Unknown artist, 2020. Let me know if you know who made this one :)

together, we're more powerful than them !!!

safer -.- without -.- police

"through the flames, paradise" etching by slumberkitty, 2019

a zine by slumberkitty & ethyl ephedrine
about police abolition

*Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this zine
contains images of people who have died, and mentions
of frontier wars, massacres and racist police violene.*

*Content warning: This zine broadly discusses police violence, deaths in custody
and the police's role in invasion, genocide and murder.*

Acknowledgements

This zine was created on the lands of the Central Arrernte and Wurundjeri people.
We acknowledge Aboriginal elders, past, present and future, and Aboriginal resistance warrirors.
We also want to acknowledge the work of abolitionists opposing slavery and prisons, the families
of Aboriginal people who have been killed by police in custody, police abolitionists in the recent
Black Lives Matter movement, the work of so many black and indigenous people of colour in writing
about abolition (see further readings & resources), survivors of police violence, everyone who
experiences the violence of policing, and all who resist police and policing regimes everywhere.

What is this zine?

This is an independently published work by genderqueer writer & activist slumberkitty,
who has lived experience of police violence, with editing & research help from ethyl ephedrine, that
aspires to summarise police abolitionist work and campaigns, to provide some history and context to
policing in Australia, offer some comparisons of policing and alternatives, and to convince the reader
of the need to abolish the police. There are many zines about police abolition available in Australia
from the US and elsewhere, and we wanted to create something that was Australia-sepcific.
We intend to update and improve this zine, so please contact us with suggestions and critique,
take this content to adapt and build from, and create your own resources that work towards the
abolition of police. We would also like help with translations.

This zine is created under a Creative Commons Lisence 3.0 Non-commercial.
Share, attribute, expand, but don't make money off it, unless fundraising for abolitionist projects
or to support people impacted by policing & prisons.

slumberkitty & ethyl ephedrine, nov 2019 - aug 2021 v1

*Disarm, demobilise, and defund police!
Stop blak deaths in custody!
Cut ties with police!*

The Black Lives Matter rally, Melbourne, June 5 2020, hundreds of thousands of people gathered in the largest
single protest against blak deaths in custody and racialised police violence in Australia. The protests occurred
during the pandemic, no transmissions of the virus occurred, achieved entirely by community measures without
any help or support from the state. Victoria Police, afraid of the possibility of riots, mobilised minimal personnel
and adopted a stand back, hands off approach to avoid further tarnishing their shaky social lisence.

further readings & resources

Further readings...

A World Without Police, zine, 2016
If you see something, do something! 12 things to do instead of calling the cops, zine, 2017
Alternatives to Police, zine, Rose City Copwatch, 2008
We Came to Learn: A call to action for police-free schools, Advancement Project report & action kit
"Police shootings of people with a mental illness" AIC, 2013. Research in practice no. 34. Australian Institute of Criminology
Policing undocumented migrants: law, violence and responsibility, Louise Boon-Kuo, 2018, Routledge
Conflict, Politics and Crime: Aboriginal communities and the police, Chris Cunneen, 2020
Abolishing the Police: An illustrated introduction, Koshka Duff & Kat Sims, AK Press, 2021
Police and government: Histories of policing in Australia, Mark Finnane, 1994
"Blood On Their Hands: The racist history of modern police unions." Flint, T. 2012. In These Times
Black and Blue: A memoir of racism and resilience, Veronica Gorrie, Scribe, 2021
Policing a Class Society, Sidney L. Harring, Haymarket Books, 2017
"More policing won't stop gendered violence", Katharine Jenkins & Koshka Duff, Verso Roundtable, 2021
"Police "Reforms" You Should Always Oppose", Mariame Kaba, Truth Out, 2014
Blue Army: Paramilitary policing in Australia, Jude McCulloch, 2001
"Imagining the good indigenous citizen: Race war and the pathology of patriarchal white sovereignty"
    Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Cultural studies review 15 (2), 2009
"The house that jack built: Britishness and white possession"
    Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Australian Critical Race and White Studies Association Journal 1 (2), 2005
A Critical Theory of Police Power: The fabrication of the social order, Mark Neocleous, AK Press, 2021
Frontier Justice, Tony Roberts, 2005
Captive Genders: Trans embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex, ed. Eric Stanley & Nat Smith, 2011, AK Press
"Policing minority child rearing practices in Australia" David Thorpe, in Child protection and family support, 1997
The End of Policing, Alex Vitale, 2018, Verso
"The other side of the COIN: counterinsurgency and community policing." Kristian Williams, 2011. Interface 3(1)
The Demand for Order and the Birth of Modern Policing, Kristian Williams, essay on libcom.org, 2011
"A Force Apart", Wilson, W.R. PhD Thesis, NT University, 2000
"The Establishment of, and Operations by The Northern Territory Native Police 1884–1891" Wilson, W.R. Journal of NT History, 1996
A World Without Police study guide: http://aworldwithoutpolice.org/study-guide/

Resources...

Critical Resistance's police abolition resources page: http://criticalresistance.org/abolish-policing/
"Our Communities, Our Solutions: An organiser's toolkit to develop campaigns to abolish policing"
    http://criticalresistance.org/abolish-policing-toolkit/
Interrupting Criminalization: Research in Action: https://www.interruptingcriminalization.com/
What's Next? Safer and more just communities without policing: https://www.interruptingcriminalization.com/whats-next
Defund the Police, Invest in Community Care: A guide to alternative mental health crisis response:
    https://www.interruptingcriminalization.com/non-police-crisis-response-guide
Cops Don't Stop Violence: Combating narratives used to defend police instead of defunding them:
    https://www.interruptingcriminalization.com/cops-dont-stop-violence
Creative Interventions Toolkit: A practical guide to stop interpersonal violence: https://www.creative-interventions.org/toolkit/
Reformist reforms vs abolitionist steps:
    http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CR_NoCops_reform_vs_abolition_REV2020.pdf
One Million Experiments: https://millionexperiments.com/
Advancement Project: https://advancementproject.org/wecametolearn/

contents

why police don't make us safe

Policing doesn't work...

It is a common belief that the goal of policing is to prevent violence, cultivate safety, and to stop crime. If this was true, why do we live in a society in which violence often occurs, social divisions, oppression, marginalisation, wealth inequality, homelessness, all continue, or are worsening? Billions of taxpayer dollars are being poured into policing, and it's not making us any safer, or more equal, or more secure. Policing clearly isn't working, and it's taking vital funding away from the many alternatives that are working, and would work alot better if they had even a fraction of police budgets.

Policing organisations are created to *enforce state laws*, primarily *property* law, under directives that enable and encourage police to manipulate, harass and detain people. State laws preserve the interests of the ruling class, which are usually diamtetrically opposed to those of the working class. They specifically criminalise certain behaviours and certain groups of people in society. Through enforcing these laws, policing actively works to undermine community safety, and fuels cycles of violence. The act of policing is also it's own type of violence. It can be overt: police physically attacking & killing (such as blak deaths in custody, & police murders of neurodiverse people), or it can be subtle, such as police sowing fear, paranoia, and threatening harm & violence to people in a given community or area.

Given the widespread violence of policing, we might ask: Do police actually *prevent* violence from occuring? How often does policing actually build *safer* communities? And if/when it does, *which* communities are made safer? And at *whose expense*? Who and what *do* police protect? And *who* do they punish? As we learn the answers to these questions, it becomes clear that police don't make us, as a society, safer. If we want to cultivate safety, we need to look elsewhere, to alternatives that actually work to make *all* of us safer.
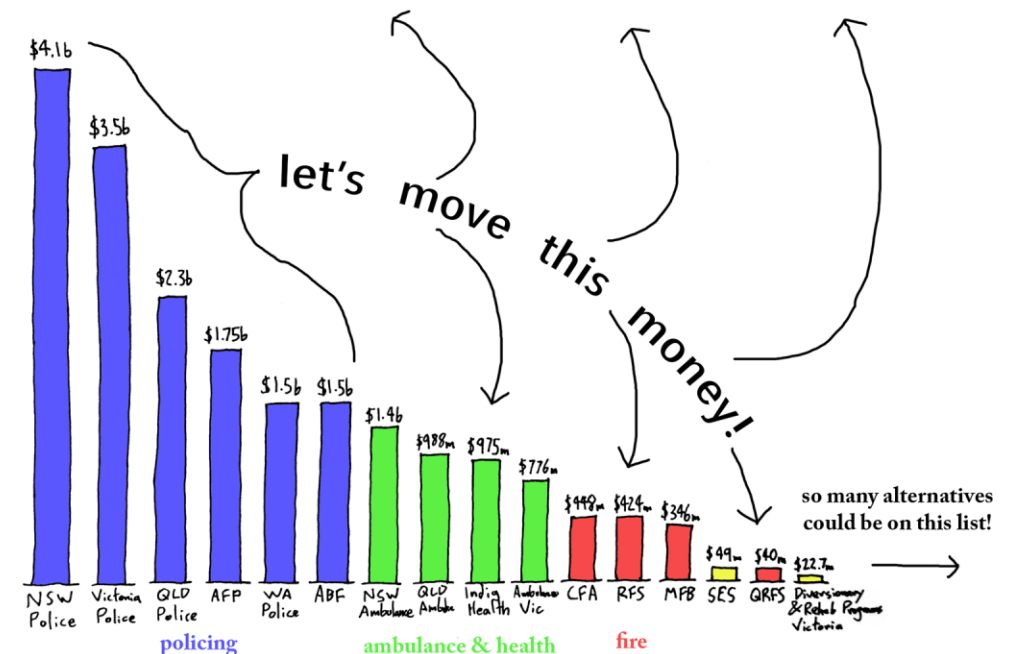
Criminalisation & policing...

This is the process by which behaviours or groups of people are made to be "criminal" under the law. Laws aren't neutral, they serve the interests of specific people. They are almost always designed to *specifically target* particular groups of people in society, often in response to a moral panic, as an election promise, or as demanded by wealthy business owners or industry lobby groups. The most common groups of people criminalised in Australia are: Indigenous people, the poor, the young, migrant communities, homeless people, sex workers, drug users and political protesters/activists. Criminalisation is rarely about safety. Criminalisation & enforcement is used to maintain the colony, protect the interests of capital, assert dominant social norms, to give police more power and discretion to use violence, to force Indigenous peoples from their lands, etc, creating a much less safe society. When some one is defined criminal, the implication is that they are less deserving of rights.

Many **youth programs and services** act as *pipelines* for young people into prisons in Australia, particularly young people of colour and Aboriginal youth, as **youth workers** are pressured, sometimes direcvtly by police, for information or to report young people for "failing to engage" with services. Even inside **libraries**, council rangers and other policing personnel will patrol what are meant to be quiet and safe public sanctuaries. And in **public space**, police regularly *harass, stop and search, corral and chase* people whom they don't want to be in a certain area, often young Aboriginal people and migrant youth, sometimes also LGBTIQA+ people.

Policing is *draining funding* from so many **essential services**, imagine what could be provided without the drain and interferrence of police. Zooming out, something nations, states & territories like to do is control how much people, and what kinds of people, cross their borders, to construct a particular kind of society (in Australia's case, a largely white/European society), and to ensure adequate supply of the "right kinds of workers" in the "right kinds of industries". Policing regimes play an important role in *border policing*, at lifelong impacts to refugees (some still detained after 8+ years) and neverending costs to taxpayers. The migration detention industry, ABF and military expenditure on border policing is in the many, many billions of dollars. Alternatives like **open borders**, **assistance for refugees**, **housing**, **welfare**, etc, for newly arrived migrants, are not only cheaper, but much more *supportive and safer* approaches. No one drowns in a leaky sinking boat if there's no police coming at them from all sides. All these examples speak to the dire need to get police out of these services and alternatives. We need to untangle their web of violence. Alternatives to policing will be made more accessible, more effective and safer, *without* police.

Imagine what we could offer instead of policing: Mental health crisis response, depression care teams, on-call disability support services, paid rural fire fighters, behaviour change and transformation programs, fully funded violence prevention work, public pill testing kits/centres, instant long-term housing with no waiting lists, free food delivery. These don't all need to be funded by the state either, in the absence of police, community responses, programs and structures can flourish when and where they're needed.

let's move this money!

so many alternatives could be on this list!

$4.1b NSW Police		
$3.5b Victoria Police		
$2.3b QLD Police		
$1.75b AFP		
$1.5b WA Police		
$1.5b ABF		
$1.4b NSW Ambulance		
$988m QLD Ambo		
$975m India Health		
$776m Ambulance Vic		
$449m CFA		
$424m RFS		
$346m MFB		
$49m SES		
$40m QRFS		
$22.7m Diversionary & Rehab Program Victoria		

policing   ambulance & health   fire

comparing police & alternatives

Police, punitive and carceral approaches are embedded within, attached to or called to "assist" many alternative services that could otherwise be separate, safer and more effective than police.

Many **mental health organisations and services** in Australia recommend calling 000, including police, if someone is experiencing a psychotic episode, self-harm or is suicidal, even though police and some **paramedics** are not trained to respond to these situations. There are also **Crisis Assessment and Treatment (CAT) teams** that can be called, but these also often call police to "assist" them. It is not uncommon for people experiencing a psychotic episode, self-harm or are suicidal to end up in police custody for a time. Many **mental health wards** that are ostensibly about healthcare use confinement, punitive and policing approaches. Police will often stop and search people trying to access **safe injecting services**, creating unnecessary barriers to accessing these health services.

Often police will arrive at a fire, car crash or other crisis scene before **fire fighters**, **paramedics** or **search and rescue services**, despite them being unable and unequipped to respond to these situations. Police presence in a crisis often functions to escalate tension and conflict, introduces unnecessary risks and dangers, and obstructs **community responses and autonomous assistance**. I've personally experienced police stopping **people** putting out a house fire, and blocking **doctors** from getting to people who needed medical assistance. The interferrece of police in **emergency services** is part of how the state extends it's control into crises & emergencies, & builds the idea that the state is a site of help & safety. But only ever on it's terms, never in a *supportive* role that *builds community resilience, autonomy & independence* from it.

Some **hospitals** are now crawling with police, hunting down people who are sick and trying to heal, for questionings, interrogations or arrest, deterring sick and injured people from accessing vital **healthcare**. Police routinely put health workers into situations in which they have to defend a patient's need for healthcare. Many **homeless services**, charities and organisations will willingly share information about "clients" with police, or are *legally mandated to report* certain people, making these services less accessible and less safe. During the first wave of the pandemic in Melbourne, police used public health orders to raid brothels, arrest drug users and hassle rough sleepers. Arrests were made, fines issued, but the health and support needs of sex workers, drug users and rough sleepers rough were sidelined. A year and a half later, there is still no income support, no increased welfare, no long-term housing availability, but police funding and resources continue to increase.

Police in Melbourne (not wearing a mask) hassles people for being outside their homes, with only fines to offer, no masks or health assistance, 2020

In these ways, police 'play their part in reproducing [social] inequalities, or even in enhancing them' (Finnane, 1994). Policing slices deep cuts into our communities, families and relationships, that reprduce and enforce ongoing oppression and structural violence, maintaining and strengthening racism, classism, patriarchy, homophobia, transphobia, etc. Policing also censors critique and dissent, shuts down liberatory action, workplace organising and community action: some of the key mechanisms by which we make society more equal and safer for everyone. Policing is key to criminalisation. Policing is not politically neutral.

When we need police, they (mostly) aren't there...
Sometimes police do help us, but anyone who has received help from police can attest to the limitations and conditionality of this often extremely inadequate help. Stolen laptop? You'll have to file a police report, which might help with an insurance claim, but you probably won't see your laptop again. Need a face mask to go to the shops? Police are handing out fines instead, no help there. Want to charge someone with assault? Again, you'll need to make a police report, the process is often long and retraumatising. Someone might get charged, maybe even found guilty and sentenced to a fine or jail time. But for many of us, this doesn't help us heal. Need health & mental health services? There's less of them since funding was reallocated to the police budget. Need accomodation? Same deal. What about if you want police to do something *before* crime or violence happens? Unless it's something *really* serious (info about a murder plot, terrorist plot, assasination, etc) police aren't interested, it's not their job. And even then, they often don't care. And if it's your boss, a politician, or a police member breaking the law or usng violence against you, we find police firmly on *their* side.

Police routinely injure and kill people...
(content warning: this section contains descriptions of police violence)
These are perhaps the most obvious ways police don't help us, and actually make things much worse. Police escalate conflict, verbally abuse, follow, stalk, harass, bully, intimidate, threaten, shove, push, kick, punch, drag, hit with batons, break bones, smash teeth, electrocute with tasers, crush feet and legs with horses, squish, strangle, drive into, drive over, shoot and kill. In fact, they're *trained* to do these things. All too often, people on the receiving end of this harm & violence *are not committing a crime*, *are not armed*, or pose *no threat to police or others*. Not that this violence would be justified if they were. Aren't police supposed to be upholding rights and enforcing laws? Why then do they carry out extra-judicial punishment and killings? There is no death penalty in Australia, so why do police carry it out? And why is it so often indigenous people, black youth, migrant communities, LGBTIQA+ people, poor people, who experience this violence? Blak deaths in custody in Australia only continue to increase (sometimes one every week), and neurodiverse and disabled people are also often among those killed by police. How does this make our communities safer?

On average, 42% of people shot by police each year (1989-2011) had a mental illness. Roughly half of all people shot by police had consumed alcohol or other drugs. (AIC 2013)

cultivating safety without police

If policing works to create a more unequal, less safe society, and actively does harm in our communities, how can we respond to conflict, prevent and end violence, and transform the underlying conditions, systems and behaviours that cause structural violence, *without* police?

Rely less on police & more on each other...

Don't call the police first. Use police as a last resort, if at all. When we don't have the skills, all other options have been explored, other assistance requested, when nothing else is working, perhaps it may be time to call police. But we shouldn't be relying on police to solve all our problems. Policing organisations themselves acknowledge this. Victoria Police recently created a new phone line for non-urgent calls to police because too many people were calling 000 for non-emergency matters. There are many better sources of help and support to call upon *before* resorting to calling police.

Deescalation & Conflict resolution...

Two amazing skills that police are rarely, if ever, trained in. Police are great at escalating situations, using aggression, yelling, the ultimate hype men for violence. If you want to see a situation go from mild disagreement to punch-on in 10 seconds, call the police in. Deescalation and conflict resolution are skills we can all be responsible for learning at least something of. It's not just helpful to prevent a fight, but can help us communicate better and find solutions to problems before anyone uses violence or calls police.

Support & Care...

Punishment and punitive responses rarely work, and almost always do more damage. What works much better is *offering support and care to each other*. It could be referring or connecting people to formal or government services, healthcare, mental healthcare, public housing, harm reduction, income support, etc. Or it could be an offer to give someone a lift, to share items and resources, or listening to someone's concerns. There's no limit to how deep and transformative support and care can be. The more people who are supported and cared for, the less likely they are to use or experience violence. The more we use and demand supportive services from government, the more pressure on them to increase funding, expand and extend them (ideally at the expense of the police budget).

Cut ties with police...

Police are often automatically embedded within systems and procedures that give us less control over when and how police are called in to a situation. This has to stop. Police have infiltrated our schools, hospitals, youth spaces, social services, sporting events, so many places where they don't need to be, introducing dangerous risks. *How much does your workplace or organisation work with police? Is this relationship doing more harm than good?*

Australian Border Force (ABF) intercept a boat carrying refugees, off the coast of Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean, 2019. ABF took them into immigration detention on Christmas Island and deported them back into danger in Columbo.

WA Police stop and search a young Aboriginal person in Perth. Young people of colour are generally targeted for stop & searches due to widespread racial profiling & criminalisation of Aboriginal and migrant communities.

NSW Police attack a gay & lesbian street celebration on Oxford Street, 1978. This attack sparked annual protests that have become the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, celebrations forged in oppostion to the violence of policing.

1989 - US TV show "Cops" begins 20 years of **positive representation** of militarised, racialised and war-on-drugs policing and police violence (Law & Order, X-Files, Fallen Angels, NCIS, etc) and spawns Australian police dramas and reality television (Blue Healers, Border Security, The Force, Rush, City Homicide, Kalgoorlie Cops), **justifying and legitimising** the public image of policing during increasing militarisation and expansion.

1990 - The 1208 Program in the US begins a slow and steady influence towards the **militarisation of police organisations in Australia**, particularly in Queensland and Victoria.

1990's-2000's - **Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer** (GLLO) programs introduced within policing organisations (AFP & ACT: 1996, Vic: 2003) to "improve relationships" between police & LGBTIQA+ people and cultivate an inclusive public image for police, though they do nothing to end policing of LGBTIQA+ communities.

1991 - The *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* report makes 339 recommendations for ending deaths in police custody, almost none are implemented and deaths in custody continue to increase.

1993 - Victoria Police **baton school children, parents and teachers** who had occupied and started running Richmond Secondary School after the state government defunded and closed it. The school was ultimately saved by the community.

1994 - The *Crime Bill* in the US influences policy in Australia towards **increasing criminalisation and policing, harsher penalties, mandatory minimum sentencing and prison expansion**.

1998 - Victoria Police **attack dock workers** several occasions during waterfront industrial actions.

1999 - Victoria Police **attack protesters with batons and horses** during the blockade of the World Economic Forum under global media attention.

2010's - Several policing organisations begin expensive contracts with private company Axon to provide tens of thousands of **body cameras** and **evidence data storage**.

2013 - *Operation Sovereign Borders* begins, bringing together 16 agencies to **police "illegal" migration**. **Australian Border Force** (ABF) is created in 2015 and sets to work collaborating with Victoria Police on a joint taskforce to conduct racist visa checks on Melbourne's city streets.

2015-present - Policing organisations around Australia respond to fascist vs antifascist conflicts with "neutral" policing, condemning each "side" equally, but **actively collaborating** with racist, neo-nazi and fascist groups to suppress antifascist actions.

2016-17 - Victoria Police **attack and evict several homeless encampments** in Melbourne during a moral panic against "violent" homeless people and an attempt to further criminalise homelessness.

2020-present - State governments introduce restrictions on people's movements with harsh penalties including jail terms, in an effort to reduce the spread of the SARS2 virus in a context of lack of healthcare & supportive measures. Many instances of **racist and poverty policing** occur, including the sieges of migrant communities in public housing appartments and police shutting down of mutual-aid and food relief efforts.

August 2021 - There have been **474** Aboriginal deaths in police custody since the Royal Commission report in 1991.

Disarm the police...

This one is simple, easy, and already happens in many places in the world. Disarm the police. Take their weapons away. The more lethal weaponry police are given, the more violence they do. Police do not need chemical weapons, firearms, tasers or other lethal or "less than lethal" weapons. There are many studies (Vitale, 2018) that demonstrate the benefits of disarming police. It's also cheaper! More money for medicines, beds, trains and schoolbooks!

Defund the police...

Police budgets are among the largest of any government department, especially local government enforcement. Money is sucked away from so many crucial public services, even from other emergency services! (see graph below). Why are we giving police so much of our money when there are better alternatives that work? If we're interested in community safety, we need to redistribute police budgets to housing, education, youth services, family violence services, mental health care, disaster relief, public transport, harm reduction programs, fire departments, disabled access, public infrastructure like bathrooms & drinking water, to name only a few alternatives that, unlike policing, actually work to make our communities safer.

Demobilise police...

Why not start with removing police from schools, youth spaces, hospitals, near health services including safe injecting rooms, homeless encampments, etc? Police should not have a permanent or ongoing presence in or around these spaces. We need to decrease the number of interactions police are having with people who are just trying to learn, to heal, to play, to sleep, to live. Let's also look at poor neighbourhoods, train stations, places young people like to hang out, and remove police from these locations too. We could also grant neighbourhoods autonomy and independence to decide for themselves if they want police to patrol their streets. When asked, very few communities want a police presence around their homes.

How the Victorian government funds emergency services

Diversionary & Rehab Programs $22.7m

MFB $346m

SES $49.2m

Ambulance Victoria $776m

CFA $448m

Victorian Prisons $1.8b

Victoria Police $3b

All other emergency services

Police & Prisons

Decriminalisation...

There are so many behaviours that should not be crimes. Even if they're things we might want to stop or discourage, criminalising & policing them just doesn't work. Let's look at criminalising homelessness for example: this doesn't actually give people homes to live in, it just makes life harder for those who don't have a home. If we look at the "war on drugs" policies that further criminalised the use of certain kinds of drugs: This hasn't stopped drug use, hasn't reduced drug addiction or abuse, doesn't support people to go sober or cultivate healthy relationships with drugs. Decriminalisation, coupled with redistributing police funding to alternatives that work, is a strong combo that has the power to really cultivate some serious stability, security and safety for all of us.

Prison Abolition...

Similarly to police, prisons also don't work. They don't rehabilitate, they don't prevent, they don't support, they don't transform underlying causes of harm & violence and they don't cultivate safety. Police abolition and prison abolition can be seen as two sides of the same coin, working to dismantle the state's system of violent control and punishment, the prison-industrial-complex, to end this source of violence. Many alternatives to prisons are also alternatives to policing.

Transformative Justice...

A framework for preventing and responding to harm & violence in our communities without relying on the state, the legal system or police. It's all about support and transformation. Supporting survivors of violence to be safe, to heal, and to transform behaviours and underlying structures that cause or lead to interpersonal harm & violence of all kinds. There's lots of resources online like the Creative Interventions toolkit, to name one.

1920's & 30's - Drug laws become **increasingly strict** in line with international policy overseen by the League of Nations, though illicit drug use in Australia is already quite low. Cannabis first criminalised in 1925. (though it was not widely used in Australia until the late 1960's)

1950's & 60's - Drug policy in Australia **aligns more closely** with US policy towards **criminalisation and police enforcement**.

1968-87 - Widespread **police corruption**, **anti-protest policing** and "**war-on-drugs**" **raids** during 19 years of a police-state-like right-wing Queensland government under Joh Bjelke-Peterson.

1971 - "**War on drugs**" policies & laws first introduced in the US, including a global campaign against illegal drug trade.

1973-76 - NSW & Queensland Police **raid communes** targeting illicit cannabis use. At the Cedar Bay commune **houses are burned by police**.

1977 - Special Operations Group (SOG) created within Victoria Police, remains a **secret police** unit to the public for three years.

1978 - NSW Police **attack a night time gay and lesbian celebration** on Oxford Street, Sydney.

1979 - *Office of the Ombudsman* established to oversee investigation of complaints against police in NSW, begins a long history of **inadequate and unaccountable investigations**.

1980 - *Aboriginal Liaison Unit formed* (ACLO's) in NSW, to "improve relationships" with Aboriginal people.

1983 - 16-year-old Aboriginal teen John Pat is **killed by WA Police in custody**, campaigns against Aboriginal deaths in custody become noticed at a national level.

1985 - National drug policy **expands criminalisation and enforcement** approaches, "**tough on crime**" campaigning increasingly used in political campaigning.

1980's-90's - **Corruption** within **most Australian policing organisations** boils to the surface and several Royal Commissions are conducted. Two prominent examples: Victoria Police's Armed Robbery and Major Crimes Squads kill dozens of people in a self-described "**war**" **on violent criminals**. Victoria Police's HQ is bombed in 1986 and two police officers are killed in 1988 as reprisals. In NSW the Woods Royal Commission reveals widespread practices of **corruption**, **drug trafficking**, **money laundering** and **falsification of evidence within NSW police**. Various forms of corruption continue despite reforms & restructuring.

"tough on crime doesn't work :("

"Tough on crime" policies only win some votes & criminalise poor and marginalised people.

They don't make you safer. They don't prevent harm and violence. They fail to address the underlying causes & drivers behind theft, broken windows, and other petty crimes. Instead, these policies only make things worse, especially for poor, hungry, houseless and struggling people.

Say NO! to "tough on crime" policies!

1946 - Strikes by Aboriginal workers on cattle stations in the Pilbara spread through the region and are suppressed by WA Police. Aboriginal workers are evicted by police from towns like Marble Bar. The Pilbara strikes are some of the longest in Australia's history.

1946 - **Aviation unit** of NSW Police established, using *ex-military* aircraft.

1940's - The Australian Communist Party increasingly policed and criminalised, culminating in the *Communist Party Dissolution Act* 1950.

1949 - Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) formed to further **formalise intelligence and surveillance capacity of the state**, collaborates with policing organisations from the beginning.

1951 - ASIO begins **surveillance** of Aboriginal activists.

1955 - Former Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police Alexander Duncan reports that **forcing confessions through intimidation** has been the norm in most Australian police departments.

1962 - *Mental Hygeine Act* replaced by Mental Health Act in Victoria, signalling a move away from the criminalisation of mental illness, though **ablism** remains deep within policing organisations.

1964-65 - The **Freedom Rides** tour NSW towns drawing attention to **racial segregation**, staging sit-ins, pickets and other actions despite threats and intimidation from racists and police.

Aboriginal activists play tricks on ASIO after it's revealed the intelligence organisation is spying on them, mid 1970's
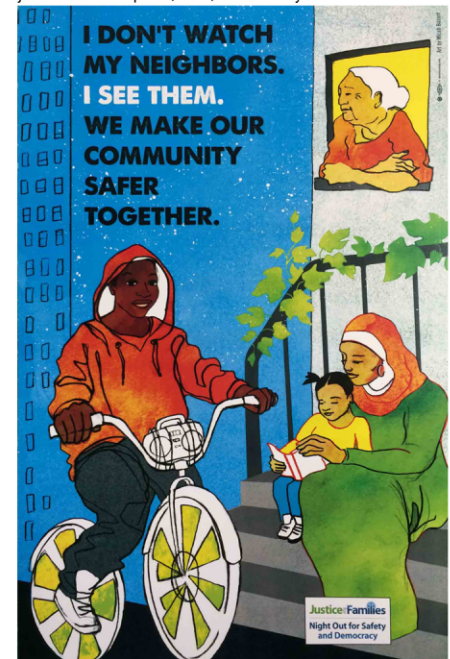

poster by monica trinidad, 2020

interrupting criminalisation, 2020, illustration by cristy road carrera

poster by peregrine bermas, collab with axis lab, 2020

justice for families poster, 2013, illustration by micah bazant

Reparations for victims & survivors of police violence...

It's long overdue that police pay for the violence and deaths they have caused, particularly to indigenous and black communities. This is a demand of many black and indigenous abolitionist movements, and it's something police can do anytime they want to, there's nothing stopping them.

Don't join the police...

Policing organisations are increasingly trying to improve their public image by hiring more people of colour, LGBTIQA+ people, women, to "prove" through "diversity" that they can be trusted with our "safety". Don't be fooled! The life of a police member is quite horrible, dangerous and soul destroying, as pawn or at best, thug, of the state. Particularly for marginalised people, toxic and violent internal cultures within policing organisations cause much higher levels of harm & violence than the general population. You, and your community, are safer outside the police, and you can do much better work outside of the police too :)

Some other things we can do to cultivate safety without police...

Cultivate healthy and respectful relationships with neighbours and community, establish and strengthen social networks based on care and support, community-controlled independent investigations of police, proliferate mutual-aid networks & activities, funded or at least supported community responses, programs & structures.

Imagining a Department of Food Security delivering free food to those who need it, illustrated by Ezra C Daniels

A potential future Mental Health Department design, illustrated by Ezra C Daniels

white nation-building policing

1875-88 - Laws **excluding migration** from China progressively passed in every Australian colony.

1883 to mid 1900's - Australian ruling class swept by the eugenics movement that used pseudo-science to justify **racist** and **ablist laws** that were then enforced by police.

1894 - All NSW Police are **permanently armed** following the *Bridge Street Affray*, previously only police in rural areas were armed, representing a shift of sites of conflict to urban areas.

1895 - All colonies agree to further **restrict migration** of "undesireable persons" ie: non-white migrants.

1901 - First Act of the new Commonwealth parliament is the *Immigration Restriction Act*, ushering in the enforcement of the "**White Australia policy**" for the next 72 years (though still continues in many ways).

1901 - Military forces operated by states amalgamated into a commonwealth military that later becomes to **Australian Defense Force**, collaborating with police and intelligence organisations.

1912 - A general strike in Brisbane is suppressed by Queensland Police

1916 - The British government arranges to form the first intelligence/spy organisation in Australia, the **Special Intelligence Bureau** (SIB), to combat espionage and the anti-war movement during WW1

1917 - **Commonwealth Police** created (later reformed as Australian Federal Police in 1979) and tasked with

1920 - *Mental Deficiency Act* passed Tasmanian parliament, wouldn't be repealed until 1963.

1923 - **Victorian Police** go on **strike** for better pay and conditions. Shops in the city are looted. The federal government refuses to send military assistance. 5,000 volunteers are recruited by military personnel, armed with cartwheel spokes, given makeshift armbands and told to go beat up thieves in the city. One third of the police force is dismissed, new police hired and given increased pay and a police pension.

1927 - Aboriginal **exclusion zones** & "**Native Passes**" implemented in Perth (and other cities) under the advocation of eugenicist A.O Neville, legalising white supremacist segregation, enforced by police.

1928 - Walpiri, Anmatyerre and Kaytetye people are killed by police in the last known officially sanctioned massacre of Aboriginal people, near Conniston, NT

1939 - *Mental Deficiency Act* passes Victorian parliament, sponsored by prominent eugenicist Redmund Barry. Acts such as this subjected neurodiverse people, orphans and others t >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>?

1939-45 - During WW2, various police forces perform **auxiliary military duties**, training with rifles and conduct surveillance in the community, in a paranoid militaristic wartime xenophobia.

by 1850 - Following one of the largest **genocides** in history, the Aboriginal population has been reduced by 90%+ through the introduction of small pox, poisons and massacres by militias and paramilitary units like the Native Mounted Police and early formal police organisations. Genocide continues to this day.

1854 - Following years of protest and the murder of a Scottish miner, gold miners take up arms against British colonial rule, protesting against mining licenses, lack of political representation and police & military violence. A battle ensues at a makeshift stockade in which the **newly created Victoria Police** assist British military in killing 27 rebel miners.

1862 - The *Police Regulation Act 1862* passes NSW parliament, amalgamating several units into the **NSW Police Force**. Rapid expansion of formal mounted and armed policing in rural areas through the 1860's to control threats from bushranger gangs, particularly in goldfields, and the transportation of gold to Sydney and Melbourne.

1864 - **Queensland Police Force** established, amalgamating several earlier units.

1866 - During the *Blood or Bread riot* in Brisbane, hundreds of government officials sworn in as **temporary constables** preparing for a feared attack of government house.

1869 - A sub-inspector, Paul Foelsche, and six **South Australian police** are posted to Palmerston/Darwin in the **Northern Territory** to establish a permanent police force there. Several police stations are established in the top end through the 1870's after the discovery of gold at Pine Creek. top end police are responsible for several massacres of Aboriginal people during this early period under the command of Foelsche.
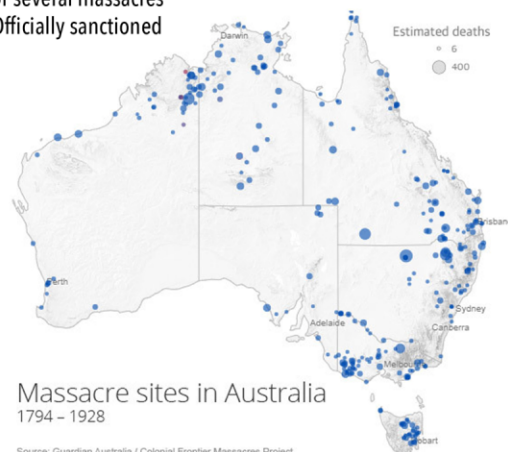
1870 - Transportation of convicts the the colonies ends. British military support of colonial governments ends. From 1855-1890 new colonies become responsible for raising their own militia, armies and police.

1878-80 - The Kelly gang evades **Victoria Police** for two years through a network of sympathisers after killing three police. The gang demands wealthy squatters share their land and redistribute their wealth, (though there is no critique of the colonialism this land ownership is built upon). The gang nearly succeeds in derailing a train with 300 police on board, and are finally killed/captured after a stand-off at Glenrowan. The capture, trial and execution of Ned Kelly represented the beginning of the end of a period of convict/migrant rebellion.

1884 - First **Native Police Corps** established to control frontier occupation in the Central Deserts, NT. This unit was responsible for several massacres under the command of Constable William Willshire. Officially sanctioned massacres continue to occur in the NT into the 1930's.

The *Hougoumont* transports the last convicts to the colony

Estimated deaths
○ 6
○ 400

Massacre sites in Australia
1794 – 1928

Source: Guardian Australia / Colonial Frontier Massacres Project.

we can only "improve" police if changes move towards abolition

More/better training...
The key question here is: "What kind of training?" If we advocate for funding to pay for police to train alongside military units to learn high use of force tactics that will then be applied to crowd control, that's not going to make anyone safer. We need to transform the way police are trained and the kinds of skills and knowledges they're taught. Things like deescalation and non-lethal disarmament are commonly suggested as better alternatives. But police should also be learning first aid, mental health first aid, how to refer to other services, how to support and care for people. This, obviously, transforms the fundamental role of police. We might then ask, who's better to call? A paramedic? Or a cop with first aid training?

Making police more diverse...
Diversity campaigns have long been used by police to "clean" the image of policing. We know that police follow orders, use excessive force, are suseptible to corruption, racially profile, hurt and kill people, *regardless* of the colour of the skin, their gender, sexuality or even political beliefs. *Police, whoever they are, are a danger.* Encouraging marginalised people to join policing organisations also places them/us in unneccesary danger. No matter how "diverse" the cohort of police members, at the end of the day, they must function as police, or they'll lose their job. And why would you want your identity, culture, sexuality, uniqueness to be used to justify the violence of policing? Resist "rainbow washing", "pinkwashing", etc.

Disciplining police misconduct...
Currently, police are almost entirely protected from legal repercussions and internal disciplinary action is always minimal. Even if we had transparent and accountable processes that actually led to serious punishments for police misconduct, we need to ask: "To what extent does punishing police even work?" Often when police are charged, they're found not guilty. When police are placed on leave, they often still receive pay. When police are fired, they're easily replaced. Would prison sentences for cops stop the violence of policing? Or are there better ways? Like disarming, demobilising & defunding?

Body cameras...
Often lauded as a way to make police accountable, police can easily cover the lens, delete footage or just turn cameras off. Body cameras are big business and policing organisations in Australia are jumping on board as they look for ways to justify their huge budgets. In Victoria Police's recent purchase of 11,000 cameras from Axon (inventors of the deadly TASER), neither party made any suggestion the cameras would make police less violent or more accountable, instead focus was on evidence capture beneficial to state prosucuted court cases.

Reformist reforms vs. abolitionist steps in policing

These charts break down the difference between reformist reforms which continue or expand the reach of policing, and abolitionist steps that work to chip away and reduce its overall impact. As we struggle to decrease the power of policing there are also positive and pro-active investments we can make in community health and well-being.

DOES THIS...	reduce funding to police?	challenge the notion that police increase safety?	reduce tools / tactics / technology police have at their disposal?	reduce the scale of policing?
BODY CAMERAS	*INCREASES.* Equipping police officers with body cameras will require more money going toward police budgets.	*NO.* Body cameras are pitched as making police more accountable, increasing the idea that policing, done "right," makes people safe.	*INCREASES.* Body cameras provide the police with another tool, increasing surveillance and increasing police budgets to acquire more gadgets.	*INCREASES.* Body cameras are based on the idea that police who do not use "excessive force" are less threatening. But police can turn off body cameras and, when used, footage often doesn't have the impact that community members want, or is used for surveillance.
COMMUNITY POLICING	*NO.* Advocates of community policing argue that departments will have to hire more cops to be in neighborhoods and in the community.	*NO.* This is based on the belief that policing is focused on keeping people safe, and the violence of policing is caused by a "breakdown of trust" with the community.	*INCREASES.* Cops are trained in additional tactics and approaches.	*NO.* More community police means that the scale of policing will increase, particularly in Black, Brown, poor neighborhoods, where there is perceived "mistrust."
MORE TRAINING	*NO.* More training will require more funding and resources going to police to develop and run trainings.	*NO.* This furthers the belief that better training would ensure that we can rely on police for safety, and that instances of police harm and violence occur because of lack of training.	*INCREASES* all of these.	*NO.* This will increase the scope of policing, given the type of training. For instance, some advocate for police to be trained on how to respond to mental health crises, furthering the idea that police are the go to for every kind of problem.
CIVILIAN REVIEW / OVERSIGHT BOARDS	*NO.* In some cases, there would be an increase in funding, whereas in other cases, there would be no change.	*NO.* Overseeing the police through a board presumes that cases of excessive force, killing, lying, planting false information, etc. are exceptional occurrences rather than part of the daily violence of policing.	*NO.* Some argue for Civilian Review Boards "with teeth," the power to make decisions and take away policing tools and tactics. However, a board with that level of power has never existed despite 50+ years of organizing for them.	*NO.* This further entrenches policing as a legitimate, reformable system, with a "community" mandate. Some boards, tasked with overseeing them, become structurally invested in their existence.
"JAIL KILLER COPS": PROSECUTE POLICE WHO HAVE KILLED AND ABUSED CIVILIANS.	*NO.* Prosecuting police does not lead to changes in funding or resourcing police.	*NO.* Individualizing police violence creates a false distinction between "good police" (who keep us safe) and "bad police" (who are unusual cases), rather than challenging the assumption that policing creates safety as systemic violence.	*NO.* Often, media attention in high profile cases leads to more resources and technology, including body cameras and "training."	*NO.* This reinforces the prison industrial complex by portraying killer / corrupt cops as 'bad apples" rather than part of a regular system of violence, and reinforces the idea that prosecution and prison serve real justice.

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frontier policing, wars & slavery

1824 - **NSW Mounted "Police"** formed specifically to combat Aboriginal resistance after strong Wiradjeri resistance at the colonial frontier, and to locate bushrangers raiding livestock in the squatted districts. Essentially a military unit, it consisted of soldiers from the **British Army** and operated as a de facto cavalry unit until 1850, playing a key role in the suppression of Aboriginal resistance at this time.

1824 - First **office of the sherif** & first **chief justice** of NSW, legal system increasingly formalised.

mid 1820's - 1832 - The "Black War" waged against Aboriginal people of Tasmania, fought by **early police units**, military and armed settlers, significantly reducing the Aboriginal population and establishing a myth that the population had been eliminated.

1829 - First **sherif** appointed in the Western Australia colony, **constables** and **bailiffs** under his direction.

1830 - A rebellion of convicts on the NSW western frontier raids armouries and liberates convicts before being worn down by the **British Army** & **NSW Marine Corps**. Public opposition to military enforcement bolsters moves towards creating and formalising civilian police units. **NSW water police** formed in 1832 to suppress property theft at the docks.

1834 - Police, military and armed settlers lead a campaign to massacre Bindjareb people at Pinjarra, WA, under the command of Governor James Stirling.

1835-50 - Aboriginal population decreased by 90%+ by the introduction of small pox and massacres by militias and paramilitary units like the **Native Mounted Police** and early formal police organisations.

1837 - The first **Native Police Corps** formed in the Port Phillip District to control the frontier into the later colony of Victoria. Native Police consisted of Aboriginal people taken from their lands, and placed under the command of white, often British Army, officers.

1838 - Ad hoc police units and paramilitary begin to be formalised into colonial **police organisations**: SA: 1838, Vic & WA: 1853, NSW: 1862, QLD: 1864, NT: 1869, Tas: 1899. The *Police Act of 1838* passes in NSW, **criminalising** certain behaviours and tasking police with enforcement.

1839 - **Border Police of NSW** formed as part of the *Crown Lands Unauthorised Occupation Act 1839*. Tasked with protecting livestock and property beyond the borders of the expanding westward colonial frontier in NSW, staffed by misbahaved soldiers, and funded by a levy on squatters who brought livestock beyond the borders of the squatted districts. It also resolved land disputes between squatters.

1840's-1930's - Pacific islanders and Aboriginal people are **enslaved** and forced to work in WA, NT, NSW & Queensland in pearling, sugarcane and other plantation industries. NSW & Queensland Police **allow the practice to occur**, accepting **bribes**, while the Native Police **track escaped enslaved people**.

1846 - Aboriginal **exclusion zone** and **curfews** introduced in Brisbane, enforced by Mounted Native Police.

1848 - **Native Mounted Police Force** formed to control the frontier into the later colony of Queensland, the largest of all Native Police corps, existed until 1915. Responsibility of the Queensland colony from 1859.

military enforcement in early colonies

1786 - **NSW Marine Corps** formed by the British Royal Navy to guard convicts on the First Fleet and enforce law in the new penal colony. Made up of volunteers from Plymouth and Portsmouth marines divisions. These marines were used to trial other overseas ad hov units such as the Corps of Colonial Marines in 1808 to fight against US independence from British rule. NSW Marine Corps enforce colonial law in Australia from 1788-92.

1789 - The first non-military force formed in the NSW colony, a **night watch** consisting of eight carefully selected convicts, under control of the Marine Corps, restructured in 1811 and placed under the control of the District Magistrates, system of ranks, recruited free men instead of convicts.

1801 - The governor of the colony of NSW issues an order authorising settlers to shoot Aboriginal people.
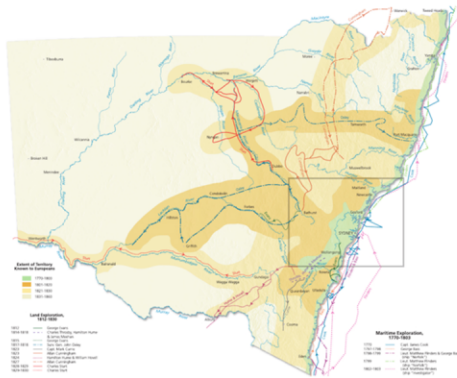
1804 - **Castle Hill convict rebellion** put down by NSW Marine Corps. Many convicts involved had been transported to NSW for participating in the Irish rebellion of 1798.

1804 - A **night watch** is established to police the colony of Tasmania, but is deemed ineffective and in 1806, **British military patrols** return.

1808-10 - A corrupt and increasingly powerful NSW Marine Corps exercise a **military coup** against the government of NSW, lasting two years, to protect the Marine Corps interests in the rum trade.

1816 - The British Army, dispatched by the NSW governor, kills at least 14 Darug people in one of the first **officially sanctioned massacres** of Aboriginal people.
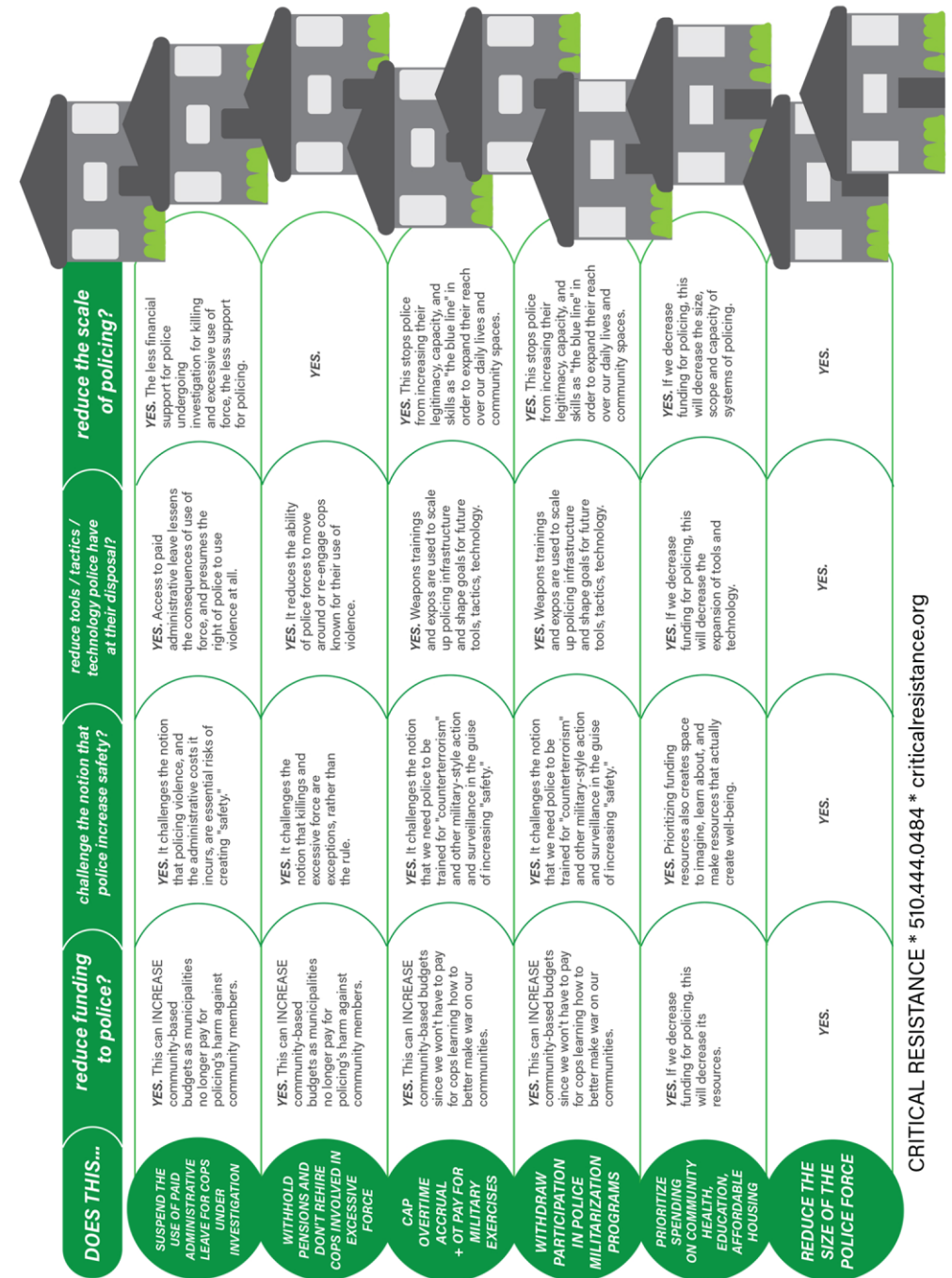
British military support of local militias, paramilitary and policing organisations continues until 1870 when transportation of convicts the the colonies and British military support of colonial governments both end.

The spread of British occupation through NSW 1770-1840

NSW Mounted Police and British military work together to suppress the Castle Hill convict rebellion

DOES THIS...	reduce funding to police?	challenge the notion that police increase safety?	reduce tools / tactics / technology police have at their disposal?	reduce the scale of policing?
SUSPEND THE USE OF PAID ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FOR COPS UNDER INVESTIGATION	**YES.** This can INCREASE community-based budgets as municipalities no longer pay for policing's harm against community members.	**YES.** It challenges the notion that policing violence, and the administrative costs it incurs, are essential risks of creating "safety."	**YES.** Access to paid administrative leave lessens the consequences of use of force, and presumes the right of police to use violence at all.	**YES.** The less financial support for police undergoing investigation for killing and excessive use of force, the less support for policing.
WITHHOLD PENSIONS AND DON'T REHIRE COPS INVOLVED IN EXCESSIVE FORCE	**YES.** This can INCREASE community-based budgets as municipalities no longer pay for policing's harm against community members.	**YES.** It challenges the notion that killings and excessive force are exceptions, rather than the rule.	**YES.** It reduces the ability of police forces to move around or re-engage cops known for their use of violence.	**YES.**
CAP OVERTIME ACCRUAL + OT PAY FOR MILITARY EXERCISES	**YES.** This can INCREASE community-based budgets since we won't have to pay for cops learning how to better make war on our communities.	**YES.** It challenges the notion that we need police to be trained for "counterterrorism" and other military-style action and surveillance in the guise of increasing "safety."	**YES.** Weapons trainings and expos are used to scale up policing infrastructure and shape goals for future tools, tactics, technology.	**YES.** This stops police from increasing their legitimacy, capacity, and skills as "the blue line" in order to expand their reach over our daily lives and community spaces.
WITHDRAW PARTICIPATION IN POLICE MILITARIZATION PROGRAMS	**YES.** This can INCREASE community-based budgets since we won't have to pay for cops learning how to better make war on our communities.	**YES.** It challenges the notion that we need police to be trained for "counterterrorism" and other military-style action and surveillance in the guise of increasing "safety."	**YES.** Weapons trainings and expos are used to scale up policing infrastructure and shape goals for future tools, tactics, technology.	**YES.** This stops police from increasing their legitimacy, capacity, and skills as "the blue line" in order to expand their reach over our daily lives and community spaces.
PRIORITIZE SPENDING ON COMMUNITY HEALTH, EDUCATION, AFFORDABLE HOUSING	**YES.** If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease its resources.	**YES.** Prioritizing funding resources also creates space to imagine, learn about, and make resources that actually create well-being.	**YES.** If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease the expansion of tools and technology.	**YES.** If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease the size, scope and capacity of systems of policing.
REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE POLICE FORCE	**YES.**	**YES.**	**YES.**	**YES.**

the origins of police

1100's-1500's - In Europe, **night watches**, often unwillingly recruited, assist feudal and monarchical rulers in enforcing laws. Later, **shire reeves** (sherifs) acted as local representatives of the crown or other distant rulers, to extend the power of the ruler into local communities. These representatives also included tax collectors, coroners and justices of the peace.

1492 - European invasion & colonisation of the Americas begins, and is performed by **colonial milita** and military who raid food stores, take & occupy land, and begin genocides of indigenous peoples. These tactics are later adapted and refined for use in the British Empire's invasion & colonisation of Australia.

1526 - The Atlantic slave trade begins, transporting people from Africa to the Americas and Europe, and enslaving them to work mines and agricultural production, exporting the products to Europe. Forms of rule enforcement from Europe are imported and adapted to become **slave patrols**, **constables** and **trackers**.

1690 - White supremacist **vigilante groups** are given legal powers to capture and punish enslaved people in the US, and later elsewhere, effectively making them ad hoc slave patrols and early forms of policing.

1703 - Curfews begin to be imposed in cities and towns (first in Boston) specifically targetting black and indigenous people, enforced by **guards**, night watches, slave patrols and white supremacist groups.

1829 - **London Metropolitan Police** created, establishing the first permanent, paid, civilian police force in the world, amalgamating night watches, legalised gangs and mounted & water units. The model is replicated in many British colonies, including Australia, where ad hoc & paramilitary units are amalgamated and formalised into police organisations from 1838-99.

A night watchman, by Thomas Dekker, typical of medieval European night watches

NSW Marine Corps from 1786 onwards early military origins of NSW Police

An officer in the London Metropolitan Police, brandishing his weapon, 1829

NSW Mounted Police sit proud in their horrific history, at the Queens Jubilee, 2012

a brief history of police in australia

Policing in Australia has it's roots in the invasion and colonisation of the continent, modelled on night watches, sherifs, slave patrols and white supremacist groups in Europe and the colonies. Early police units worked under or alongside British military to assert British rule over indigenous lands, convicts and poor, landless migrants. Police helped establish and maintain a system of private and crown ownership of land, control economic activity, put down indigenous resistance, convict protests and worker rebellions, to force British rule upon the continent, cand rush potential republican independence, ensuring the new colonies subservience to the empire.

Early military and police units initiated and participated in intentional campaigns to kill and massacre Aboriginal people, which continued into the early-mid 1900's, and today in the form of neocolonial policing and blak deaths in custody. As today they were also rife with corruption. The colony of NSW was in fact ruled by NSW Marine Corps from 1808-10 after they waged a military coup against the government of NSW, to maintain their power in the rum trade.

Early forms of British colonial policing in Scotland and Ireland, themselves influenced by policing in European colonies in the Americas, Africa, East Asia and during the Atlantic slave trade, influenced and informed early policing in Australia. Policing was also trialled and developed here. The use of military units to enforce rule and law was widely opposed by everyday people, for obvious reasons, so the idea of a separate civilian, non-military or paramilitary alternative aspired to garner more support from the governed population and the laws enforced upon them. The new police forces could if needed be drawn upon to put down strikes, or undertake retributive campaigns against indigenous people. Police uniforms were designed to be similar but separate to military uniforms, so the colour blue was chosen to differentiate them from the red military uniform of the British Army at the time, to try and convince the public that police were more concerned with general public safety, "on the side" of the people, though this was never true.

Some key periods of policing in Australia...

1786-early 1800's: **British military enforcement**
early 1800's - late 1800's: **Ad hoc frontier policing, frontier wars & slavery**
1838-99: **Formalisation of colonial police organisations**
1901-1970's: **Nation-building policing**
1960's-present: **Increasing expansion, "war on drugs" & militarisation**
1979-present: **Community & outreach policing policies**