



Speech by

**GRANT MUSGROVE**

**MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD**

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Hansard 25 November 1999

### INCREASE IN CRIME

**Mr MUSGROVE** (Springwood—ALP) (6.43 p.m.): The member for Toowoomba South has been lamenting a 5% increase in crime across Queensland. He somehow thinks that it has something to do with the change in Government. In the first year of the Borbidge/Sheldon Government in 1996-97, crimes against the person rose by 16% and crimes against property rose by 9%.

In 1995-96, the last year of the Goss Labor Government, crimes against the person dropped by 6% and crimes against property dropped by 3%. That was the only year in the past 10 years when crime has dropped overall. That means that in the first year of the Borbidge Government there was a 25% increase in crimes against the person and a 9% increase in crimes against property.

What did the then Police Minister, Mr Cooper, say in response to those dramatic increases? As reported in the *Courier-Mail*, he said that he was "encouraged" by a slow-down in the rate of offences against the person and the "static" rate of property crime which showed that inroads were being made. If this large 25% increase in crime was encouraging and considered to be static, the member for Crows Nest must be ecstatic about an increase of only 5%.

Back in 1997, Mr Cooper went on to say—

"The statistics show that crime is an ongoing problem, but not out of control. There are some categories that remain a concern but we are heading in the right direction."

What is interesting is that, while some crime categories did increase last year, more than half of the crime categories were either below or were the same as the 1996-97 crime levels—the same crime levels that Mr Cooper said were encouraging.

What this shows is the volatility of crime statistics. However, the latest statistics are well within the 10-year trend. What is different between the Borbidge Government and the Beattie Labor Government is that we are taking on the crime problem directly through an unprecedented increase in police numbers and by putting much more effective crime prevention measures in place.

May I place on record this evening my gratitude to the Police Minister for the steps he has taken in my electorate of Springwood to include a police shopfront in the local community. My officers report to me that this shopfront is doing a great job. We recently had a fairly substantial incident at Springwood. If it had not been for the shopfront, the car thief would not have been apprehended and the drugs that were seized by police would not have been detected. Thank you very much for that, Minister.

Whilst I am on that matter, may I also thank the Minister for the \$500,000 extension to what was, I admit, an overcrowded Slacks Creek Police Station. I made representations to the Minister and he acknowledged that the police needed more resources and more space to do their job, and do it well. The Minister responded, and I thank him very much for that.

Today, criminals have been turning their attention away from banks and similar high security targets and concentrating on the softer targets such as corner stores and service stations in my electorate and in neighbouring suburbs. Our local police have developed a number of very good initiatives to combat this trend. One initiative is the high intensity Stop Rob campaign—an organised crime approach to armed robbery through the Organised Crime Investigation Unit. Stop Rob involves operational officers visiting at-risk business premises during shifts as part of patrol duties and objectives.

The aim is to educate business owners on what steps they can take to prevent their businesses from being soft targets for armed robberies.

The Stop Rob program also provides those businesses with information on how to best assist police in the event that they do become a victim. The police also use intelligence gathered by the Organised Crime Investigation Unit operating out of the State Crime Operations Branch Command at police headquarters to target recidivist armed robbers across the State. A large part of the group's focus is involved with the coordination of intelligence in the detection and suppression of recidivist armed robbers.

Time expired.

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