

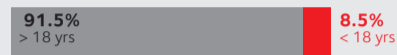
About this report

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 Felius and Ms Shannon Walding.

Offender characteristics

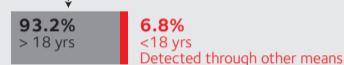
PRE-TRIAL

6,843 offenders detected in SNPs



DURING TRIAL

2,632 offenders detected in the SNPs

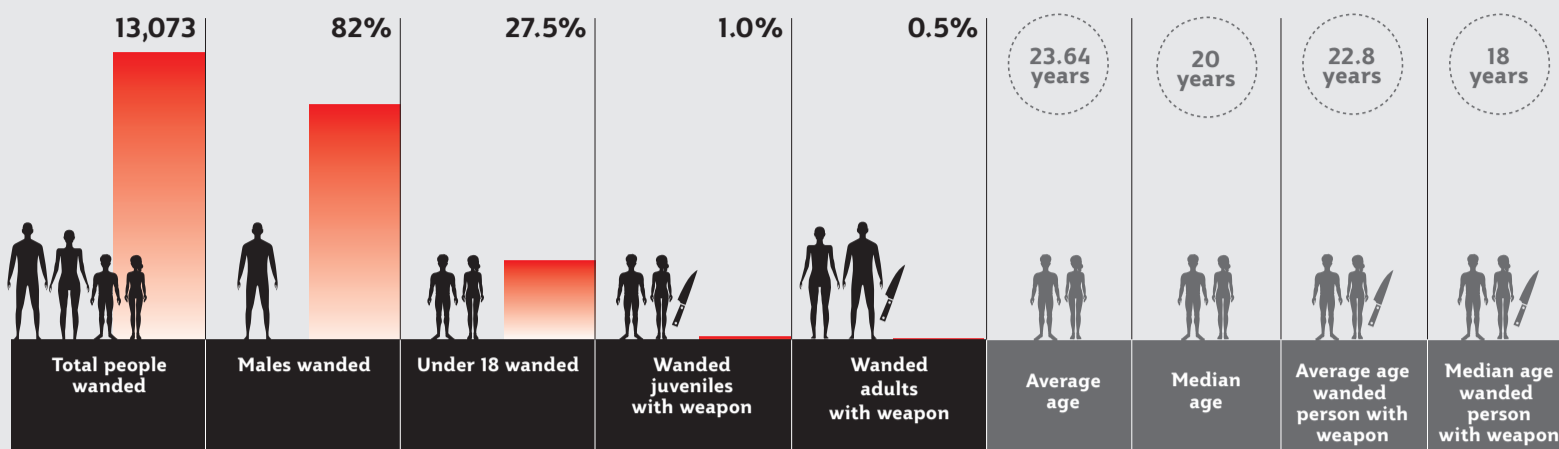


Contact information

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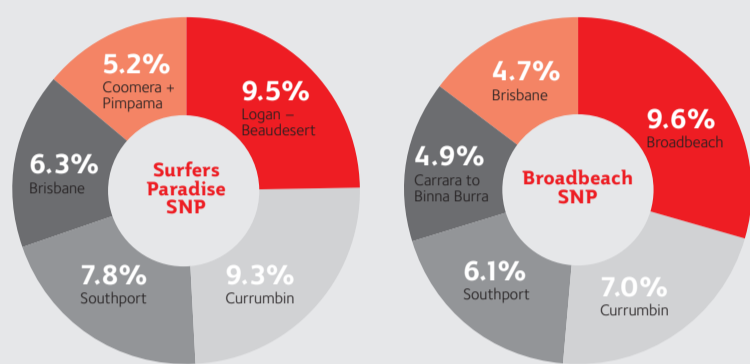
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Snapshot of wanding activity over the trial (2021 TO 2022)



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:

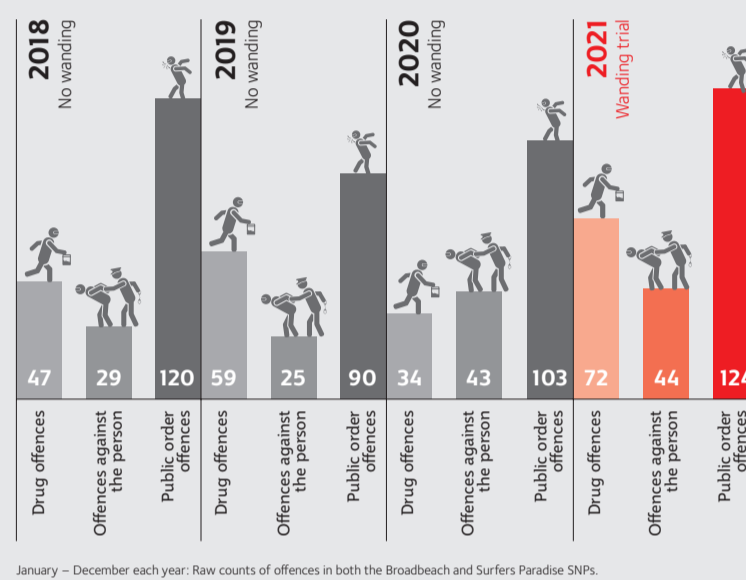


Note: No one who volunteered their postcode was from the Surfers Paradise - Benowa area.



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.



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 wanding trial.



Data collected



Findings so far

Preliminary analysis interviews/focus groups findings

QPS stakeholders commented on the use and effects of wandings:

- The wanding device used in the trial was considered efficient and effective.
- Some officers raised concerns about whether, if wanding 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 wanding 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 wandings.

On who gets selected for wanding, 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 wanding had been received, and QPS interviewees commented that wanding was well received in the community, both by youth and adults who had undergone wanding, bystanders and other members of the general public.
- Officers perceived the key to successful and accepted wanding was communication, with all officers explaining the purpose and reasoning of wanding before doing it.
- An unintended benefit was that officers felt wanding 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 wanding:

- Operational budgets to support wanding operations in the future will have to consider staffing costs; other costs associated with wanding (such as wanding 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 wanding, especially after QPS returned to normal operations following the end of border security deployments.

Next stages of the project

