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Focus on Albert Park

In the recent past, the Albert Park area has attracted to its locality prostitutes and drug dealers, further contributing to the dowdy neighbourhood that has emerged in the once prestigious inner city suburb.

Albert Park is situated south-east of the Durban CBD, bounded by Russell Street in the west, Broad Street in the east, Smith Street in the north and St. Andrew's Street on the south (Maharaj and Mpungose, 1994).

This area was reserved for international cricket matches at the turn of the century and as far back as 1864, it was reserved as a site for public recreation.

The Park itself is the oldest existing park in Durban (South African Women's Weekly, 1963 as quoted in Maharaj and Mpungose, 1994)

Approximately one hundred and twenty years later by the mid 1980s, the Albert Park suburb, which by now

had many "white" pensioners who were attracted by the relatively low rentals and property prices, was forced to change its identity. The OCR worked with the first few cases of government and private landlord racist evictions of blacks in the mid 80's. By 1991, Albert Park had become an integrated suburb - a "rainbow" society, having largely worked through conflict situations, harassment and antagonistic attitudes.

A survey has been undertaken by the Organisation of Civil Rights (OCR) as part of their anti-crime project to monitor, evaluate and assist communities in their fight against crime.

As for Albert Park, it is crucial for business to be organised and be represented on the inner city community police forum since decisions regarding safety and security as well as redevelopment are taking place without their involvement.

The OCR has a strong involvement at grassroots level in its struggle against crime since 1987 and supports the need for monitoring and evaluating the process of community policing partnerships.

The CBD Crime Watch Co-ordinators was launched as a private sector initiative in partnership with the South African Police Services (SAPS) and Metro police. It is also represented on the inner city CPF with Mr. Chris Edmunds serving on its executive as deputy chairperson. The CBD Crime Watch Co-ordinators have members known as Crime Watch monitors. They carry cards and police type pocket books to record all incidents and are trained by the city's disaster control department and the Pinetown Red Cross.

The OCR and the CBD Crime Watch Co-ordinators was concerned about the absence of the Albert Park business community on

the inner city CPF. Businesses are not organised into a cohesive entity and is therefore not represented on the inner city CPF. An essential component of the survey was to measure the level of interest in forming a local business forum. The OCR will take up the call for unicity crime prevention policing for Overport and Durban central.

OCR in conjunction with the CBD Crime Watch Co-ordinators conducted a business survey in Albert Park in December 2000 to January 2001 in an attempt to determine crime trends in the area.

The OCR has conducted several crime surveys over the past five years to ascertain objectively the extent of the crime situation in the inner city. This was the second survey to assess the impact of the inner city community police forum (CPF) that was launched in November 1998 and the forth in five years conducted by the Organisation of Civic Rights (OCR).

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