

MEDIA RELEASE

29 January 2015

The thin blue line at Mataranka.

I had just finished preparing the story on the Borooloola Night Patrol when I received a phone from Di Collins who is the Mataranka Night Patrol Team Leader. She had rung to see if she could thank her team through the Newsletter for, ... *“work above and beyond the call of duty”*.

It turns out that earlier in January they had had a bad night in Mataranka. Di told the story of the night.

“.. a lot incidents... a lot of alcohol and domestic violence resulting in a bad injury to an older women in a wheel chair... and we had to face it alone as the local police were called out to a serious motor vehicle accident involving a lot of children”

It is not unusual with the large Police patrol areas that the town is left with only the night Patrol to protect the vulnerable. Di told me that the incident in town that night also involved a large group of people including a number of children. Children are often the real victims in these types of incidents with them often witnessing quite aberrant behaviour and violence.

The Night Patrol officers were able to separate the warring parties, get the injured woman to the clinic and relocate the children to a safe place.

“When we got back to from finding safe places for children the Police had returned with the first of the children from the car accident and so it went on.

“It was very angry for a while. My team did really well. They worked professionally and we were able to get some calm back into the place”, Di said in a very matter fact way but clearly very proud of the work her team did this night and most nights of the week.

Di is a woman of a certain age and slightly built but has a presence that comes from working in Night Patrol for nearly four years.

“I know this town and most of the people who live here and that makes a bit of a difference when you have to deal with people who are badly effected by alcohol and angry”, she said, “but it is good to know I have the back up of my patrol team and good training..

...however we do need a safe house in town for women and children effected by domestic violence otherwise we have to find people in town willing to assist or we have to go to Jilkminggan or Katherine and this is usually not very suitable.”

Michael Soler the Roper Gulf Council Officer in Mataranka says of the Night Patrol

“ it constantly amazes me what they are able to achieve in what could very volatile situations.”

The Mataranka Night Patrol has four members Di, Danny, Johnno, and Shareen.

“Until recently there were only two of us, both women, but we now have a full team” said Di....a really good team!

Night Patrol works as a close team but with the support of the local Sunrise Health Clinics, Police, Council Staff and most importantly members of the community of Mataranka.

Night Patrol will be out there again tonight to help protect the vulnerable in our small towns.

For further details please direct your enquiries to
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