



Speech by

Mr BRUCE LAMING
MEMBER FOR MOOLOOLAH

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SUNSHINE COAST POLICE NUMBERS

Mr LAMING (Mooloolah—LP) (10.26 a.m.): I rise to express my concern about an issue that I have raised more than any other in this House, and that is police numbers on the Sunshine Coast. My specific concern is with the situation in and around my own electorate, which has one of the lowest police to population ratios in Queensland. I am sure that my Sunshine Coast colleagues share my concern.

At the outset, I say that our police officers on the coast—and I am sure elsewhere—are doing a great job. I am particularly impressed by their efforts to work closely with community organisations and councils to take a whole-of-community proactive role. They are addressing not just crime but community problems, particularly those involving our youth.

Last week saw the launch of "street angels" at Mooloolaba—a dedicated group of people who look out for and after at-risk youth in our area at night. They are dedicated volunteers who are doing a great job. Soon the annual schoolies week program will commence and there are organisations that ensure that those young people who come to the Sunshine Coast from various parts of Queensland are provided with wholesome entertainment as an alternative to other activities that might put them at risk. Organisations such as Community Solutions are to be commended for that.

However, the record of this Government in failing to maintain the same level of numbers of police officers coming to the Sunshine Coast as established by the coalition Government and former Minister Russell Cooper is to be condemned. Until April this year, the police to population ratio, which continued to rise due to the momentum created by the coalition Government, was 1 to 738. In June, that population ratio slipped to 1 to 763, and in September it slipped to 1 to 776.

That is a disgrace. The fact that none of the recent retreads taken into the service were allocated to the Sunshine Coast is a further insult to a community that is working hard not just for their own young people but for those visiting from other parts of Queensland and beyond.

I call on the Minister to address this issue and fix the situation.
