



Speech by

JOHN ENGLISH

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

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MORETON BAY ISLANDS, POLICE RESOURCES

Mr ENGLISH (Redlands—ALP) (11.53 a.m.): Policing the bay islands is a unique challenge for the Queensland Police Service. To my knowledge, there is no other collection of islands with similar population densities so close to mainland Australia. This challenge, like many others, is being met by the Queensland Police Service. In June 1996 the Redland Bay Police Station was opened to improve service delivery to the southern Redlands and the southern Moreton Bay islands. This station has a water police presence to facilitate service delivery to the islands. In May 1999 the Beattie government delivered a high-speed barge, the *John F. Power*, to the Queensland Police Service to allow greater flexibility in service delivery to the bay islands. Whilst this was not perfect, it showed a commitment by the Beattie government to improve policing on the islands.

I acknowledge the good work performed by Sergeant Karl Jensen, his staff and Sue, the administration officer, at Redland Bay Police Station. In my previous occupation I made many late-night trips to the bay islands to assist in the resolution of high-risk incidents. The *John F. Power* allows large numbers of personnel, vehicles and other support equipment to be transported to any of the islands, including North Stradbroke Island in the electorate of the member for Cleveland. The *John F. Power* can cruise at over 30 knots and, at that speed, any deployment occurs quickly.

Whilst these changes are welcomed, the Queensland Police Service is continuing to improve service delivery. Recently I had discussions with Assistant Commissioner Peter Freestone and his management team, including Superintendent John Hopgood and Inspector Les Hopkins. During those discussions I voiced the concerns of many people on the bay islands about delays in police response and a general perception that police were not interested in the bay islands. I can proudly advise the residents of the bay islands that the Queensland Police Service is interested in supporting the people on the islands.

Recently a four-man team was formed to focus solely on providing general duties policing for the bay islands. Senior Constable Paul Ryan, Senior Constable Graham Staib, Senior Constable Jeff Benfer and Senior Constable Kyle Gould are committed to knowing the people and understanding the specific issues surrounding policing on the bay islands. With a permanent team focused on the islands, the invaluable element of public trust can begin to develop between the residents and the police. This trust is essential in obtaining detailed information about criminal activity on the islands. I would encourage the police to get across to the islands as often as possible to speak to residents and to begin building the links that are essential for effective community policing. I would also encourage the residents to speak to members of the team to get to know them.

I commend the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, Commissioner Bob Atkinson and Assistant Commissioner Peter Freestone for their ongoing commitment to improving policing across Queensland generally and in the Redlands specifically. I note, however, that there is more to be done. The effectiveness of the bay island team would be enhanced by having a vehicle fitted with the Maverick computer system. This would allow easy checks to be conducted on people and vehicles to enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement activities on the islands.

To increase flexibility of policing on the bay islands, the police need access to overnight accommodation on Macleay Island. On Macleay Island the rural fire service and volunteer Queensland Ambulance Service have provided office and living space for the Queensland Police Service. These

facilities are not available on Russell Island. The rural fire brigade is currently investigating a new building on Russell Island and will offer both office space and living space for use by the Police Service.

To experience these issues first-hand, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services will visit the bay islands on Wednesday, 13 June. During this visit, the minister will be able to hear about and experience the isolation that is a major issue in providing quality law enforcement to these islands. The development of the bay islands team and the visit by the minister show the government's commitment to policing on the bay islands. I will continue to raise issues that affect my constituents and work towards finding solutions.
