

Ranger training in Western Australia

Graeme Raine

In Western Australia Rangers have a number of responsibilities which include, but are not limited to, the following legislation:

- Local Government Act 1960-1982
- Dog Act 1976
- Bush Fires Act 1954-1977
- Litter Act 1979-1981
- Control of Vehicles (Off-Road Areas) Act 1978
- Local Authority Bye-laws which include parking control.

Rangers are often the first point of contact residents have with their local authority and are also expected to be experts in the field of public relations, conflict resolution, negotiation and animal handling.

It has been of concern to the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association WA, which represents Rangers, that there has traditionally been little or no formal training available for these officers. The position of Ranger has become more demanding and it is unreasonable to expect persons to possess the necessary skills to effectively carry out their duties without access to recognised training courses.

One of the Association's principal aims was to have a recognised TAFE training course designed for and, where possible, delivered by experienced Rangers. In 1993 and 1994 a sub-committee comprising Association members and chaired by a curriculum consultant of the Central Metropolitan College of TAFE external studies developed two 34 hour courses, namely Municipal Law Enforcement A & B.

MUNICIPAL LAW ENFORCEMENT A

- Administer and enforce the Dog Act and Regulations
- Administer and enforce the relevant part of the Local Government Act to include:
 - Stray Livestock
 - Parking
 - Fire Prevention
 - Arrests
- Administer and enforce parts of State Government Acts and Statutes to include:
 - Litter Act
 - Control of Vehicles (Off Road Areas) Act
- Crowd Control

MUNICIPAL LAW ENFORCEMENT B

- Investigate, gather and evaluate evidence to initiate and process a successful prosecution
- Explain Ranger's role in regard to community protection
- Describe appropriate security procedures in a given situation

These two modules form 64 hours of compulsory electives towards a Certificate of Supervision First Line Management which is detailed below.

CERTIFICATE OF SUPERVISION FIRST LINE MANAGEMENT

Schedule of subjects

Managing Information
Managing Operations- Customer Service
Managing Effective Working Relationship
Managing and Developing Teams
Managing Grievances and Disputes
Managing People- Workplace Practice
Managing Finance- Setting and Achieving Budgets
Writing Skills for Work

(Students must complete all of the above core modules plus 102 hours of electives to a course total of 289 hours).

Electives

Work Team Communication
Presenting Information
Writing Workplace Documents
Managing Operations- Productivity
Managing Operations- Innovation
Managing Operations- Change
Managing and Organising Work for Goal Achievement
Managing Performance and Goal Achievement
Managing People- Recruitment, Selection and Induction
Managing Finance- Performance
Managing Finance- Cost Efficiency
Managing Finance- Operating and Capital Expenditure
Managing Group Problem Solving and Decision Making
Managing People- Training and Development

Municipal Law Enforcement A & B are currently available through the Central Metropolitan College of TAFE and the Bunbury Campus of TAFE. Negotiations are taking place to offer these courses through the CY O'Connor College of TAFE in Northam.

A representative of the Association sat on the curriculum development panel of the nationally accredited Certificate IV Statutory Investigations and Enforcement Certificate which is designed to provide the necessary skills to persons employed in agencies that have investigatory and evidence gathering functions.

CERTIFICATE IV STATUTORY INVESTIGATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Core modules

Specialist:
Introduction to the Law
Principles of Criminal Law
Investigative Interviews
Investigative Techniques
Evidence
Complaints
Apprehension Skills

Communication:

Work Team Communication
Dealing with Conflict
Negotiating Skills
Writing Skills for Work
Writing Workplace Documents
Community Education:
- Presenting Information
- Speaking in Public

Electives

Arrest
Conducting Prosecutions
Managing Information
Managing and Developing Work Teams
Presenting Reports
Investigative Audits

Workplace competency assessment (required for Certification)

The Association has also been involved with and supports the Ithica College of TAFE which is developing the National Animal Control Officers' Course which is detailed in these proceedings.

Three times a year the Association in conjunction with the Keep Australia Beautiful Council (WA) runs a one day Litter Law Enforcement Course. This course is principally designed for newly appointed Rangers and gives a detailed coverage of the relevant parts of the Act and regulations together with court etiquette and enforcement techniques. Classes are limited to 16 participants and recently included Building Inspectors for the first time. Animal Handling and Prosecution courses are available through the Municipal Training Service, these being one and two day courses respectively.

An Association member delivers the Animal Handling course which includes legislation relating to livestock and dog impounding, capturing and handling techniques and road hazard procedures. A two hour practical component involves Rangers with hands on dog handling skills which includes loading, unloading and kennelling.

A session involving professionally trained protection dogs is a feature of this course. It is designed to demonstrate the danger that a dog can be to an Animal Control Officer. Volunteer participants also don protective equipment and gain first hand knowledge of dog aggression. By incorporating this into the session, participants were able to identify the importance of not placing themselves into potentially dangerous situations.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A working party has been established to look into merging the National Animal Control Officers' Course with Municipal Law Enforcement A & B. It is also proposed that Fire Prevention and Emergency Management modules will be added to form a Western Australian Rangers Certificate. Aligning this certificate with the National Course will provide rangers with portability of the accreditation Australia wide. It is also proposed that Municipal Law Enforcement A & B will be available through external study in 1996.

In summary, 1995 has been the year in which training for Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' in Western Australia became a reality. For the first time the efforts of many Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association committee members both past and present were realised.

We are confident that through these courses, together with the National project, animal control will in the future be recognised as a profession in its own right.

The Association wishes to thank Mr Brian Chanter, formerly of TAFE external studies, and Dr Gaille Perry of TAFE Queensland for the extremely valuable contributions made towards Animal Control Officers' course development.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Graeme has been employed in local government for 14 years, nine of which involve animal control. He is currently employed by the City of Nedlands as Senior Ranger. He was involved in the Curriculum Development Committees of the Certificate of Supervision First Line Management, Municipal Law Enforcement A & B, Certificate IV Statutory Investigations and Enforcement and the National Animal Management Project. He currently delivers Municipal Law Enforcement A & B through the Central Metropolitan College of TAFE in Perth, Western Australia. In conjunction with the Keep Australia Beautiful Council WA, Graeme runs three training courses per year in Litter Law Enforcement and he runs the Animal Handling course through the Municipal Training Service. Graeme is a training officer for the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association and has a strong interest in the provision of relevant training courses for Animal Control Officers.

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