

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 wand 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 wand were required to first view a training module on the process and officer safety. For each shift during an authorised wand 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

176
operations
Broadbeach

185
operations
Surfers Paradise

The 5 stages of a wanding operation

- 1** A prescribed QPS officer (Commissioned officers or authorised Senior Sergeants) authorises a wanding operation, indicating area, date and start time, with a duration of 12 hours.
- Anyone can be wanded with no requirement for suspicion. Officers must identify themselves and inform persons they are required to be scanned, and if required offer a written notice.
- The scan is conducted. If prohibited items are located, usual arrest/ seizure processes are initiated and an Occurrence is recorded on QPRIME. If there is non-compliance, the person must be warned this is an offence, and if it persists, further action may be taken for contravening requirements of a police officer.³
- If no items are detected, officers create a Streetcheck and ask subjects to volunteer their name. Where no name is offered, the approximate address only is recorded.
- Officers use their QLite devices to record occurrences and streetchecks.

Safeguards include:

- Conducted by officer of same sex (where practicable)
- Activation of body worn camera
- Support requested from Council CCTV network
- Minimally invasive scan conducted at interception site
- Service of written notice if subject requests
- Minimal detention period

Both adults and young people can be scanned, with no parental consent required for minors.

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:

TOTAL	3,608 people wanded
AGE	<p>2,230 (61.8%) Adults</p> <p>1,378 (38.2%) < 18 yrs</p>
GENDER	<p>88% 3,211 males wanded</p> <p>12% 397 females wanded</p>
OPERATIONS	<p>Most detections to date relate to the Surfers Paradise trial site.</p>

OVERALL CHARGES

72

Location of 72 weapons leading to 56 charges (some for multiple weapons) under the Weapons Act 1990.

76

76 charges under the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 resulting in either a caution, drug diversion or court appearance.

201

201 charges against 156 persons.

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.



Next stages of the project

- 01** Secure QPRIME offence data extract (to test for impact).
- 02** Conduct another round of observations.
- 03** Finalise and deploy the community perceptions survey.
- 04** Provide another status report by 31 March 2022 or as agreed.