



Speech by

BRUCE DAVIDSON

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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POLICE RESOURCES, NOOSA ELECTORATE

Mr DAVIDSON (Noosa—LP) (10.54 p.m.): I rise in the Adjournment debate to raise the issue of police numbers in the Noosa electorate. There are four police stations in my electorate—Coolum, Noosa Heads, Eumundi and Cooroy. The assigned strength of police officers at these police stations is as follows: Noosa Heads, 26; Coolum, seven; Eumundi, two; and Cooroy, four. The Noosa Heads Police Station has had an assigned strength of 26 officers for the past decade. There have been improvements in the police numbers at Coolum, Eumundi and Cooroy, albeit that these increases have been only marginal.

When one looks at the total number of police officers serving in the Noosa electorate and surrounding areas, one sees that the police officer to population ratio is well over 1,000 people to every police officer. When consideration is given to the Sunshine Coast as a whole, the Minister's own figures, released only last week, suggest that there is one police officer to every 760 residents. That is one police officer to every 760 residents on the Sunshine Coast.

When one makes a comparison with other regions—and I will use the Gold Coast and Cairns as examples, because the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Cairns are similar in that they are all major tourism destinations—we see that the Gold Coast has one police officer to every 602 residents and Cairns has one police officer to every 443 residents. When one compares these figures—the Gold Coast, with one police officer to every 602 residents; Cairns, with one police officer to every 443 residents; and the Sunshine Coast, with one police officer to every 760 residents—one can conclude only that the Sunshine Coast has been neglected in relation to the assignment of police officers in the State of Queensland. The Sunshine Coast has been neglected.

In relation to the Noosa electorate, as I said before, under the current assignment of police officers to my electorate we have a police officer to resident ratio of one police officer to every thousand residents. I can highlight the issue further by advising the House of the fact that Gympie, which borders on the Noosa electorate, has a police officer to resident ratio of one police officer to every 526 residents. I will also highlight the police numbers in the Minister's own police region, where the ratio is one police officer to every 652 residents. Noosa has one police officer to every 760 residents, yet the Minister's electorate has one police officer to every 652 residents.

I have no doubt that the Sunshine Coast is being both neglected and ignored in the allocation of police officers in this State, and I urge the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to raise this issue with the Queensland Police Service and that consideration be given to an overhaul of the police staffing model to ensure that the Sunshine Coast and the Noosa electorate are treated fairly in relation to the allocation of police officers in this State.

Every Queenslanders has an expectation that the security of their lifestyle will be protected. Every Queenslanders has an expectation that, when they need the Police Service in an emergency situation, their call will be answered. Queenslanders pay taxes and charges with an expectation that this service will be delivered by the Government. There has been much rhetoric from both sides of this House on the funding for the Queensland Police Service and the number of police officers graduating from our police academies. I acknowledge the enormous advances by my colleague Russell Cooper on this issue in his time as Police Minister in this State through ensuring, when we were in Government, that

there was a plan for the future of the Police Service and a commitment to providing increased police numbers over a 10-year period.

I acknowledge the commitment of police officers in my electorate to providing the best possible service they can with the limited officer power and resources they have available to them. Their partnerships with community groups and organisations are well recognised and respected. It is not their commitment to their work that has ever been questioned but the lack of a sufficient number of police officers to service the needs of our community.

Recently, the 000 number was dialled by a mother of a son who had been assaulted at Noosa Heads. That 000 number rang out twice. I have written to the Minister asking him to investigate why the women's call to the 000 number was not answered when she attempted to alert the Police Service and other emergency services to the life-threatening situation her son was in.

Time expired.
