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Cops to hit beat without vital kit

by Kate Higgins



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TOWNSVILLE'S top cops have been told to tighten their belts, with no guarantee they'll have equipment for new recruits before they hit the beat.

Despite the State Government promising to boost frontline resources, this year's Budget for new and upgraded operational equipment, including cars, boats and traffic cameras, was the lowest in three years.

It comes as the state's two police academy campuses, in Townsville and Brisbane, prepare to churn out more recruits at a faster rate to meet the Government's quota of 300 new officers on the beat this financial year.

It is understood Towns-

ville's senior police officers have now been told to prepare for an influx of new officers, but have been warned vital equipment, such as additional cars and computers, has not yet been purchased to provide for the recruits.

Funding for new operational equipment for the Queensland Police Service fell from \$77.5 million in the 2011-12 Budget to \$53.8 million this financial year.

The figure was also below the 2010-11 spend of \$60.1 million.

A spokesman for Police Minister Jack Dempsey yesterday denied that drops in funding meant new recruits would be without equipment.

"Everything that the new

officers require, they will have in the budget," he said.

The LNP has allocated \$146.9 million over four years to deliver 1100 new police officers by 2015-16.

However, Opposition police spokesman Bill Byrne said the drop in overall funding for equipment was another symptom of the LNP's "slash and burn mentality" and accused Mr Dempsey of under-resourcing police.

"The funding for equipment has continually increased over the last few years as police officer levels increased," Mr Byrne said.

"The drop in funding for police equipment shows how hollow the LNP election commitment is to put more police

on the beat."

Meanwhile, a new crop of first-year officers is expected to join the QPS ranks early next year, with instructors at the Townsville Police Academy already running a revamped 25-week training course, down from the previous 30-week course, to pump more recruits through the program.

The shorter course is set to begin at the Brisbane facility in January, allowing both campuses to produce more officers in a calendar year.

The State Government also relaxed entry criteria to allow younger people without tertiary education to apply to the police force.

Tabled by Hon Mark Ryan MP
At LACSC Est Hendrie
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Signature [Signature]