

Council's security cameras – Where's the consultation?

Research: Jesse Wone

The idea of using security cameras (CCTV) to reduce crime in public areas has been around for a while, long enough for a large amount of experience to be gained about the pitfalls of such a strategy.

Lawlink, the information service of the NSW Attorney General's Department, carries over 50 pages of CCTV Guidelines, which provide "a clear statement of the NSW Government's policy on the appropriate establishment and use of CCTV schemes." The lack of implementation of many key recommendations in the Guidelines casts doubt on the legitimacy of the installation of cameras in Nimbin, and of the use made of them.

From the outset, the guidelines do not seem to have been followed. Prior to installation of the cameras,

a representative Community Safety Committee should be formed to develop a local crime prevention plan and safety strategy, since "CCTV should not be implemented as the only means of addressing crime in public places."

This committee would be involved in developing a CCTV Code of Practice, covering all aspects of management including rules defining access to monitors; access to recorded images; procedures defining recording and storage practices, tape/disc retention times, re-use and copying; signage, publicity and information about the scheme.

The Community Safety Committee should also conduct a three-stage community consultation. Initially, "all groups likely to be affected by the proposal for CCTV should be consulted. This will

include residents, users of the nominated area, businesses in the area and any other specific groups such as young people, relevant ethnic communities and the elderly. Different consultation techniques may be required to reach different sections of the community...." When did this happen?

**"CCTV should not be promoted as a cure for all of an area's crime problems."
Crime Prevention Division,
NSW Attorney General's
Department**

Details of the Proposal are then to be presented for wide community endorsement. They will include: the exact area to be monitored; the current incidence of crime there, based on crime statistics; a realistic

appraisal of what the program might achieve; the commencement date and planned duration of the program; the means by which it will be evaluated; the cost and funding arrangements of the program; any environmental alterations required, including lighting; the avenue for complaints about the operation of the system; and the means of commenting on the evaluation results. Has anyone seen such a Proposal?

We should have by now. A Community Information Strategy is also supposed to be in place, which includes notices in local newspapers, on community noticeboards and distributed to youth groups, schools and community groups; radio announcements on community radio; information attached to rates notices and in council newsletters. Perhaps it's at the printer.

The CCTV Guidelines Policy Statement states, "It is essential that the community be fully consulted in any planning for the introduction

of CCTV," as it "may involve a degree of cost to the community, for example in terms of the allocation of resources, or in the implications for personal privacy." Provisions of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and the Workplace Video Surveillance Act 1998 are both relevant in this regard.

It goes on to caution, "Care should be taken to ensure that schemes are not used to prevent access to the area covered by CCTV of those who have no criminal intent, but whose presence might offend against some "norm" of behaviour or dress."

Without the recommended procedures being followed, there are no safeguards that this will not occur.

Photo: Country Energy workmen attach boom arms to their poles, in readiness for the installation of the security cameras in Cullen Street.

Pivotal meeting called for CTC



Shopfront. Monday volunteer Lydia LePatourel at the desk of the new CTC premises.

by Alex Charles

The future is far from certain for the Nimbin Community Technology Centre. A special general meeting (SGM) has been called by the CTC management in an attempt to allay concerns over the CTC's direction and its viability into the future.

David Julian, manager of the Nimbin centre said, "The meeting will address structural and strategic problems that have evolved. There is currently only one active committee member, and therefore discussion and decision making, within the management plan, doesn't take place. It is important that we attain a skilled team, to progress the CTC." This sentiment was echoed by the Nimbin Community Development Manager, David Hallett, who added that the SGM "will welcome current members, who are technologically literate, to

nominate for the management committee."

Already there have been allegations of people jockeying for positions on the management committee, out of self-interest. David Julian said, "As with any other community group, committee members must declare a financial or pecuniary interest, and absent themselves from any decisions that may be in their own interest."

Visitor Information Centre It is important that the CTC adheres to its management and business plans, which incorporate a functioning, and equitable Visitor Information Centre (VIC). This will ensure continued support from Lismore City Council, who have indicated that the sustainability of the CTC and an accredited Visitor Information Centre in Nimbin, are in everybody's best interest.

The CTC is progressing toward an accredited visi-

tor centre, and have plans to increase its local product and technology retail sector, while at the same time maintaining its educational and technology support base for locals.

David Julian is optimistic. "The CTC has an established clientele, showing a demand for Information Technology services in the village. Education, computer upgrades and repairs, desktop publishing, emailing, and other emerging technologies, will continue to be necessary, and need to be accessible for local people, as well as the travelling public," he said.

Maybe a fair and functioning CTC and VIC managed by a committed and concerned group of six for the betterment of all the community, will be born from the SGM. Maybe it's up to you.

The SGM will take place on Thursday 21st July at 6.00pm at the Nimbin Community Centre.

Simone's case: where to now?

Wuerzburg Senior Public Prosecutor, Bardo Backert, has outed Simone's boyfriend, Tobias Suckfuell, as the main suspect in her murder. German newspapers report that the normally conservative Backert has acted out of character, in having accused Mr Suckfuell of complicity in the demise of Simone, due to inconsistency in statements he has made to the NSW police, and the German authorities.

The German Prosecutor has also acted due to information passed onto him from the NSW Homicide Squad Profiler, who attempts to ascertain the crime scene, from the perspective of both the victim, and the perpetrator. No charges have been laid, and Mr Backert says at this stage that there is not enough evidence to arrest Mr Suckfuell.

Then there is the question of the hair, that was found in the fence near the location where Simone's body was found, and which



Tobias Suckfuell and Simone Stroebel, holidaying in Nimbin shortly before her death.

is undergoing DNA analysis to determine if there is a match to Mr Suckfuell, or any other suspect. German media have been questioning Mr Backert's motives in this instance, emphasising that Mr Suckfuell was critical of the NSW Police handling of the case from the beginning.

They also report that 'profiling' is not an exact science, and point to the 'American sniper' case, where

profilers twice misdirected Police resources, that led to further carnage. These aspects, and the awaiting of DNA matching, appear to be aimed at exerting maximum pressure on Mr Suckfuell, in an attempt to break his perceived resolve and extract a confession.

The case may remain unsolved, and be passed on to the Coroner in the near future.



Wired. Adam Leonard and Rod Mitchell from Telstra installing new optical fibre broadband service at Nimbin Central School. Photo: Sue Stock