

Title: ***Police pursuits in Queensland: research, review and reform***

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Abstract: Purpose - Police high-speed pursuits present a difficult area for police managers and policy makers because of the important need to balance public safety with the mandate to enforce laws. The issue of police pursuits has been relatively under-researched in Australia. The overall purpose of the paper is to provide a descriptive analysis of the characteristics surrounding police pursuits in Queensland, Australia.

Design/methodology/approach - Considers recent events involving high speed pursuit-related fatal accidents and research into police pursuits which has illuminated clearly the significant risks for both community and police organisations associated with pursuits. Uses data collected in Queensland over a five-year period.

Findings - The results show that approximately 630 pursuits occur per year in Queensland across the study period, and that half of all pursuits are initiated for traffic offences while an additional quarter are initiated for stolen cars. **A total of 29 per cent of pursuits involved a collision, 11 per cent resulted in some sort of injury, and 11 people were killed during the five-year study period.**

In relation to an issue that appears to justify the initiation of some police pursuits - that fleeing drivers provide opportunities for police to apprehend serious offenders - examination of the charges data against the fleeing driver showed that very few apprehended drivers were charged with crimes more serious than what was known at the time the pursuit was initiated.

Originality/value - The findings in this study illuminate the importance of adopting more restrictive police pursuit policies.

Keywords: Australia, Police, Traffic control

Article Type: Research paper

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