



Speech by

Hon. TOM BARTON

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Police Beat Shopfronts

Hon. T. A. BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (9.50 a.m.), by leave: On Monday, I was pleased to make some very important announcements to come from the Springwood Community Cabinet. As part of our commitment to crime prevention, I announced that there would be three police shopfronts and one Police Beat in the Upper Mount Gravatt/Logan region. The three police shopfronts will go into shopping centres in Springwood, Mount Gravatt and Woodridge, and the Police Beat will be located in Eagleby. Each should be operating by early next year.

The Springwood shopfront, which was an election promise, will be located within the Arndale Shopping Centre and should be operating by February/March next year. The Mount Gravatt shopfront will be operating before Christmas in the Garden City Shopping Centre, and the Woodridge one—due to be finished by February next year—will be located in Logan Central Plaza at Woodridge. The Eagleby Police Beat will have four police officers, assigned to dedicated "beats" or areas, and should be up and running early next year. Final negotiations are under way to have it located in the Eagleby Shopping Plaza, which the four officers will use as their central base.

As the coalition came to realise late in its term, police shopfronts and Police Beats will combat crime and the fear of crime within the community. The Borbidge/Sheldon Government virtually ignored the Police Beat and police shopfront concept, which was developed by the Goss Labor Government. However, in the run-up to the 1998 State election, the then Minister for Police, Russell Cooper, ran around the State promising Police Beats and shopfronts left, right and centre. Queensland voters quite rightly saw this as another cynical election ploy from a man who supposedly had just realised the virtue of Police Beats and shopfronts.

The Labor Party knew how effective Police Beats and shopfronts were as a crime prevention tool. Not only did we introduce them; we continued to support them when in Opposition. That is why we promised 10 new Police Beats and 10 new shopfronts as part of our election commitments. Not only did we honour those election commitments; we will exceed them. The Eagleby Police Beat is one of 12 new ones being implemented this financial year. For the shopfronts, there will be six this financial year and a further four next financial year.

Police Beats and shopfronts not only provide a human face of the Police Service but also reduce crime and the fear of crime. People get to know their local cops because they are in accessible locations such as major shopping centres. People like Police Beats and shopfronts. It is a tangible improvement to local policing. Considering how popular Police Beats and shopfronts are, I am at a loss to explain why members of the coalition failed to substantially expand these programs when they had the chance. But then again, it probably explains why they are sitting on that side of the House again and will be for many years to come.
