



Speech by

## Mr BRUCE LAMING

### MEMBER FOR MOOLOOLAH

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Hansard 25 November 1999

#### INCREASE IN CRIME

**Mr LAMING** (Mooloolah—LP) (6.11 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to second the motion of the honourable member for Toowoomba South. The motion that this "Parliament views with concern an overall increase in crime of over 5 per cent across Queensland during the first 12 months of the Beattie Government" is almost an understatement in the case of the Sunshine Coast. Recent local headlines and editorials give me no joy or political satisfaction at all—just anger at a Government that has let down my community. The headlines read "Crime up 20 per cent", "Cut price cops" and "Government fails in their duty to provide public safety". It gives me no joy to say that it had to happen and "I told you so"—none at all. I make no apologies for the fact that in this place I have raised the issue of police numbers over 60 times—a fact recorded on the register of speeches.

**Mr Barton:** And I've given you 53 additional police.

**Mr LAMING:** That does not show up in the figures.

It is not the case that I have a bent towards police matters and it is not the case that I am trying to take the political advantage in my electorate. My raising this issue actually creates more work for me. I am not doing this simply to kick the Government; I was as persistent in my representations with the previous coalition Minister as I was with the ALP Minister before him.

I support and praise my local police officers for the work that they do, especially considering the particular difficulties under which they operate. So what is the problem? What is the particular problem on the Sunshine Coast? What has caused or contributed to this situation and how can it be addressed? The problem is that crime has increased by 5.1% during the first year of the Beattie Labor Government. According to the Police Commissioner, this is a reversal of the downward trends that we have seen over the past two years. What is the problem in the local area? I will tell honourable members what it is.

In the Sunshine Coast district, crime jumped by 20% in the first year of the Beattie Government—the largest jump in crime anywhere in the State and four times the State average. Let us talk about crimes rather than percentages. That represents 4,350 extra crimes in one year—10 extra crimes every day—on the Sunshine Coast. There were some falls, and that is pleasing. However, property damage surged a massive 45% in just one year. I am not going to claim that this situation is attributable entirely to our appalling police to population ratio, but by hell it must be a contributing factor. In addition, it is simply not fair to put Sunshine Coast officers under this level of strain. Our appalling police to population ratio is a product of this Government's lack of performance in recruiting, a miserable budget increase, our population growth rate and the unfair impact of the current police staffing allocation model. Other speakers either have gone or will go into more detail on the Minister's and the Government's shortcomings in budgeting and recruitment.

We cannot control the natural growth rate of popular places such as the Sunshine Coast, but the Minister can and should instruct the human resources management branch to anticipate our growth rate and not just rely on current ABS figures. Most importantly, the staffing allocation model must be reviewed, with less attention on inputs and more on outcomes. It simply does not work. I will table a copy of the current model so that members can see that it is input driven. If I had the time, I would cite some of the inputs. However, there is not time to do so. Honourable members might be interested in

looking at it. Mr Speaker, I note that it indicates an appalling police to population ratio for your electorate. I am sure that you also are concerned.

Not only do we have virtually the lowest ratios in the State; the numbers went down under the Goss Government. And I have a table that proves that. The numbers and the ratio improved under the coalition. However, the Beattie Government is presiding over yet another decline in the ratio on the coast. I will table some statistics which show that the figures for the Sunshine Coast are going backwards, as they did during the Goss years.

I am not usually drawn to using strong language in this place, but I must say that, frankly, this stinks. My message to this Government is: increase the policing-on-the-beat budget, start recruiting again, fix the police allocation model so that fair outcomes are achieved, give our local coppers a fair go, and provide the service that our community deserves. I am aware that the police allocation model is under review. Let us expedite the process and make sure that it works for the benefit of the police and our community. Rather than being input driven, the model should be output driven. We have to make sure that it works.

Time expired.

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