to the abuse of power (FG1, FG2, FG3, QP3, QP8). However, none of the participants commented that they felt this had occurred (FG1, FG2, FG3, QP3). They commented that often, there was a police officer of rank (Sergeant or above) in attendance during wandering operations to ensure potential abuses did not occur (FG2), and that every time a power (e.g. person was wandered) was exercised, it was recorded by the officer's BWC (FG4, QP1; QP8):

"There is a potential for that, the police service though has policy in terms of the use of a power requires the activation of body worn cameras footage. That generally alleviates a) a complaint being made or b) it rapidly accelerates the determination as to the appropriateness or not of the use of that power, simply because it's video recorded" (QP8).

As noted, each time a wandering occurred, police officers were required to submit a street check. To act as an additional safeguard, senior officers initiated a practice of regularly auditing street checks and BWC to ensure cameras were activated each time someone was wandered, as well as consistency of wandering applications (QP2, QP5, QP7, QP8, QP9). In addition, a random sample of footage was reviewed to ensure the legislation was adhered to and wandings were conducted in an operationally safe manner (QP2, QP5, QP6, QP7, QP9), as well as to improve practices (QP6):

"all the time we're reviewing that footage to make sure that we're actually still doing a good job and that we're actually not doing the job we did 6 months ago we're actually doing a better job than we did 6 months ago, so we're looking for that continues improvement" (QP6); and

"so street checks get audited for consistency and to make sure that things are recorded right, but also supervisors will have to do regular audits of body worn camera footage, so that's part of our safeguards is to make sure our body worn camera is activated" (QP2).

Wandering operations were also monitored by the Gold Coast City Council CCTV camera network, providing another overwatch capacity (ES5, QP9). The agreed protocol, outlined in the Gold Coast District Instruction and Aide Memoire, was that each time a wandering took place, the Council was requested to point their cameras on the wandering incident (QP2):

“where possible, the Gold Coast City Council CCTV cameras put upon us once we’re doing wandering. So there’s audits of that body worn camera footage, and also CCTV just to make sure that compliance is being adhered to when it comes to the safeguards and the following the legislation and that too” (QP2).

In addition, police officers conducted wandings in groups, which provided peer oversight (QP1, QP4).

“most people are given feedback if it’s identified upfront, like police are pretty brutal with one another at times like that” (QP4).

As discussed above, people stopped for wandering are not required to provide their identifying particulars. Officers suggested that most people subjected to wandering gave their name anyway (FG1, FG3, FG4, QP1, QP2, QP5, QP7, QP9). One officer did suggest that it would be beneficial to have the power to ask for name and address, primarily because:

“we are executing a power and when we execute a power to me there has to be some checks and balances and that’s around protecting our officers as well from complaint matters and other things” (QP9).

The procedural audits and reviews put in place by QPS, along with requiring all officers to receive training before joining wandering operations, act as additional safeguards, albeit ones that are not entrenched in legislation. There is scope to consider expanding that training, and we return to this issue in our last section on suggestions for the future.

5.3 Summary

In summary, wandering operations in busy places require police officers to exercise their discretion as to who they select for wandering. The evidence suggests that there has been a degree of targeting of young males in both SNPs. Given the express rationale of the legislative scheme, this is appropriate. However, the evidence also suggests there may be some over-representation of First Nations people among those wandered, although the unreliability of the QPRIME data on this point makes this conclusion uncertain. Any such over-representation would not be evidence-based. Additionally, comments from a small number of police officers indicate reliance on unfounded stereotypes in exercising their discretion.

Of more concern are the informal 'rules of thumb' used by officers to select who will be wanded. While in crowded SNPs it is not practical to wand every individual, so the variation and inconsistency in who gets selected was considerable. Much of this seemed to lack any evidence base related to actual offending patterns among different groups at different places, and to vary across different groups of officers. Most concerning is that a small number of officers indicated that non-offending behaviours, such as being in a group or just hanging out, guide their selections of who to wand. The wide discretion afforded officers in selecting people for wanding leaves considerable room for decisions based on stereotypes and discrimination.

Unfortunately the PPRA scheme safeguards relate only to identification and notifications, and do not extend to guarantees of fair treatment. It is likely that this will arise under the HRA, although as yet it is unlitigated. The potential for inappropriate use of discretion, coupled with the lack of clear safeguards in the PPRA, are returned to in the final chapter.

6 Trial efficiency

This chapter addresses whether the wandering operations were effective, both in their deployment and in their impact on the behaviour of young people. It addresses the following key questions:

- 14: Are wandering operations being conducted efficiently (what are the costs of overtime worked, rostering changes, unscheduled leave etc)?*
- 15: Do wandering operations deliver efficiencies for local police (what savings result from wandering)?*
- 16: Do the benefits of the trial outweigh the cost?*
- 17: Are there any unintended consequences arising from the wandering trial?*

6.1 Efficiency

During the 2021–2022 financial year, the some of the SNP funding was used to alleviate some QPS staffing costs and provide funding for overtime shifts in the two SNPs. Officers were paid overtime to staff extra shifts during wandering operations. We were advised that additional overtime was worked by many officers, both those stationed in the relevant districts and those from nearby areas and commands (including for example some investigators, or first year constables on the completion of their academy training).

This funding meant that effectively the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach police districts were quarantined from any extra costs relating to wandering. This position ended on 30th June 2022, and all costs must now be taken from normal district budgets. Our understanding is that this change will result in a significant reduction in the number of additional overtime shifts worked specifically to facilitate wandering. Instead, wandering operations will be an ‘add on’ to usual patrols, requiring no additional staffing costs to those that are routinely incurred. It is presumed that any capital costs relating to the maintenance or replacement of equipment will become part of the QPS capital budget.

This change has implications for this evaluation, in that it could be expected that the frequency of wandings will reduce without the additional overtime shifts. This means that the evaluation findings about the impact of wandings may no longer be applicable in the new environment. The presence of this additional funding for the trial period is a significant factor which needs to be considered in any decision to expand wandering. In light of the fact that wandering efforts were less frequent in Broadbeach SNP, given the fact that in that command

officers were tasked with both SNP and traditional police activities (compared to the Surfers Paradise SNP where wandering operations could be separate activities), this change will most likely result in less wandering coverage going forward.

In terms of the cost effectiveness of wandering, some participants in interviews and focus groups argued that it would lead to cost savings in the long run, because it reduces the potential for serious injuries (FG2, QP5). This benefits those who would otherwise have been victims, but also was seen as having the potential for flow on effects to reduce costs for police and for the larger criminal justice and public health systems if serious offences were avoided (QP5, QP8, QP9) as explained in these quotes:

“if we can save someone getting stabbed, saves the hospital, saves the health system, it saves the court system ... not so much for our organisation, we just investigate and do what we do. But I think for all of government and broader, if we can save people getting seriously injured, the flow on effect then for the health system and for the court system for an unlawful wounding, or attempted murder, that’s where the savings are” (QP5);

“the cost of actually undertaking investigations, cost in terms of court related costs, in terms of you know if we investigate an assault or a stabbing the court costs essentially means there’s police officers there giving evidence, they’ve got to be in there to manage all of those, there’s cost indications from the watch house, whereas if it’s interdicted earlier it generally becomes an almost cut and dried offence – versus generally the police don’t need to turn up, aren’t required to go to court because it hasn’t got to such a serious extent, it’s just, when I say just I don’t mean to downplay it, but it’s just a possession of a knife in a public place, compared to unlawful wounding, grievous bodily harm, murder, which then brings with it a whole lot of cost implications for justice, for correctives, for those sorts of things” (QP8); and

“if the offences aren’t committed are investigators and our frontline staff don’t have to guard crime scenes and complete detailed investigations, they can go on and look after other matters, so we actually wind up in more of a positive crime cycle which is what I believe is occurring in those particular locations as a result of it” (QP9).

As noted in Chapter 2, the short time frame of the trial and the lack of a sufficient follow-up period limits the capacity of the evaluation to determine whether these benefits have occurred or are likely. We reported in Chapter 3 that, to date, there has been little change in overall offence rates in the two trial sites, except only for increases in charges of being in possession of a knife, and drug and public order offences in the Surfers Paradise SNP. There

has been no significant impact on charges relating to knife-related violence, such as crimes against the person.

Changes may become more evident over a longer period, but for both SNPs the base rate of such offences is relatively low to begin with, making it hard to detect any improvements. However, as was observed by several officers, even one life saved, or one serious injury avoided in the future, would be a worthwhile outcome. This is especially the case given the relatively low ongoing costs of wandering as noted above.

The police participants were asked about the impact on wandering after the end of the special funding allocation. Most commented that they expected wandering would scale down significantly and some were even concerned about whether wandering would continue without the extra funding. Some suggested it would 'roll into a business- as-usual approach' (QP9) and become part of the core duties of an operational police officer in the SNP (QP9, QP7). Some participants commented that it would be challenge, but one they would happily accept (QP6, QP7), because:

"any proactive or preventative measure in my opinion will always give those efficiencies in the long run" (QP7).

Some expressed concerns that wandering will '*just becomes another one of those things to do*' (QP5) and with all the competing demands there might just be no time available to conduct wandering (FG1). One way to solve this problem would be by conducting targeting wandering operations, based on intelligence (FG3), or for reasonable suspicion of illegal activity (QP5). One participant commented: "*the ideal would be for every patrol unit to carry a wand to use when necessary*" (QP5) and "*having the capacity to do it when needed and when required is effective*" (QP4):

"making it a business as usual approach is always going to be difficult, because it just becomes another one of those things to do. And that's when I think it comes to the managers to reinforce the staff how great a weapon it is to combat knife crime and to make those areas safer ... It depends on the competing needs too ... It's another thing to carry ... It would be nice if it became a matter of course, it went out on every shift and became a tool that they could use a lot during their shift. That would be awesome to see that sort of thing" (QP5).

However, to make the wandering part of the business-as-usual approach might be complicated due to the need for prior authorisations (QP1, QP3). Some concerns were raised about: 1)

knowing whether authorisations were current; and, 2) the ease of obtaining authorisations. Currently the duration of each wandering authorisation is 12 hours, which is across shifts of operational police officers, as this participant points out:

“if you’re patrolling for instance and go, ‘oh you know these guys would be good for a wandering’ then you’d have to go through your emails to check do we have authorisation, because I nearly did one the other night thinking oh yeah there was authorisation” (QP1).

If there is no current authorisation, one needs to be obtained prior to the wandering. This itself led to some concerns by some officers (QP1, QP3):

“you might lose the opportunity” (QP1); and

“if they’re on a job they’re not going to be answering the phone or whatever, so that could be” (QP3)

Other officers suggested that to fully employ the benefits of wandering, it should extend to include transport corridors. They advised that young people travel to the SNPs by public transport (FG1, FG2, FG3, FG4, QP1, QP5, QP7, QP8, QP9), congregate near public transport hubs (FG3, FG4) and, as these officers suggested:

“if you saw the police doing that and to make that safer for you to travel, would that give you more confidence to use public transport?” (QP5); and

“difficulty with restricting it to a safe night precinct is the mechanisms by which people go into those precincts, and what might happen along the way” (INPS3); and

“the ultimate goal is to stop people getting stabbed with knives and if you make a place safer by using wandering powers” (QP7).

Other places suggested for inclusion were shopping centres (FG3, FG4, QP5) to reduce displacement (QP5), and also because a lot of youth congregate there. This was not, however, a universal opinion (FG1):

“I’ve seen the benefits of the wandering, but personally I would hate to see it be extended to beyond these areas where there’s a specific need” (FG1).

Expansion of wandering to major events (FG3, QP2, QP5, QP7) and other SNP's (QP9) were also suggested. But as this senior officer suggested, any expansion needs to be carefully considered:

"I think police would do a really good job with it if we had some really good boundaries for them and I think that's when the SNP boundaries have helped us a lot, we just simply know that we have to be within those boundaries to exercise that power, so there's no mis-use of the power" (QP6).

As these senior officers observed (QP6, QP9):

"we've had discussions about pushing it into a public transport corridor type of space, again I think it's easy for us to operate in terms of there's the boundary, so if we were to go into a public transport corridor there'd have to be some really strong definitions around what is a public transport corridor, is it a bus stop, is it a train stop, is it within 50 metres of those things, is it 100 metres of those things you know" (QP6); and

"the consideration is around that overwatch capacity. I think again the transport hubs generally have good CCTV, they have external CCTV as a check and balance approach you know on the trains, buses, train stations etc. light rail they have them as well so that would provide that overwatch capacity for those operations again providing those checks and balances" (QP9).

And as this external stakeholder suggested:

"wherever they're coming from and they come into the area we want the ability for the police to be able to do their job and intercept the problems because at the moment we have the Safe Night Precinct ... but then right behind it you have the community organisation and they are still being affected by the same challenges that happen in the Safe Night Precinct and the link between the two can be the public transport or the ability of where they are moving around – they've got the ability to manage that situation" (ES3).

A considerable difficulty here is likely to be in defining what constitutes a relevant transport corridor or major event. It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to consider whether there was any evidence to support such expansions.

6.2 Unintended consequences

We have already reported some unintended consequences of the wandering trial. We noted the perception expressed by many officers participating in focus groups and interviews that the increased public interactions brought about by stopping people for wandering had in many cases improved police engagement efforts. During observations we noted that many, although not all, people stopped for wandering responded well to police, and that mostly the interactions were positive. Indeed, some young people requested to be wandered. There were exceptions to this, with some people expressing frustration and asking why they had been selected for wandering. There is insufficient evidence to understand this difference, although it may be that people with prior negative interactions with police were less likely to feel positive about being wandered.

Another unanticipated outcome has been the increased detection of illicit drugs as a result of wandering operations in the Surfers Paradise SNP, as reported in chapter 3. The explanation for this is that when a wandering indicated the presence of metal, the persons involved were required to empty their pockets and their bags and belongings. In the process, officers were able to detect drugs.

Some interview and focus group participants expressed concern at this effect, noting the need to ensure that wandering was not being used as a tool to extend it a reasonable suspicion to search for other items:

“it doesn’t say to search people, it does talk about wandering, I think that the police see that as the opportunity to wand someone and of course and I think you’ve seen it for yourselves once something is found we can then talk about reasonable suspicion and the way we change our attitude in dealing with whether it’s a weapon or drugs, whatever’s found so I think they can see that as a lead into be able to search someone”
(QP6)

The increased detection of drugs was not part of the rationale for the introduction of wandering. The ability to conduct wandings in the absence of any reasonable suspicion is a very significant departure from normal criminal law and procedure. While possessing drugs is an offence in Queensland, the impact of wandering on a person’s human rights has been justified by the possibility of reducing violent crime, not drug offences. The possible long term benefit to the criminal justice system of reducing the number of offences against the person could be diminished if there is a concomitant increase in people charged with minor drug offences.

Some officers also expressed concerns that wandering requires more safeguards to ensure officer safety. Wandering requires officers to be in quite close proximity to the person wandered, without knowing their name and asking them to produce any prohibited items, including edged weapons. Not knowing who the person reduces the ability to conduct a risk assessment (FG1, FG2, QP1, QP2).

6.3 Summary

In summary, the wandering trial was mostly funded by a special funding allocation from the Queensland government. Future operations are expected to operate at minimal additional cost over and above standard operations; however with the cessation of additional funding, wandering is expected to be absorbed into 'business as usual' policing. The overall financial costs to QPS have been minor, although this might change if more equipment needs to be bought in the future. The long-term potential, which is not yet supported by the data, for reduced serious offending could lead to savings for both QPS and the criminal justice system more broadly, as well as the prevention of harm for individual victims. However cost savings could be undermined if wandering continues to result in increased detection and criminal justice processing for minor drug offences, especially for young people, in an environment where diversion options in Queensland remain limited.

7 Conclusion and suggestions

In this chapter we bring together our findings on the key questions addressed by the evaluation. We conclude with some suggestions for future directions.

7.1 Key Findings

As discussed in chapter 1, the legislation permitting the trial of metal detecting wands by QPS was introduced with the primary goal of reducing knife carrying in public, primarily by young people. This goal in turn was intended to lead to reduced serious violent offending involving knives and other bladed weapons, particularly by young people and particularly in crowded SNPs.

Given that knife carrying is covert until detected by police, our main measure for the primary goal of reduced knife-carrying was the extent to which police detections of knives in the two SNPs increased during the trial period. We note, however, that offending involving weapons occurs at a very low rate across both sites. Bearing this in mind, we reported in Chapter 3 that there was no change in the very low levels of knife detections in Broadbeach SNP, but in the Surfers Paradise SNP knife detections doubled, with much of the increase related to wandering operations. Knife detections in other areas of the Gold Coast were examined to see if this was part of any broader trend, but none was observed.

Therefore, **key finding 1** is that in the Surfers Paradise SNP, but not in the Broadbeach SNP, the wandering trial contributed to increased detection of knife carrying. **Key finding 2** flows from this, in that the variability in outcome between the two sites suggests that any continuation or extension of wandering should be carefully targeted at only those areas likely to benefit from it. This would be those areas where the data show a proportionately higher prevalence of knife offences during a sustained period, such as occurred in Surfers Paradise but not Broadbeach.

The evidence to date does not suggest any deterrent effect that can be attributed to wandering, whereby fewer people are carrying knives. As discussed, there has been no change to knife detections in Broadbeach and a significant increase in Surfers Paradise. This suggests **key finding 3**, which is that wandering has been useful to better detect weapons (in one site only), but not yet deterring people from carrying them. This may change over time, and a subsequent evaluation may be helpful.

We also examined whether the increased detection of knives in turn had any effect on other forms of offending, specifically those offences likely to involve or be associated with knives. **Key finding 4**, as reported in Chapter 3, was that apart from the increase in weapons offences noted for Surfers Paradise, there was no statistically significant change in any other category of crime across the two SNP areas, or in any of the adjacent areas we examined. This includes the offences of armed robbery and offences against the person. From this we conclude that, as yet, there is no evidence to suggest that increased detection of knives has reduced violent or other offending. Despite this finding, we note both the police officers and community members that we spoke to during the evaluation period reported enhanced feelings of safety during the trial. These feelings may potentially be attributable to increased visibility of police in the two areas, increased public engagement, and positive media coverage of the wandering during the trial. Further evaluation would be required to confirm this.

Key finding 5, reported in Chapter 4, is that the wandering equipment and deployment have been seen as effective by those involved in the evaluation. Some suggestions were made for considering other features on the equipment, but the great majority of participants were satisfied with it. Other suggestions were made about modifying the wording of the notification requirement, and for potentially updating training should the use of wandering be continued.

Key finding 6, also reported in Chapter 4, is that the current authorisation process is not underpinned by any evidence-based or strategic decision-making, but instead reflects the availability or lack thereof of resources. It can be presumed that by including this process in the scheme, Parliament intended that blanket deployment of wandering was not intended. Instead, operations should be tailored to periods, places and people where there is clear evidence of higher risks of violent crime.

Chapter 5 of the evaluation dealt with equity. **Key finding 7** was that wandering has been inconsistently used across different groups in society. While the ministerial statements in Chapter 1 suggest that wandering was always intended to be used primarily against young people, the data suggested that officer discretion sometimes sees decisions made on the basis of stereotypes and other inappropriate grounds. It is important to note that this likely occurs in only a minority of instances. Nevertheless, it raises human rights concerns that need to be addressed. **Key finding 8** relates to QPS data stored in QPRIME, and the problems we discussed in Chapter 5 relating to how First Nations status is captured. The lack of reliability in these data has affected not just this evaluation but will also hinder other operational and research outcomes relying on this data.

In Chapter 6 we discussed the efficiency of wandering operations. Because the whole duration of the trial saw wandering funded by a separate budgetary allocation, we are not able to comment on how it has impacted on other aspects of policing. This will need to be carefully considered if the decision is taken to continue the use of wandering past the current sunset clause.

We also canvassed unintended consequences in Chapter 6, noting in particular the officer perceptions of enhanced engagement with the public, and community perceptions of enhanced safety. This outcome is beneficial. However, **key finding 9** is that given the increased number of drug detections linked to wandering operations in Surfers Paradise, care needs to be taken to ensure that wandering does not lead to a by-passing of reasonable suspicion safeguards, and net-widening among minor offenders who are not carrying weapons, but nevertheless come to police attention purely because of wandering. The entry of larger numbers of people into formal criminal justice systems could have many adverse flow-on effects.

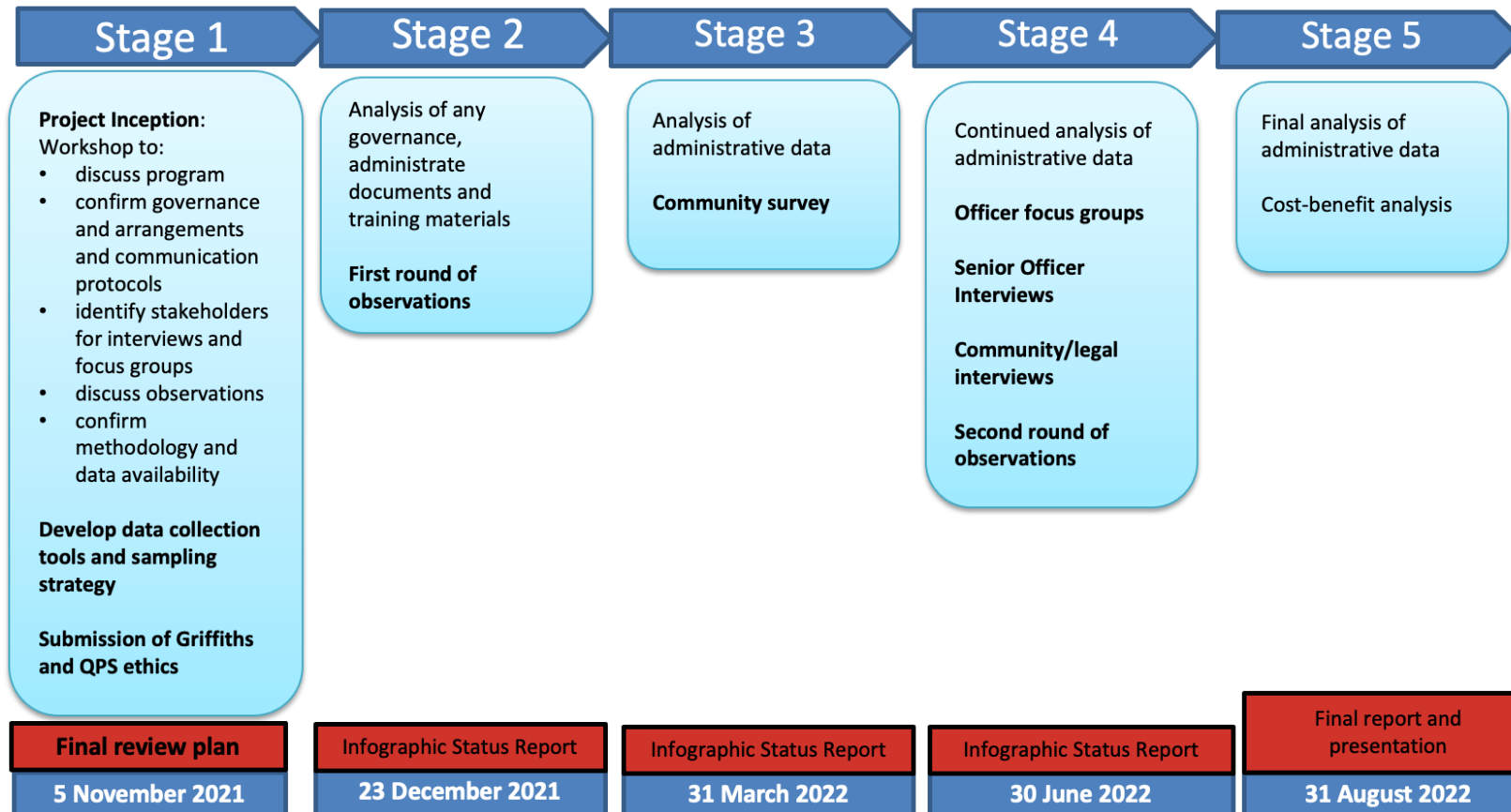
7.2 Suggestions for the future

Based on these key findings, we make the following suggestions should wandering be extended past its current sunset date:

1. There is limited justification for the intrusiveness of wandering in areas without evidence of higher than usual counts of weapons crime. In the future, wandering should only be used in places where the evidence suggests weapons are more likely to be carried.
2. The current authorisation process serves little purpose. One option is to retain authorisations but require them to be given only when there is evidence to suggest a heightened risk of weapons carrying, based on some form of evidence. Alternatively, the need for authorisations could be removed, wandering made permissible at any time but only in areas of proven high risk, and stronger safeguards introduced to govern how officers use their discretion to select people to be wandered.
3. The legislation requires that officers give a verbal and, if requested, written notification to people being wandered. The current form of wording is not user-friendly for either officers or people being wandered and should be revised.

4. While overall most users were satisfied with the current wands, when there is a need to order new or replacement equipment, the suggestions made by some officers for improvement should be considered.
5. The wand training for officers needs to explicitly identify underlying objectives, and how people should be selected for wand. This includes reminding officers the goal is reduced violent crime, not the better detection of any other type of behaviours.
6. Training should also specifically discuss how wand can impinge human rights protected under the HRA. Specific mention needs to be made of the human rights implications of the use of stereotypes to guide decision-making. Officers should be directed not to select people for wand based only on race or cultural identification, or because they are part of a group perceived as troublesome. Evidence-based guidelines on risk factors for knife carrying should be produced to guide officer discretion.
7. QPS should formalise the current audit process used by senior officers to review wand operations. In particular, there should be random audits of a proportion of all officers who participate in wand, specifically focused on whether they are over-targeting any particular categories of individuals (rather than simply focusing on compliance with policy). These audits can draw on BWC and CCTV footage, but also involve analysis of both offence and street check data in QPRIME to identify any patterns suggesting bias.
8. QPS should address the unreliability of data recorded in QPRIME specifically relating to First Nations people. Given the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the criminal justice system, and state and federal government commitments to Closing the Gap, it is crucial that QPS can accurately record and retrieve this important information. Consideration might also be given to careful recording of Māori and Pasifika status due to the demographic composition of Queensland.

Appendix A: Program logic



Appendix B: Data sources for outputs

Evaluation questions	
Trial Impact	(Primary) Data sources
<p>1a. Has there been a change in the number and rate of non-DV related offences of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possession of a weapon • Armed robbery • Going armed in public • Assaults involving weapons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPRIME data
<p>1b. Has the proportion of these offences involving knives compared to all other weapons changed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPIRME data
<p>2. Has there been a change in the type of weapons detected by police? This includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the types of knives detected (e.g. ceramic); • Other metal weapons e.g. knuckledusters; and • Changes in the detection/use of other weapons, including replica firearms, gel-blasters, syringes and broken glass. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPRRIME data
<p>3. Have there been any changes in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detection of non-weapons related offences (e.g. drugs, public order offences)? • the rates of incidents resulting in charges of higher or lower severity (e.g. common versus serious assault, grievous bodily harm etc)? • the age or demographic profile of people found carrying weapons in the trial area? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPRRIME data • Focus groups with officers • Interviews with senior officers

<p>4a. Has there been a change in the number and rate of detected non-DV related offences in the non-SNP areas of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, along with Southport and compared to Gold Coast as a whole, particularly for the following offences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possession of a weapon? • Armed robbery? • Going armed in public? • Assault involving weapons?? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPRIME data
<p>4b. Has the proportion of such offences involving knives changed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPRIME data
<p>5: Have there been any changes in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detection of non-weapons related offences (e.g. drugs, public order offences)? • the rates of incidents resulting in charges of higher or lower severity (e.g. common versus serious assault, grievous bodily harm etc)? • the age or demographic profile of people found carrying weapons in the non-trial area? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPRIME data • Focus groups with officers • Interviews with senior officers
<p>6. Have perceptions of safety changed as a consequence of the trial for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who visit the Safe Night Precinct? • Local residents? • Local business owners? • SNP Liquor Accord members, and members of other relevant stakeholder groups? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sources
Trial effectiveness	
<p>7. How effective is the process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPS Wandering trial team - SharePoint data • Focus groups with officers • Interviews with senior officers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At each site, how many wands are available for use, is there any training for their use, and what guidance is given (written or verbal) on how, when and why to use the wands? • How often / frequently are senior officers authorising wandering operations? • Are there patterns of use (e.g. at particular times, days of the week, locations)? • What is the duration of each wandering operation? How many individuals are wanded during each operation? How are individuals selected for wandering? • How many police officers are involved in each wandering operation? What are their ranks? • What is the demographic profile of people subject to each wandering operation? • What records are kept of who is wanded, why, and any outcomes, e.g. detections? • Are wandering operations being deployed consistently across the two sites and by different personnel? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Governance and administrative documentation
<p>8. How effective is wandering in changing the behaviour of young people?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the age or demographic profile of people found carrying weapons in the trial area changed? • Has the age profile of people found carrying weapons in the non-SNP areas of Surfers Paradise, Broadbeach, Southport and Gold Coast as a whole changed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPRIME data • Stakeholder interviews
<p>9. Has there been a change during the trial in how young people respond to or engage with police?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups with officers • Interviews with senior officers • Interviews with stakeholder
Trial equity	
<p>10. Is wandering being applied equitably to people of different demographic groups? Is there any evidence of over-use or discrimination against some groups?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPS Wandering trial team - SharePoint data • Focus groups with officers • Interviews with senior officers • Observations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and administrative documentation
11. Is wandering being conducted in accordance with the legislation and QPS operational procedures? Are all relevant officers aware of appropriate operational policies and procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPS Wandering trial team - SharePoint data • Focus groups with officers • Interviews with senior officers • Observations • Governance and administrative documentation
12. How appropriate is the process of wandering with regard to human rights considerations? What training/guidance do officers receive in relation to human rights considerations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with senior police officers • Interviews with stakeholders
13. Are the legal rights and protections of people being wandered being observed? What processes are in place to ensure this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with senior police officers • Interviews with stakeholders
Trial efficiency	
14. Are wandering operations being conducted efficiently (what are the costs of overtime worked, rostering changes, unscheduled leave etc)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups with officers • Interviews with senior officers • QPS Wandering trial team - SharePoint data
15. Do wandering operations deliver efficiencies for local police (what savings result from wandering)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups with officers • Interviews with senior officers • QPS Wandering trial team - SharePoint data • ITAS (or similar) staffing data
16. Do the benefits of the trial outweigh the cost?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups with officers • Interviews with senior officers • QPS Wandering trial team - SharePoint data

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITAS (or similar) staffing data
17. Are there any unintended consequences arising from the wandering trial?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sources

*Note: Due to the length of the evaluation (12 months) and the impacts of COVID-19 on the offending and policing landscape in 2020 and 2021, it may be not possible to robustly determine the impacts of the EDDF programs on recidivism.

Appendix C: Infographic status reports

The next 6 pages contain the 3 infographic status reports

1. Infographic status report 1 released on 9 February 2022
2. Infographic status report 2 released on 18 May 2022
3. Infographic status report 3 released on 1 July 2022

WANDING TRIAL (2020–2021) STATUS REPORT 1

Griffith Criminology Institute (GCI) evaluation of the QPS trial of handheld scanners (wands) in prescribed areas

About this report

This is a brief update on the Griffith Criminology Institute (GCI) evaluation of the QPS trial of handheld scanners (wands) in prescribed areas. This update reports on progress to date based on our review of QPS documents, preliminary administrative data and preliminary field observations. This project has been approved by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (2021/865) and the QPS Research Committee (09/12/2021). Team members are Janet Ransley, Nadine Connell, Shannon Walding and Margo van Felius.

¹ Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000

² Safe Night Precincts as defined in the Liquor Act 1992

³ s791 PPRA

Equipment and training

The wanding devices secured for the trial are Garrett THD devices described as four inches long, which vibrate and show a red LED light when triggered. Officers are provided with access to written instructions on use, and a Youtube video.



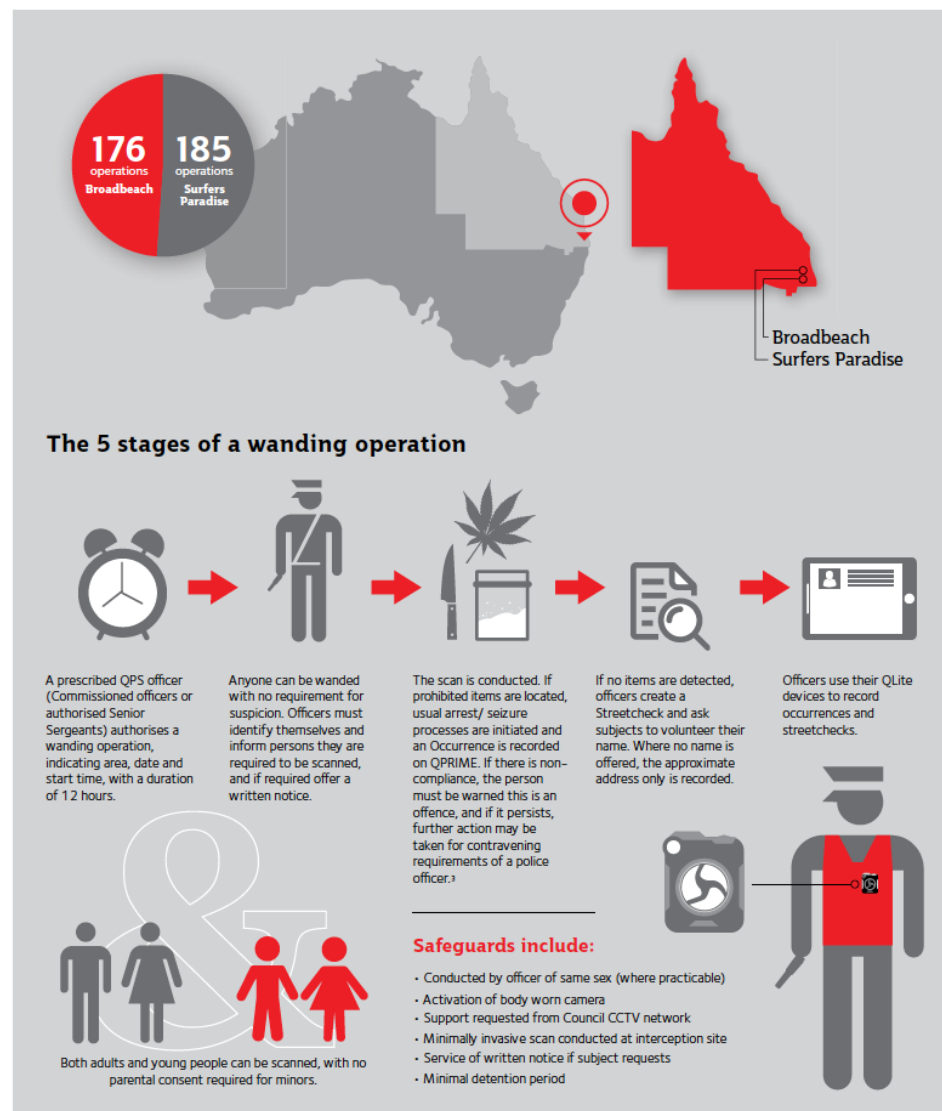
All officers deployed to wanding are required to first view a training module on the process and officer safety. For each shift during an authorised wanding operation officers are briefed and have the opportunity to ask questions.



Contact information

For more information about the QPS Wanding Trial contact Professor Janet Ransley, Director, Griffith Criminology Institute:

jransley@griffith.edu.au
www.griffith.edu.au/criminology-institute



Why a wanding trial?

The carrying of knives in public places can lead to escalating violence with tragic outcomes.

In April 2021 the PPRA¹ was amended to allow authorised wanding operations in two trial areas, the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach SNPs². The overall aim of the trial is to minimise the risks of harm from the unlawful possession of knives in the two trial areas by enabling improved detection and increased deterrence.

The trial will assess the impact on offences, fairness of operations, and community views on safety.

This will involve:

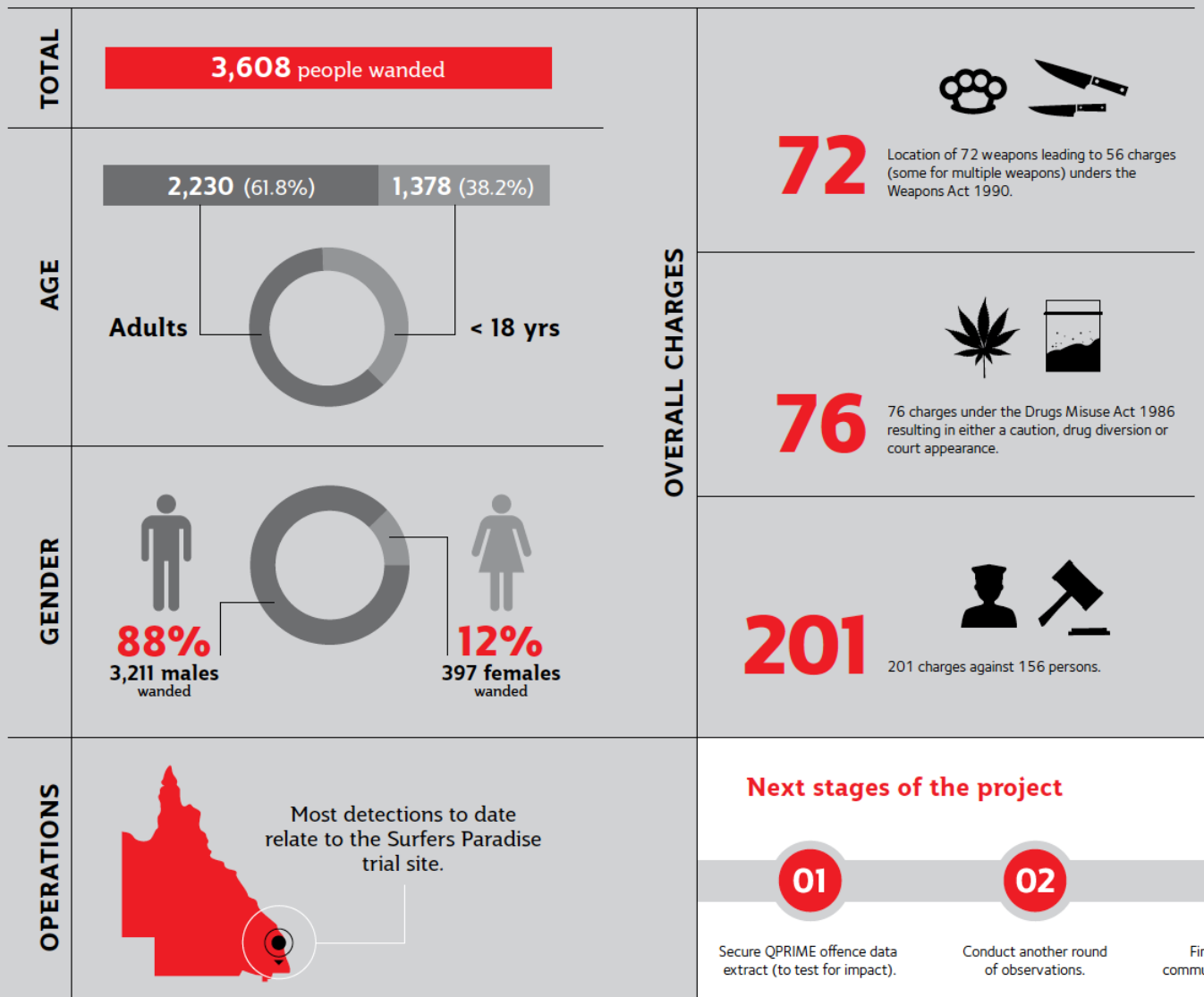
- Reviews of administrative data and documents.
- Interviews of officers and stakeholders.
- Operations observations.
- An online community survey.

The project concludes in August 2022.



USAGE - 27 APRIL 2021 TO 17 JANUARY 2022

QPS data shows that the first authorised operation was conducted on 27 April 2021. Between then and 17 January 2022 there have been:



What we have observed so far

We observed operations on two dates in January, covering 3 separate shifts in afternoons and evenings.

Further systematic observations are still to be conducted but initially we observed:

- Interactions appear polite, with officers either reading or paraphrasing the required verbal notice and responding to any questions. Only once did a subject request the written notice.
- Most stops are of young men with officers indicating various identifiers they looked for in deciding who to stop. Some young people indicated they had been stopped more than once.
- Efforts are made to observe the same sex requirement, to the extent that in shifts lacking female officers no females were stopped.
- Most people stopped did not object, indeed we observed young people asking to be wanded. Most also voluntarily produced identification for streetcheck recording.
- The wand deployment seemed straightforward and involved no physical contact. Wands were also used inside subjects' bags, and if activated subjects were asked to empty the bag for a visual check.



WANDING TRIAL (2021–2022) STATUS REPORT 2

Griffith Criminology Institute (GCI) evaluation of the QPS trial of handheld scanners (wands) in prescribed areas

About this report

This is the second brief update on the Griffith Criminology Institute (GCI) evaluation of the QPS trial of handheld scanners (wands) in prescribed areas. This update reports on progress to date based on our review of QPS documents, preliminary administrative data and preliminary field observations. This project has been approved by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (2021/865) and the QPS Research Committee (09/12/2021). Team members are Professor Janet Ransley, Associate Professor Nadine Connell, Ms Shannon Walding and Ms Margo van Felius.

¹ Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000

² Safe Night Precincts as defined in the Liquor Act 1992

³ s791 PPRA

Equipment and training

The wands used in the trial are [Garrett THD devices](#) 4 inches long, vibrating and show a red LED light when triggered.

During observations, the wands appeared easy and efficient to use. They appeared effective in identifying metal objects. The wands are small and light and fit easily on the utility belt of the officers.

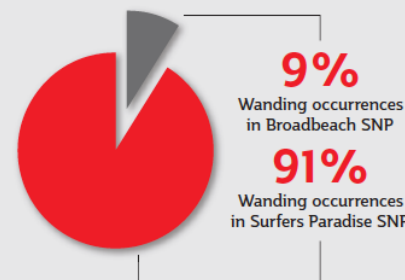


Contact information

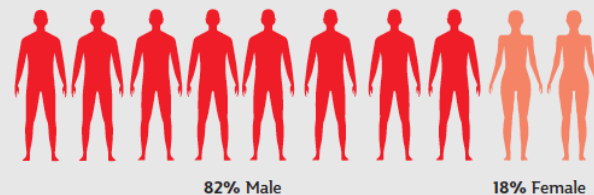
For more information about the QPS Wanding Trial contact Professor Janet Ransley, Director, Griffith Criminology Institute:

jransley@griffith.edu.au
www.griffith.edu.au/criminology-institute

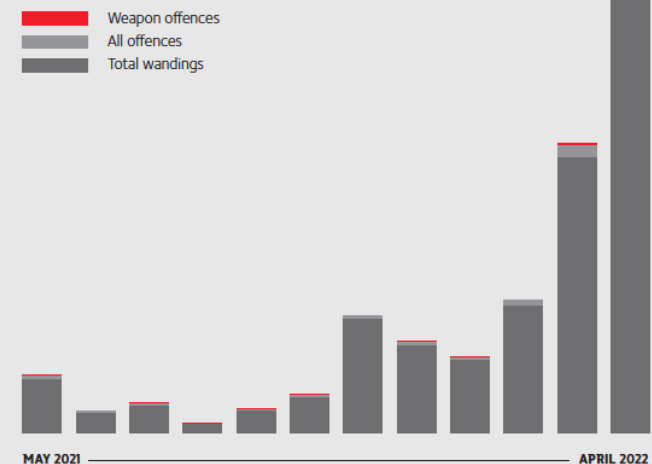
Total number of wanding occurrences (MAY 2021 TO APRIL 2022)



Breakdown of those who have been wanded

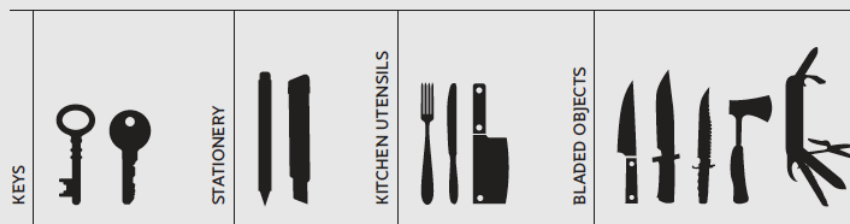


Total number of Wandings and Offences



This data has been provided by QPS Entertainment Precinct group and is still subject to verification by the Griffith University Evaluation Team.

PROPERTY SEIZED FROM WANDING



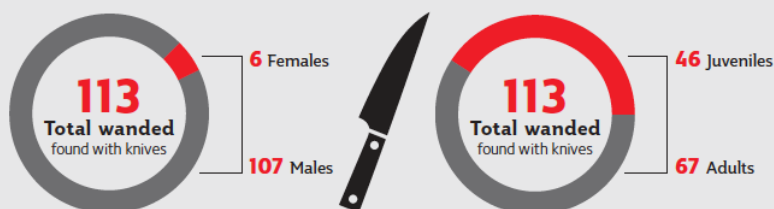
OFFENDER AGE GROUP (WANDERED OFFENDERS THAT WERE IN POSSESSION OF A WEAPON)



CHARGES LINKED WITH WANDING



WANDERED PERSONS IN POSSESSION OF KNIVES



CURRENT ACTIVITIES



Focus groups with operational police officers scheduled to be finalised between **9th and 17th May 2022**.



Interviews with senior police inside and outside the Wandering trial area, and stakeholders are currently underway.



Obtained and currently analysing QPRIME data to ascertain impact on offences and offenders in trial and adjacent areas.



The community survey went live on **11 April 2022**, it has been advertised on Facebook and Twitter, as well as around various locations in the Surfers Paradise SNP.

The current number of responses is 82, and promotion of participation in the survey is continuing.

Next stages of the project

01

Finalise the community survey and preliminary findings.

02

Continued analysis of QPRIME data.

03

Complete interviews and focus groups and identify preliminary themes.

04

Provide 3rd and final infographic status report by 30 June 2022.

New findings

We observed operations on 3 dates, two in January and one in April.

School holiday periods were selected for the observations, given the likelihood there would be larger numbers of visitors generally and young people specifically in the observation areas at those times. Four separate shifts during authorised wanding operations were observed, occurring in afternoons and evenings. Observations were conducted in both Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach safe night precincts. We noted:

- Interactions with police appear polite, officers either reading or paraphrasing the required verbal notice and responding to any questions. Questions about the wanding device were answered.
- As is also apparent in the administrative data, there appear to be some patterns in who is stopped for wanding.
- Most stops are of young men with officers indicating various identifiers they looked for in deciding who to stop.
- Some people who were wanded indicated that they had been stopped, wanded and searched before.
- Most people stopped did not object and most voluntarily produced identification for street check recording and/or volunteered other information when asked.
- People wanded who indicated that they were homeless or in need of other services, were generally offered referrals to a homeless centre or other appropriate services.
- The wanding process seems straight forward and easy to apply, and does not require physical contact. Wands were also used inside people's bags, and when activated subjects were asked to empty their bag for a visual check.

WANDING TRIAL (2021-2022) STATUS REPORT 3

Griffith Criminology Institute (GCI) evaluation of the QPS trial of handheld scanners (wands) in prescribed areas

About this report

This is the third brief update on the Griffith Criminology Institute (GCI) evaluation of the QPS trial of handheld scanners (wands) in prescribed areas. This update reports on progress to date based on our review of QPS documents, preliminary administrative data, field observations, interviews with senior police and community stakeholders, and focus groups with frontline police officers. This project has been approved by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (2021/865) and the QPS Research Committee (09/12/2021). Team members are Professor Janet Ransley, Associate Professor Nadine Connell, Ms Margo van Felijs and Ms Shannon Walding.

Offender characteristics

PRE-TRIAL

6,843 offenders detected in SNPs

91.5% > 18 yrs 8.5% < 18 yrs

DURING TRIAL

2,632 offenders detected in the SNPs

92.2% > 18 yrs 7.8% < 18 yrs

95.3% > 18 yrs 4.7% identified through wand (34 people were < 18 yrs)

93.2% > 18 yrs 6.8% < 18 yrs Detected through other means

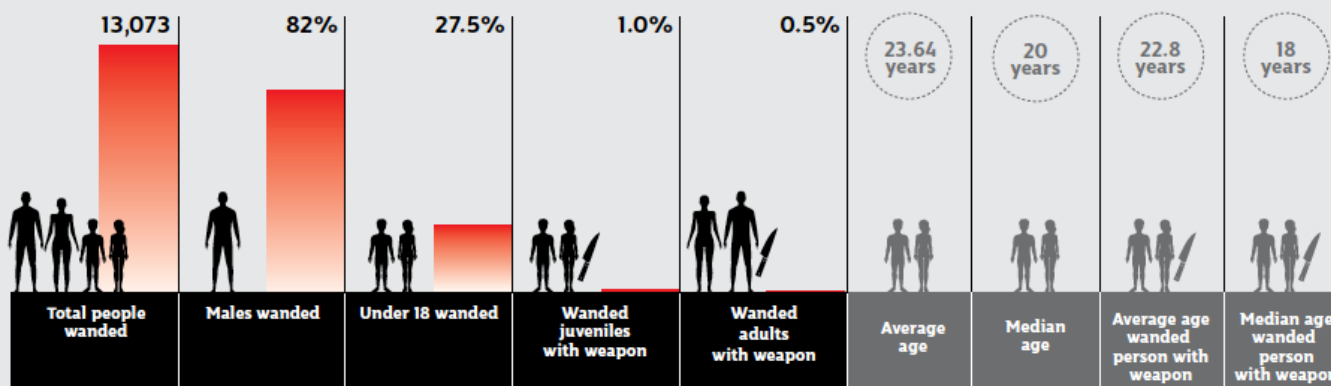


Contact information

For more information about the QPS Wanding Trial contact Professor Janet Ransley, Director, Griffith Criminology Institute:

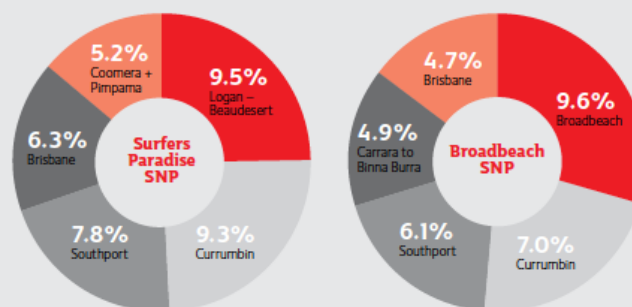
jransley@griffith.edu.au
Wanding_Trial@griffith.edu.au
www.griffith.edu.au/criminology-institute

Snapshot of wanding activity over the trial (2021 TO 2022)



Five most common home postcodes of people wanded

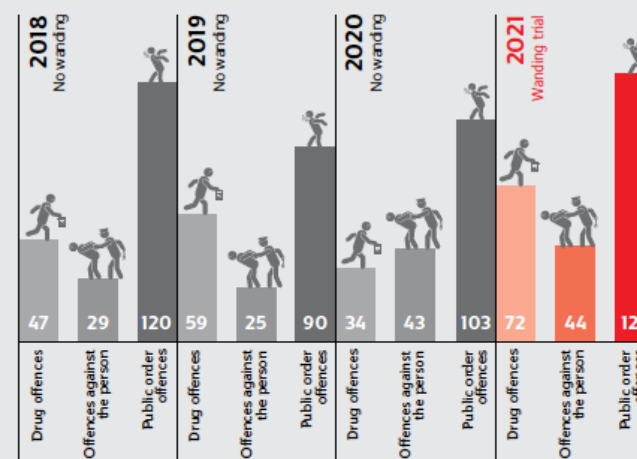
Three quarters of people wanded gave a home postcode. The 5 most common home postcodes of people wanded per SNP were:



Note: No one who volunteered their postcode was from the Surfers Paradise - Benowa area.

Preliminary analysis QPS data

Note that 2020 and 2021 coincided with the COVID-19 period, which affected both offence rates and policing responses, so that direct comparisons with preceding years are complex.



January - December each year: Raw counts of offences in both the Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise SNPs.

Armed robberies

There were **19** armed robbery offenders the year immediately pre-trial (9 separate occurrences) and **5** armed robbery offenders during the trial (4 separate occurrences) in the SNPs.

	Juvenile offenders	Adult offenders	Total offenders
2018-19 30 Apr-29 Apr	////	////	////////
2019-20 30 Apr-29 Apr	////////	////////	////////
2020-21 30 Apr-29 Apr	////////	////////	////////
2021-22 30 Apr-29 Apr	///	///	////

How weapons were detected during the trial for offenders under 18

% of offenders **under 18** years old in possession of a dangerous article during the wandering trial.



Data collected

QPrime and other admin data	10 Interviews with senior officers	4 Focus groups 16 frontline officers	7 Interviews external stakeholders	4 Observations

Findings so far

Preliminary analysis interviews/focus groups findings

QPS stakeholders commented on the use and effects of wandings:

- The wandling device used in the trial was considered efficient and effective.
- Some officers raised concerns about whether, if wandling is continued, authorisations may become harder to obtain.
- Some interviewees suggested that the trial should be expanded to at least the transport corridors leading into and through the SNPs and at big events in nearby areas.
- While most could not comment on displacement, there were suggestions that some youth seen as potentially problematic and some crime had displaced to Southport or other areas of the Gold Coast.
- Officers commented that in their view the number of armed robberies had declined. However they noted it was difficult to measure whether knife-carrying had reduced, given that prior to the trial detection of them was far less certain.
- Officers believed an additional benefit of wandling is that other offences were identified during the process, especially drug related offences.
- Officers expressed a range of perceptions about changes in youth behaviours, with some suggesting that there were fewer youth present in the SNPs, fewer youth carrying knives, and that youth who were in the SNPs (particularly Surfers Paradise) were better behaved, while others felt that nothing had changed. However, interviewees commented that the overall relationship between police and youth had improved due to increased positive interactions during wandlings.

On who gets selected for wandling, QPS interviewees said:

- People are selected based on what they are doing and in what context. So an older person walking down the street at midday is less likely to be wanded than a teenager in the SNP at midnight.
- Fewer females were wanded, with officers commenting that larger groups were mostly comprised of young men,

and that females dressed in beachwear generally had fewer opportunities to conceal weapons.

When asked about safeguards, QPS interviewees commented:

- Safeguards for those wanded includes monitoring by supervising officers for compliance with the legislation, including on human rights.
- Supervisors commented that equity of application and ensuring adherence to all policies and procedures was a continuous process, both by peer review as well as random viewing of body worn camera footage.
- At this stage of the trial no formal complaints about wandling had been received, and QPS interviewees commented that wandling was well received in the community, both by youth and adults who had undergone wandling, bystanders and other members of the general public.
- Officers perceived the key to successful and accepted wandling was communication, with all officers explaining the purpose and reasoning of wandling before doing it.
- An unintended benefit was that officers felt wandling made it easier for them to approach and talk to members of the community. Many officers emphasized that they appreciated having a reason to initiate positive interactions with youth and other members of the public.
- Some concerns were raised about officer safety, given the close proximity required with the person being wanded, in that they could be liable to attack. However interviewees suggested most of the risk could be mitigated through training.

Considerations for the future of wandling:

- Operational budgets to support wandling operations in the future will have to consider staffing costs; other costs associated with wandling (such as wandling price) were considered negligible.

Non-QPS stakeholders expressed:

- They generally supported the program. They reported anecdotal views that youth and adults in the area were less combative since the start of wandling, especially after QPS returned to normal operations following the end of border security deployments.

Next stages of the project

01

Finalise community survey.

02

Continued analysis of all data including community survey.

03

Provide draft of final report by 30 August 2022.

Appendix D: Human ethics protocol – Griffith University

Full Research Ethics Clearance 2021/865

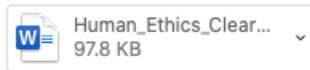
← ↶ ↷



📧 rims@griffith.edu.au <rims@griffith.edu.au>

Monday, 20 December 2021 at 3:51 pm

To: n.connell@griffith.edu.au; 📧 Margo Van Felius; s.walding@griffith.edu.au; j.ransley@griffith.edu.au; +1 more ▾



[Download All](#) • [Preview All](#)

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW

Dear Prof Janet Ransley

I write further to the additional information provided in relation to the provisional approval granted to your application for ethical clearance for your project "NR: Commercial Evaluation - QPS contracted research of the QPS Wandering trail review" (GU Ref No: 2021/865).

This is to confirm that this response has addressed the comments and concerns of the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GUHREC).

The GUHREC resolved to grant your application a clearance status of "Fully Approved".

Consequently, you are authorised to immediately commence this research on this basis.

Regards

Gynelle Murray | Acting Ethics Policy Officer
Office for Research
Griffith University | Nathan | QLD 4111 | Bray Centre (N54) Room 0.10
T +61 7 373 52069 | E gynelle.murray@griffith.edu.au
griffith.edu.au

Appendix E: QPS research committee approval



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

ABN: 29 409 225 509

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY COMMAND

40 Tank Street, Brisbane, 4000
GPO Box 1440, Brisbane, Queensland, 4001

TELEPHONE: 0439 674 975



09 December 2021

Professor Janet RANSLEY
Griffith Criminology Institute
J.Ransley@griffith.edu.au

Our Ref.:

Your Ref.: QPSRC-1221-1.01

Dear Professor Ransley,

RESEARCH REQUEST LETTER OF NOTIFICATION - QPS Wandering Trial Review (QPS00739)

I refer to your application dated 24 November 2021 for permission to conduct research within the Queensland Police Service (QPS). The application has been carefully considered by the QPS Research Committee and has been approved subject to the following conditions:

- 1) You carefully read, sign and return the Formal Deed of Agreement to the QPS Research Committee Secretariat;
- 2) Any data or police resources required for this project must be negotiated and is subject to QPS operational requirements and the provision of this Letter of Notification; and
- 3) Applicant liaises with QPS Analytics and Gold Coast District to refine data requirements.

Your QPSRC Reference Number for this approved research project is **QPSRC-1221-1.01**.

QPS practice is to provide approved research with a dedicated liaison officer(s), where applicable, to facilitate access to required resources for your project. Your liaison officer at the QPS will be provided once relevant documentation is returned to QPS Research Committee Secretariat (the Research and Evaluation Unit) via QPS.Research@police.qld.gov.au.

Should you have queries about this, please contact Mrs Sandra Smith, Manager of the Research and Evaluation Unit, on telephone number (07) 3364 8114.

I wish you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

C I HARSLEY APM
CHAIR, QPS RESEARCH COMMITTEE
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY COMMAND

Appendix F: Information sheet and consent from - interviews

QPS Wanding Trial Review

Who is conducting the research:

Professor Janet Ransley (Project Leader) Griffith Criminology Institute j.ransley@griffith.edu.au	Associate Professor Nadine Connell Griffith Criminology Institute n.connell@griffith.edu.au
Ms Shannon Walding Griffith Criminology Institute s.walding@griffith.edu.au	Margo van Felius (Project Manager) Griffith Criminology Institute m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au

Griffith University Ethics Reference Number: 2021/865

Why is the research being conducted?

Carriage of knives in public places poses a significant risk to community safety, with the potential for altercations to quickly escalate to the use of a weapon. In recent times this has been evidenced in two separate tragic murders involving knives within the Surfers Paradise Safe Night Precincts (SNP). To help address this, and as part of a suite of measures introduced to address youth crime, the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* (Chapter 2, Part 3A) was amended to authorise a senior police officer to approve the use of handheld scanners (wands) for up to 12 hours at a time, in two prescribed areas, the Surfers Paradise CBD and Broadbeach CBD SNPs.

The objectives of these legislative amendments are to minimise risks of harm associated with the unlawful possession of knives in the two prescribed areas. The provisions include a sunset clause whereby they will cease after two years, allowing a 12-month trial of the scheme to be conducted in the two prescribed areas. The aim of the trial is to review the impact, effectiveness, equity and efficiency of the wanding scheme.

Griffith University has been contracted by QPS to examine the impact, effectiveness, equity and efficiency of wanding. The impact focusses on the change in reportable offences, displacement and diffusion of benefits, and perceptions of safety. The effectiveness reviews the processes and the changes in young people behaviour. While equity examines equity of application and ensuring safeguards are adhered to, and trial efficiency looks at the cost/benefits of wanding.

The basis by which participants will be selected or screened

You have been selected because you are a Police Officer or a civilian member of the Queensland Police Service; a professional or practitioner employed with a Legal Service, Department of Justice and Attorney-General or Courts; or a member of a community group or other external stakeholder that can provide insight into the wanding trial's impact, effectiveness, equity and efficiency.

What you will be asked to do

We are asking you to take part in an one-to-one interview, which will take about an hour of your time, at a location of your choice.

The interview will focus on the wandering trial's impact, effectiveness, equity and efficiency as outlined above.

We would like to audio-record the interview, which will then be transcribed and a copy of the transcription will be provided to you for your review. All names will be removed from the transcription.

The expected benefits of the research

The goal of this review is to assess whether the wandering trial has had an impact, is effective and applied equitable and provides efficiencies.

There are no direct benefits to you. However, it will give you the opportunity to reflect on your experience and share insights and what is working well, what is not working well and how and where it can be improved.

Risks to you

We do not foresee any risks to you as a result of participating in the interview.

Your confidentiality

The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/ or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential. Your information will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. Your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at <http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan> or telephone (07) 3735 4375.

However, it is important to understand that although the research team will take every precaution to maintain your confidentiality, the research team is unable to fully guarantee your confidentiality.

It is important that you understand that your answers to the questions will be confidential. Your comments will be recorded using an audio recording device to ensure we capture as much information as possible. We will then transcribe your comments and assign a pseudonym (fake name) to the transcript so your identity remains confidential. Once transcribed, you will receive a copy of the transcript. As required by Griffith University, all audio recordings will be erased after transcription.

However, other research data (transcripts and analysis) will be retained in a password protected electronic file at Griffith University for a period of five years before being destroyed.

Your participation is voluntary

Please note that participation in the study is voluntary. This means that participants will not be penalised by Griffith University or QPS for not taking part. Further to this, participants can choose not to answer questions and may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. There will be no ramifications for withdrawal.

Consent to participate

If you are willing to participate, we would like to ask you to sign the attached consent form to confirm your agreement to participate and to indicate your willingness to audio-record your interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Questions / further information

You are free to discuss your participation in this study with Margo van Felius from the research team by either phone 0422367541 or e-mail m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au

The ethical conduct of this research

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. This research project has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Griffith University in accordance with these guidelines.

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 4375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Feedback to you

The research results will be results will be reported to the QPS and may also be disseminated via journal articles and / or conference presentations.

Participants can seek information about the findings from any member of the research team (via e-mail).

QPS Wandering Trial Review

CONSENT FORM | Interviews

Who is conducting the research

Professor Janet Ransley (Project Leader) Griffith Criminology Institute j.ransley@griffith.edu.au	Associate Professor Nadine Connell Griffith Criminology Institute n.connell@griffith.edu.au
Ms Shannon Walding Griffith Criminology Institute s.walding@griffith.edu.au	Margo van Felius (Project Manager) Griffith Criminology Institute m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au

Griffith University Ethics Reference Number: 2021/865

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include the participation in an interview;
- I understand that the interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed;
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and will not impact my relationship with the Queensland Police Service
- I understand that my name and other personal information that could identify me will be removed or de-identified in publications or presentations resulting from this research;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without explanation or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au), if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the interview:

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix G: Information sheet and consent form - focus groups

QPS Wandering Trial Review

Who is conducting the research:

Professor Janet Ransley (Project Leader) Griffith Criminology Institute j.ransley@griffith.edu.au	Associate Professor Nadine Connell Griffith Criminology Institute n.connell@griffith.edu.au
Ms Shannon Walding Griffith Criminology Institute s.walding@griffith.edu.au	Margo van Felius (Project Manager) Griffith Criminology Institute m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au

Griffith University Ethics Reference Number: 2021/865

Why is the research being conducted?

Carriage of knives in public places poses a significant risk to community safety, with the potential for altercations to quickly escalate to the use of a weapon. In recent times this has been evidenced in two separate tragic murders involving knives within the Surfers Paradise Safe Night Precincts (SNP). To help address this, and as part of a suite of measures introduced to address youth crime, the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* (Chapter 2, Part 3A) was amended to authorise a senior police officer to approve the use of handheld scanners (wands) for up to 12 hours at a time, in two prescribed areas, the Surfers Paradise CBD and Broadbeach CBD SNPs.

The objectives of these legislative amendments are to minimise risks of harm associated with the unlawful possession of knives in the two prescribed areas. The provisions include a sunset clause whereby they will cease after two years, allowing a 12-month trial of the scheme to be conducted in the two prescribed areas. The aim of the trial is to review the impact, effectiveness, equity and efficiency of the wandering scheme.

Griffith University has been contracted by QPS to examine the impact, effectiveness, equity and efficiency of wandering. The impact focusses on the change in reportable offences, displacement and diffusion of benefits, and perceptions of safety. The effectiveness reviews the processes and the changes in young people behaviour. While equity examines equity of application and ensuring safeguards are adhered to, and trial efficiency looks at the cost/benefits of wandering.

The basis by which participants will be selected or screened

You have been selected because you are a Police Officer of the Queensland Police Service that has taken part in wandering operations and might be able to provide insight into the wandering trial's impact, effectiveness, equity and efficiency.

What you will be asked to do

We are asking you to take part in focus group, which will take about an 1 ½ hour of your time, at a location near to you.

The focus group will focus on your experiences with wandering.

We would like to audio-record the interview, which will then be transcribed and a copy of the transcription will be provided to you for your review. All names will be removed from the transcription.

The expected benefits of the research

The goal of this review is to assess whether the wandering trial has had an impact, is effective, applied equitable and provides efficiencies.

There are no direct benefits to you. However, it will give you the opportunity to reflect on your experience and share insights and what is working well, what is not working well and how and where it can be improved.

Risks to you

We do not foresee any risks to you as a result of participating in the focus group.

Your confidentiality

The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/ or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential. Your information will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. Your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at <http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan> or telephone (07) 3735 4375.

However, it is important to understand that although the research team will take every precaution to maintain your confidentiality, the research team is unable to fully guarantee your confidentiality.

It is important that you understand that your answers to the questions will be confidential. Your comments will be recorded using an audio recording device to ensure we capture as much information as possible. We will then transcribe your comments and assign a pseudonym (fake name) to the transcript so your identity remains confidential. As required by Griffith University, all audio recordings will be erased after transcription. However, other research data (transcripts and analysis) will be retained in a password protected electronic file at Griffith University for a period of five years before being destroyed.

Your participation is voluntary

Please note that participation in the study is voluntary. This means that participants will not be penalised by Griffith University or QPS for not taking part. Further to this, participants can choose not to answer questions and may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. There will be no ramifications for withdrawal.

Consent to participate

If you are willing to participate, we would like to ask you to sign the attached consent form to confirm your agreement to participate and to indicate your willingness to audio-record the focus group. Thank you for your consideration.

Questions / further information

You are free to discuss your participation in this study with Margo van Felius from the research team by either phone 0422367541 or e-mail m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au

The ethical conduct of this research

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. This research project has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Griffith University in accordance with these guidelines.

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project you can contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 4375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Feedback to you

The research results will be results will be reported to the QPS and may also be disseminated via journal articles and / or conference presentations.

Participants can seek information about the findings from any member of the research team (via e-mail).

QPS Wandering Trial Review

CONSENT FORM | Focus Groups

Who is conducting the research

Professor Janet Ransley (Project Leader) Griffith Criminology Institute j.ransley@griffith.edu.au	Associate Professor Nadine Connell Griffith Criminology Institute n.connell@griffith.edu.au
Ms Shannon Walding Griffith Criminology Institute s.walding@griffith.edu.au	Margo van Felius (Project Manager) Griffith Criminology Institute m.vanfelius@griffith.edu.au

Griffith University Ethics Reference Number: 2021/865

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include the participation in a focus group;
- I understand that the focus group will be digitally recorded and transcribed;
- Because of the nature of the focus group, I understand that my anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed;
- I understand that everything that was said in the focus group is confidential;
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and will not impact my relationship with the Queensland Police Service;
- I understand that my name and other personal information that could identify me will be removed or de-identified in publications or presentations resulting from this research;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without explanation or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au), if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the focus group:

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix H: Interview/focus group schedule – QPS inside trial site

Senior officer interviews (within trial site) - schedule

Since the commencement of the trial- Have you noticed any changes in behaviour among people in SNP areas in relation to i) the carrying of weapons or ii) other offences?

Prompts

1. Have you seen change in the number and rate of recorded non-DV related offences involving weapons, in particular knives?
2. Have you observed a change in type of weapons detected/used?
3. Have you seen a change in types of offences?
4. Has the severity of the injuries changed?
5. Has the demographic profile of people found carrying weapons in the trial area changed?
6. has there been any flow on effects to other types of offence e.g. drugs or public order?

Assessment of displacement and diffusion of benefits

7. *To what extent do you think that the trial has caused weapons problems to move to the non-SNP areas of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, or in other non-SNP areas of the Gold Coast as a whole? (Prompt – primarily weapon related?).*

Changes in community and stakeholder perceptions of safety

8. Have you received any feedback from the community regarding the trial? If so, what has been their feedback? To what extent do you think the community feels safer?
(prompts: people who visit the Safe Night Precinct, local residents, local business owners)

Aim 2: Trial effectiveness

Effectiveness of the process – key Q – what is the operational impact of wand operations?

Prompts

9. To what extent is there a sufficient number of wands available on the night?
10. To what extent are they easy to use?
11. Was guidance/training provided on its use? On the legalities of its use? (prompts: PPRA, Liquor Act, Human Rights, etc).
12. How often are you authorising wand operations?
13. What is the decision making process for authorising a wand operation? (e.g. increase in crime, community perceptions, request from officers, etc)
14. When are wand operations generally conducted? Why? (prompt: days of week, time of day)

15. What is the duration of each wandering operation? How is that decided? (prompt: any patterns)
16. How many police officers are involved in each wandering operation? What are their ranks?
17. How comfortable are you with your officers understanding the OPMs and legislation around the use of wandering? (prompts: PPRA, Liquor Act and Human Rights)
18. How are people selected for wandering?
19. What records are kept of who is wanded, why, and any outcomes, e.g. detections?
20. Are wandering operations being deployed consistently across the two sites and by different personnel? Why/why not?

Changes in behaviour of young people carrying weapons

21. To what extent has the trial changed the behaviour of young people in the SNP areas?
22. Have you seen a change during the trial in how young people respond to or engage with the police?

Aim 3: Trial equity

Equity of application – Key Q – who is wanded and why?

Prompts

23. Are particular target groups set for each wandering operation? Are certain groups targeted more than others? Why/why not?
24. In your experience have there been opportunities for unfairness or discrimination in the choice of wandering targets? What steps do you take to avoid this?
25. Is wandering being conducted in accordance with the legislation and QPS operational procedures? Are all relevant officers aware of appropriate operational policies and procedures?
26. How is this monitored?

Aim 4: Trial Efficiency

27: How are current wandering operations staffed (e.g. existing resources versus overtime. If overtime, how is this being funded?) What is the impact on budgets/resources for other policing tasks?

28: To what extent do wandering operations deliver efficiencies for local police (what savings result from wandering)?

29: To what extent do the benefits of the trial outweigh the cost?

30: Are there any unintended consequences arising from the wandering trial? (prompts: more complaints against officers, displacement, etc).

Appendix I: Interview/focus group schedule – QPS outside trial site

Senior officer interviews (outside trial site) - schedule

Since the commencement of the trial, what have been the changes in your area- Have you noticed any changes in behaviour among people in your area in relation to i) the carrying of weapons or ii) other offences?

Prompts

1. *To what extent do you think that the trial has caused offenders to move to the non-SNP areas of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, or in other non-SNP areas of the Gold Coast as a whole? (Prompt – primarily weapon related?).*
2. *Have you seen change in the number and rate of recorded non-DV related offences involving weapons, in particular knives in your area?*
3. *Have you observed a change in type of weapons detected/used?*
4. *Have you seen a change in types of offences?*
5. *Has the severity of the injuries changed?*
6. *Has the demographic profile of people found carrying weapons in your area changed?*
7. *has there been any flow on effects to other types of offence e.g. drugs or public order?*

Operational impact on your area

8. *Have you been asked to supply officers for wandering operations and if so how often? For which site/s?*
9. *How many officers are you asked to supply (on average, per week) ? What are their ranks?*
10. *How does this impact on your area? (prompt: other operations, general policing)*
11. *What has been the feedback from your officers when they are asked to participate?*
12. *What has been their feedback after participation?*
13. *Have your officers received training regarding wandering? (prompt: actual use and legalities of use)?*
14. *How comfortable are you with your officers understanding the OPMs and legislation around the use of wandering? (prompt: PPRA, Liquor Act and Human Rights)*

Changes in behaviour of young people carrying weapons

15. *To what extent has the trial changed the behaviour of young people in your area (e.g. are they re-locating from SNPs?)?*
16. *Have you seen a change during the trial in how young people respond to or engage with the police area?*

Wandering a potential opportunity for other areas

- 17: *Would you like to have wands available in your area? Why? Why not? For what purposes?*
- 18: *What benefits do you see from wandering? Any disadvantages?*

19: *To what extent do* the benefits of the use of wandering outweigh the disadvantages?

20: Are there any unintended consequences arising from the wandering trial? (prompt: more complaints against officers, displacement, etc).

Appendix J: Interview schedule – external stakeholders

Senior officer interviews (outside trial site) - schedule

Since the commencement of the trial, what have been the changes in your area- Have you noticed any changes in behaviour among people in your area in relation to i) the carrying of weapons or ii) other offences?

Prompts

1. *To what extent do you think that the trial has caused offenders to move to the non-SNP areas of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, or in other non-SNP areas of the Gold Coast as a whole? (Prompt – primarily weapon related?).*
2. *Have you seen change in the number and rate of recorded non-DV related offences involving weapons, in particular knives in your area?*
3. *Have you observed a change in type of weapons detected/used?*
4. *Have you seen a change in types of offences?*
5. *Has the severity of the injuries changed?*
6. *Has the demographic profile of people found carrying weapons in your area changed?*
7. *has there been any flow on effects to other types of offence e.g. drugs or public order?*

Operational impact on your area

8. *Have you been asked to supply officers for wandering operations and if so how often? For which site/s?*
9. *How many officers are you asked to supply (on average, per week) ? What are their ranks?*
10. *How does this impact on your area? (prompt: other operations, general policing)*
11. *What has been the feedback from your officers when they are asked to participate?*
12. *What has been their feedback after participation?*
13. *Have your officers received training regarding wandering? (prompt: actual use and legalities of use)?*
14. *How comfortable are you with your officers understanding the OPMs and legislation around the use of wandering? (prompt: PPRA, Liquor Act and Human Rights)*

Changes in behaviour of young people carrying weapons

15. *To what extent has the trial changed the behaviour of young people in your area (e.g. are they re-locating from SNPs?)?*
16. *Have you seen a change during the trial in how young people respond to or engage with the police area?*

Wandering a potential opportunity for other areas

- 17: *Would you like to have wands available in your area? Why? Why not? For what purposes?*
- 18: *What benefits do you see from wandering? Any disadvantages?*
- 19: *To what extent do the benefits of the use of wandering outweigh the disadvantages?*

20: Are there any unintended consequences arising from the wandering trial? (prompt: more complaints against officers, displacement, etc).

Appendix K: Observation tool

In order to observe the implementation quality of the wandng trial, the team will undertake observations of a select number of wandng operations throughout the course of the trial. The following wandng and wandng related events will be observed:

1. Pre-deployment wandng briefing
2. Wandng operations on scheduled wandng nights
3. Wandng operations on nights chosen for a random wandng operation

Pre-Deployment Wandng Briefing

The pre-deployment wandng briefing takes place at the beginning of a shift in which a wandng operation will take place. The individuals present include the ranking QPS officer(s) for the shift and the patrol officers who will be deployed with wands. These briefings serve as a training refresher for the officers who will deploy metal detecting wands during the shift. Briefings last between 45 minute and 1 hour. During these briefings, 2-3 team members will be present and work together to observe the training lecture. Observation data will include the number of officers present and notes about the training topics and/or demonstrations. No identifiable information about the officers who are present will be collected.

Wandng Operations (Scheduled and Random)

An observation team will also go out with patrol officers on select shifts – both those as part of advanced scheduled wandng operations and those that happen on a random schedule – to observe the wandng process. The observation team will consist of 2-3 members who will be trained in observation techniques. The team will observe wandng operations throughout the course of one QPS shift in the designated SNP precincts. Data collected will include the gender, apparent age, and apparent ethnic background of the individuals who are wanded. These data will later be cross-referenced against QPS incident reports. Other data collected will include the start and end time of the incident, the number of individuals involved in the wandng incident, and notes about the interactions between officers and the public. At no time will any member of the public be asked any identifying information. The research team will not take video or still photography at these observations.

The observers will be accompanied by a QPS officer who is not part of the wandng operation but responsible for ensuring safety and well-being of the research team. The research team will respect any directives by the attending QPS officer to leave the scene if there is a question of a safety issue.

Appendix L: Offences included in data request from QPRIME

All of the following offence types as specified by QPRIME offence codes which are not flagged as domestic violence incidents and are linked to occurrences with a start date between 30 April 2018 and 30 April 2022:

0111	Murder
0112	Murder - Attempted murder
0114	Murder - Manslaughter (excluding driving causing death)
0116	Murder - Manslaughter Unlawful Striking Cause death
0211	Assault occasioning grievous bodily harm
0213	Wounding
0214	Assault occasioning bodily harm
0215	Assault; serious (other)
0216	Assault; police (PPRA)
0217	Assault; minor (not elsewhere classified)
0218	Assault; Common
0219	Assault; aggravated (Non-sexual)
0311	Rape
0312	Rape - Attempted
0315	Assault with intent to commit rape
0316	Sexual Assault (Other)
0546	Armed so as to cause fear or alarm
0547	Armed with intent (Summary Offences Act)
0611	Robbery; armed
0612	Robbery; unarmed
0613	Robbery; unarmed; in company
0614	Assault with intent to steal
0615	Demand property with menaces with intent to steal
1011	Drug - Possess and/or use dangerous drugs
1013	Drug - Supply dangerous drugs
1017	Drug - Possess things for use; or used in the administration; consumption; smoking of a dangerous drug
1101	Unlawful Possession of concealable firearm
1102	Unlawful Possession of firearm (other) (this may not be relevant)
1110	Possession/use of dangerous article (other weapon)
1111	Weapons Act offences (other)
1203	Graffiti
1204	Wilful damage (not elsewhere classified)
1301	Resist arrest; incite; hinder; obstruct police
1302	Disobey Move on Direction
1305	Public Nuisance - Summary Offences Act
1306	Wilful Exposure - Summary Offences Act
1307	Disorderly behaviour

1308	Indecent behaviour
1309	Obscene; insulting; offensive; etc. language
1310	Offences against good order (other)
1311	Public Nuisance Offences Under The Vagrants; Gaming & Other Offences
1313	Public Nuisance - Disorderly
1314	Public Nuisance - Offensive
1315	Public Nuisance - Threatening (includes threatening behaviour toward Police)
1316	Public Nuisance - Violent
1317	Public Nuisance - Language Offences directed toward Police
1318	Public Urination
1651	Consume Liquor in a public place
1731	Assault (Comm By-Law)
1732	Unlawful Damage to Property including Graffiti (Comm By-Law)
1733	Obscene Language/Offensive Behaviour (Comm By-Law)
1734	Assault/Obstruct Police (Comm By-Law)
1739	Possession of Dangerous Articles (Comm By-Law)
1740	Possession of a Firearm or Weapon (Comm By-Law)
1749	Fail to Comply with a Lawful Direction (Comm By-Law)
	Any other offences/intelligence reports nested within occurrences where the QPRIME wandering trial operation number is linked

Appendix M: Locality of people wanded (wandering occurrences)

	Number	Percentage
Unknown	3,569	27.56
Logan - Beaudesert	1,142	8.82
Surfers Paradise to Benowa	1,127	8.70
Southport	998	7.71
Brisbane	789	6.09
Coomera + Pimpama	634	4.90
Carrara to Binna Burra	560	4.32
SE QLD - Other	493	3.81
Ipswich	480	3.71
Arundel, Molendinar, Ashmore	386	2.98
Broadbeach	369	2.85
QLD - Other	347	2.68
Runaway Bay + surrounds	270	2.09
Burleigh	222	1.71
Helensvale + Hope Island	202	1.56
Robina	193	1.49
NSW	193	1.49
Mudgeeraba to Worongary	157	1.21
Ormeau	146	1.13
Oxenford	143	1.10
Varsity Lakes	118	0.91
Elanora + Palm Beach	117	0.90
VIC	79	0.61
Currumbin	64	0.49
Coolangatta	64	0.49
Interstate - Other	27	0.21
Mt Tamborine	25	0.19
Tugun	24	0.19
Tallebudgera	10	0.08

