



Speech by

**Hon. TOM BARTON**

**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Hansard 11 November 1999

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

#### **Strategies to Combat Armed Robbery**

**Hon. T. A. BARTON** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (9.42 a.m.), by leave: The Queensland Police Service has recently implemented a number of strategies to assist in the prevention of armed robberies across the State. While some of these initiatives are currently operating Statewide, each policing region has also developed their own approach to the problem of rising rates of the crime. Statewide initiatives include the high intensity Stop Rob campaign and 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. "Soft targets" refers to a premises which may operate out of normal business hours, has minimal security, one employee and no cameras. A service station or 7-Eleven store would fit this profile. The Stop Rob program also provides these businesses with information on how to best assist police in the event that they become a target.

While armed robberies are an unfortunate drain on the community, both in terms of financial cost and emotional burden, the fact is that robberies do occur, and without the targeting of intelligence by police they may occur much more frequently. Intelligence gathered by the Organised Crime Investigation Group, operating out of State Crime Operations Branch Command at police headquarters, is used to target recidivist armed robbers across the State. The group uses a multidisciplinary team approach to investigate major and organised crime, including armed robberies 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 robbery offenders. This intelligence is used in both conventional and covert policing techniques to target known recidivist offenders in coordination and liaison with regional and interstate policing groups. The group is responsible for developing specific intelligence-driven action plans targeting armed robbery offenders and shared this information with a number of other agencies including the Queensland Bureau of Criminal Intelligence and the Corrective Services Proactive Intelligence Network. More recently, the group is developing a recidivist armed robbery database to assist in the identification of armed robbery offences and offenders.

Armed robbery is something which can and is being targeted more effectively at a regional and district level. Each police region in this State has its own strategy or strategies for the gathering and targeting of intelligence in tackling armed robbery within their jurisdiction. Some more recent examples include the South East region's Operation PRASS—Preventing Robberies at Service Stations and an Armed Robbery Awareness Program that operates in the Metro North region. Based in Logan, Operation PRASS is a registered Problem Oriented Policing Partnership project that was developed following a rise in robbery offences at service stations. The project is operated by Logan District Criminal Investigation Branch and involves providing information and advice to service station proprietors and owners on methods of reducing the incidence of robbery and increasing levels of safety for their employees. The project also involves the support and assistance of Logan City Council, Pilkington Glass, banking representatives, the Insurance Council of Australia and a barrister from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. These stakeholders are available to provide advice on available products, financial incentives, methods of financing improvements and duty of care issues.

Just last week, the Logan district began to implement yet another strategy aimed at curbing the incidence of armed robberies through its District Operations Support Group. The group consists of uniform police working in three teams of four officers to provide a high visibility in hot spot areas for offences of robbery, unlawful entry of dwellings and motor vehicle theft. Uniform staff are also tasked to conduct Stop Rob checks on soft target premises during their patrols.

In the Metro North region, officers within the regional operations unit recently secured funding of \$9,000 under the Problem Oriented Policing Project Funding Committee to conduct an Armed Robbery Awareness Program. The aims of such a program include the establishment of an interactive partnership with business houses which operate outside normal trading hours, with an emphasis on those considered to be soft targets. The program will also incorporate target-focused patrols at select premises. By raising the levels of public awareness, the program also seeks to reduce the incidence of armed robbery offences within the region.

While there are many more examples of good police work being carried out all over this State, I am confident those I have mentioned this morning will have great success in tackling armed robbery within their communities.

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