

Police Dog (PD) Zeus and Leading Senior Constable Knight GSDCA Outstanding Canine Service Award

Police Dog Zeus' birth date is 1/5/2016

Six years ago, Leading Senior Constable Knight, a police member for 22 years and a Dog Handler for 8 years, was teamed up with Police Dog (PD) Zeus and commenced novice training with him before qualifying and being attached to the East Team.

There have been many memorable moments in jobs including falling in muddy creeks, being dragged face down on muddy slopes, cats attaching themselves to Zeus's face, or even tracking for up to 70 mins and getting the arrest. They all make for an interesting career in dog handling.

PD Zeus is a very independent dog who has a high prey drive and a willingness to work. Even when the going gets tough and he looks exhausted, he will keep going if there is a track or wind scent to chase up. Not too long ago during what was his most successful night shift, he was responsible for 8 people being arrested in the one week, and all from tracking and searching.

The following are snap shots from some of the jobs attended by PD Zeus. They stand out because the offenders involved would never have been located, identified and held accountable without his amazing capabilities.

This incident is firmly imprinted in my mind because of the work we did to get the offender. Offenders had entered the property in the early hours of Sunday morning. They stole a truck, motorbikes and a 1950's Porsche worth over \$150,000. They had all but escaped, but the driver of the Porsche stalled it at the end of the street and could not get it started again. A local divisional van doing one last patrol before knock off observed the Porsche stopped at an intersection with no one inside. One phone call later and the crime had been uncovered. A sharp eyed constable saw a person of interest who was now hurriedly walking away from the car. When they attempted to speak to him, he ran and disappeared somewhere along the security fencing to an old quarry. We attended about an hour later and PD Zeus quickly located the offender's exit point. There was a small depression in the ground and the bottom of the fence was pushed up slightly. I made my way under it on my belly but quickly realised we were in a blackberry thicket and a maze of blackberry tunnels doing its best to stop me at every turn. It was one of those days where you remind yourself "trust your dog" on repeat. After what seemed like an hour we were through the tunnel system, but confident we were going the right way. We had located items of clothing including both of the offenders runners now permanently wrapped up in blackberry vines as we worked our way through. I was now covered head to foot in mud and who knows what else but I didn't care as we were determined to locate the offender. Once clear of the hedge of blackberries, PD Zeus was becoming very frustrated with my lack of pace and was in a hunting track. It was like being behind a sled dog. I was constantly getting caught by ankle high blackberry vines but eventually cleared them into open paddocks. As it turns out, we were now in a disused quarry. PD Zeus led me to a pile of abandoned mining equipment and I could see that the track had ended and Zeus was now wind scenting. A short time later we located the offender who was looking worse for wear and near naked after his high speed jaunt through the blackberries!

Another task that stands out was when a multi break alarm was activated at the BMW dealership/service centre in Prahran at around 2.30am. Local units arrived on scene and observed

a male in the rear of the showroom. The offender spotted police and ran around frantically looking for exit. A security guard arrived on scene allowing members entry to showroom. On hearing that police were entering the building I advised the patrol supervisor that due to the size of the complex, they should exit and hold an external cordon. I arrived on scene and deployed PD Zeus for a search. The building is very large with multiple underground levels. Over the course of an hour we systematically cleared all levels but could not locate the offender. I started to suspect that the offender had successfully made it out a back door before the cordon could be set up. PD Zeus kept wanting to return to the lower basement service department, so I took him back down to the area, at which time PD Zeus started to indicate at the door to a fan room. On entering the fan room, PD Zeus gave strong indications and started barking. There was nowhere to hide in this room so I started thinking the offender had somehow climbed inside of the industrial sized ventilation fan unit. There was no obvious way in and I was about to walk away but PD Zeus was still very animated, so I climbed on top of it and to my surprise, located an opening in the wall to the void space under the building. I looked through and using my torch could make out a dark object that was different to the soil approximately 20 metres from me and wedged in a crevice against the outer wall. I yelled out assuming that it was the offender and he eventually made his way to my location. He climbed out and was arrested without incident. It was a great lesson in relation to trusting the dog!

A stolen BMW X5 taken during an Aggravated Burglary and involved in several other Agg burglars, was being tracked by Dandenong Crime Unit. A person of interest likely to be in the vehicle was involved in High Harm, High Impact offending including the use of this vehicle. The police helicopter was in the Caulfield area looking for the vehicle. It managed to get intermittent sightings as did other patrolling units but they were unable to maintain observations. Tracking showed the vehicle was now stationary and at the same time, there were multiple calls to Triple zero regarding two youths observed jumping fences in XXXXXX Road, the vehicle was confirmed to be stationary nearby where these calls were coming from. We were in the area in case the vehicle was abandoned. We attended the scene and PD Zeus was deployed for a track and search. PD Zeus gave indications of human scent in a rear yard where the two youths had been seen. PD Zeus indicated up the rear fence so we tracked over it in to XXXXXXXX Street with PD Zeus giving indications that the offenders had continued to jump side fences south in XXXXXXXX Street. While moving through rear yards, I spoke to a resident who confirmed seeing two boys run through their yard jumping fences south bound and PD Zeus gave indications through to the fence line of XXXXXXXX. The access on the side fence to number XX was dangerous for PD Zeus so we went in to number XX, but PD Zeus was not giving any indications of fresh human scent. We returned to number XX, satisfied that the offenders had not moved beyond the property there and I scaled the side gate. Once PD Zeus reached the fence area where the offenders crossed, he again indicated the presence of human scent and commenced tracking. He dragged me to a large shed/workshop at the rear of the property and I challenged at the door and got no response. I then advised the police member with me to call all units to surround the property. PD Zeus became very animated but I could not see anyone in the shed and could not see anywhere that could hide two people. I again announced the presence of a Police Dog and sent PD Zeus into the shed off lead to search. PD Zeus quickly honed in and indicated at the rear right of the shed where there appeared to be some small workshop machinery under covers. PD Zeus showed a lot of interest and started to try and push through the covers. I immediately called Zeus to my side and put him back on lead. The offenders, including the original person of interest, were located laying against the shed wall behind the machinery and were arrested without incident. This was a great result and drastically reduced high harm offending throughout the southern region for some time.