



Speech by

CATE MOLLOY

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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POLICING, SUNSHINE COAST

Ms MOLLOY (Noosa—ALP) (12.15 p.m.): I rise to address the House on the issue of Sunshine Coast policing. As the House would be aware, since taking up my position as member for Noosa I have had a keen interest in policing issues. Policing remains a major issue for people on the Sunshine Coast and particularly for my constituents in the electorate of Noosa. My office consistently receives stories from victims of crimes from all walks of life, from our senior citizens through to business owners.

There is a perception amongst some in the community that the Sunshine Coast is lacking in law and order. Having said this, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the positive steps the Beattie government and Police Minister McGrady are taking to address this issue. Already in the government's short term significant announcements have been made.

Hooning is one problem that is a mainstay of our local press. The establishment of the Traffic Response Team, an integral part of the State Traffic Task Force, is a clear example of how seriously these issues are being taken. While the task force will be based in Boondall it will work throughout the state, and its first priority areas will be the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Ipswich.

My electorate has also welcomed the Beattie government's commitment to develop 16 new Tactical Crime Squads during this term, especially as one of the first five, consisting of 14 officers, will be based on the Sunshine Coast. The Tactical Crime Squads will investigate all crime, with an emphasis placed on property crime and possession-supply of drug offences—a huge issue in our electorate. They will provide assistance to the local CIB detectives and, depending on the needs of the community, could also conduct district-based special operations into problems such as breaking and entering or hooning. Closer to home, my constituents living in Eumundi are certainly looking forward to the construction of their new police station.

It is also pleasing to note that the government is listening to my representations on behalf of the people of Coolum, who have been calling for an increased police presence in their beachside community. At present, police numbers at the Coolum station are at an all-time high, with an allocation of nine full-time officers and two first-year constables in training. A second police vehicle has also been made available to this station. Despite such attention, I will continue to lobby for an increased police presence in Coolum.

This community has a growing population that practically bursts to overflowing during the tourist season. While such an influx of people is great for the local economy, it is often also an invitation to criminals. When I spoke last of this issue I referred to an elderly couple who had their family heirlooms stolen from their home in a street in which five out of nine homes had been burgled. I would like now to offer an example of the problems that tourist accommodation managers are facing. One manager has experienced burglaries of his office and a unit, and it appears that his car park is under constant attack as 12 vehicles have been broken into. I might add that his complex does not stand alone on this issue.

The people of Coolum, however, are also taking steps to address this crime within their community. Bill Mathews, area coordinator of Coolum No. 3 Neighbourhood Watch, is currently trying to secure extra equipment for the local station. I will be working closely with Mr Williams and local community groups over the next weeks to achieve their goal. I would also like to thank the member for Kawana, Chris Cummins, for his offer of assistance on this matter. This is evidence that the people of Coolum recognise that if criminal activity is perceived as having the upper hand in this beautiful tourist destination it will surely have a detrimental impact on the town's image and its economy. So while I

thank the Beattie government and Minister McGrady for their efforts to date, there is still work to be done, and I look forward to more positive outcomes in the future.

I would also like to add that this should be a bipartisan issue but that there are people in our community who are grandstanding and making mischief over it. I call on that community group—all groups within that community—to join with me to work together on what is a bipartisan issue.
