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Queensland Police's Orwellian 'Fixated Persons Unit'

By [Chris Nyst](#) | 14 April 2018, 8:00am | 12 comments



You have the right to remain silent (Image via twitter.com/1EarthMedia)

A secretive branch of the Queensland Police has Big Brother's shadow looming over it, writes [Chris Nyst](#).

LAST YEAR, I learned something kind of crazy that I never knew before. A gentleman came to my office complaining that five police officers had recently materialised at his front door, without warning or invitation, wanting to conduct a psychiatric assessment on him. It all sounded more than a little bit bizarre to me, but, since the gentleman appeared otherwise quite lucid, I tried to dig a little deeper in the hope of understanding what it may be all about. He didn't really know. The best he could tell me was the officers concerned were apparently attached to something called the "[Fixated Persons Unit](#)".

What?

I kept digging, and eventually discovered that, according to my client, he had recently made a number of official complaints about the behaviour of a certain public servant who he contended had been abusing his powers in the line of duty.

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It still didn't seem to make much sense to me until I went looking for the so-called Fixated Persons Unit. I was somewhat surprised to find that, in fact, it's [actually a thing](#).

2017 ACVPA Gold Winner – Queensland Fixated Threat Assessment Centre



According to the [official brochures](#), the [Queensland Fixated Threat Assessment Centre](#) (QFTAC) is an agency staffed by Queensland Police officers and clinicians from the [Queensland Forensic Mental Health Service](#) to identify people who are thought to “fixate” on government officials and other public identities.

We have long had laws to address threatening behaviour, stalking, peace and good behaviour breaches and apprehended violence, but this, it seems, is something else again. Apparently established by [Campbell Newman’s Liberal National Party](#) Government in 2013, the agency receives information from the Queensland Police Service, law enforcement agencies, ministerial and electoral offices, and other government bodies about allegedly fixated persons, with a view to *'intervening before they escalate to harmful behaviours'*. Don't ask me precisely what that all entails, but the brochure includes benign references to *'proactive rather than reactive'* home visits and weekly reviews, all on a strictly *'need to know'* basis. Thank goodness, the QFTAC assures us, all this is not just a means of locking away political agitators and the agency has no interest in people who merely hold dissident political opinions.

Isn't this just a means of locking away political dissidents?

Assessing concerning, disordered communications or approaches to politicians is simply a means of identifying mentally ill people with unmet mental health needs. QFTAC does not have any interest, or indeed capacity, to intervene with individuals who merely hold divergent political views.

Do these services operate elsewhere?

While there is a lot of interest in establishing fixated threat assessment services in other parts of Australasia, at present there are no similar services outside Europe. QFTAC is closely modelled on the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre (FTAC) set up in the UK in 2006 (see [www.fixatedthreat.com](#) or [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fixated_Threat_Assessment_Centre](#)).

Further information

QFTAC education sessions were delivered in late 2013 to QPS and mental health services throughout Queensland. If you are interested in learning more about QFTAC please contact Drs Michele Pathé or Timothy Lowry at CFOS on 07 3139 7200 for advice and training options. A training DVD is also available.

Contacting QFTAC

Queensland Fixated Threat Assessment Centre
Queensland Police Headquarters
200 Roma Street Brisbane Qld 4000
Ph 07 3364 4379 or 07 3364 4230
E: scg.qfta@police.qld.gov.au

(Screenshot from 'The Queensland Fixated Threat Assessment Centre (QFTAC)' [brochure](#) (page 2)

Still, I am somewhat surprised the initiative hasn't been the subject of more strident public scrutiny and debate, particularly given Queensland's chequered history of past proactive police security operations. The infamous Queensland Police [Special Branch](#) was established in the 1940s to monitor German and Japanese subversives during World War II, but 30 years later it was broadly accused of doing the back-door bidding of the [Bjelke-Petersen](#) State Government,

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investigating and harassing political opponents, dissidents and protestors. It was ultimately disbanded in 1989, following the recommendation of the [Fitzgerald Inquiry](#) into Police Corruption, after it (perhaps tellingly) destroyed all its records rather than allow them to fall into the Inquiry’s hands.

Proactive intelligence agencies undoubtedly have their place, particularly in an ever-more-sophisticated world of anti-government activity. But so, of course, do concepts of open government, transparent and accountable law enforcement and the right to dissent.



Asher Wolf

@Asher_Wolf

Post lots of FOIs? Make lots of RTI requests? Police & psychiatrists may deem you a "fixated person"
<https://t.co/IQ6xEqJomm?amp=1>

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Unfortunately, the online [QFTAC brochure](#) is long on why “fixated persons” must be monitored, but regrettably short on whether – and, if so, how – its own activities are. With no mention of any kind of public interest monitor, we’re left to wonder just precisely who is fixating on the people fixating on the fixated people.

[Chris Nyst](#) is a Gold Coast lawyer, novelist and filmmaker. This story was [originally published](#) on the website of Nyst Legal and has been republished with permission.





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without charge & injected against her will by the QFTAC needs funds for a barrister & reports for her appeal



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Notso Cute • 9 months ago

Michaelia Cash and Malcolm Turnbull better stay away from Queensland, their unhealthy Fixation on the Unions and Bill Shorten is strange behaviour at least. I think most of the Coalition members would qualify for a visit from the "Fixated Persons Unit". Peter Dutton's unhealthy Fixation on denying help too innocent children on Manus island, would clearly need a serious look at from the "Fixated Persons Unit".

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Rebecca • 9 months ago

This is Scary Stuff, fiona wilson whistleblower against origin energy & their unsafe practices plus their under estimated Royalties paid to the Q.L.D Government. She apparently approached the Minister to hand over her information, this Minister may have been Dr Anthony Lynham as a result the Fixated Persons Unit was called. She was taken away & injected. It Appears our Politicians use this power to silence. And yes the same Fixated Persons Unit operates in N.S.W. Established by Campbell Newman in QLD says it all.

5 ^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›



42 Long • 9 months ago

Over- reacting to people you think are over-reacting to some people is funny, (peculiar). Campbell Newman? Good thing he went before the Fence was built and another country established.. Queensland had a few real moments back then.. Perfect one day, unrecognisable the next.

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DenisPC9 ➔ Guest • 9 months ago

"What happened to the investigation? We are not told. We can only assume there was no violation of the person's rights."

Quite possibly Daniel. But history tells us otherwise.

I'll go with history rather than "assumptions" or even worse "trust" or "hope".

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rodmaxc ➔ Guest • 9 months ago

Oh Daniel, it is called shining a light on dark places, it seems you are happy to accept the dark.

4 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



oz-demigod ➔ Guest • 9 months ago

"aimlessly muckraking"

Really? You need to go back to your News Corpse subscription then. Read what you're told is the truth and believe it because they tell you to.

If you honestly believe those words, and the rest of your comment, you're more of a drone than you think.....and certainly more than they'll ever tell you.

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Bapak • 9 months ago

A bit of Latin I learned this week - Quis custodiet ipsos custodes.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Gregory T ➔ Bapak • 9 months ago

Well, in the words of that great and humanitarian Queensland leader, "don't you worry about that "

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



ForgottenAustralianFamily • 9 months ago

Is this why the police have not acted on the complaints of two child sex abuse victims in our family? Do they think we are fixated? In one case, did it change their minds when reports emerged of another child victim of the same perpetrator? Is it because my late husband, a known anti-Joh activist, and I were placed under surveillance in the early 70s by none other than Don Lane, who then slandered my husband in Queensland Parliament, calling him a thief? Does this explain the unannounced visits by police to my home to check on my "well-being" a few years back? The mind boggles.

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ForgottenAustralianFamily ➔ ForgottenAustralianFamily • 9 months ago

So is that it, then? A tantalising glimpse of undiscovered corridors of power in Queensland?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Barry Theodore • 9 months ago

I lov the artwork. Is that conper one of the Village People?

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