



Speech by

**JEFF SEENEY**

**MEMBER FOR CALLIDE**

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Hansard 7 March 2002

#### **STATE GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (6.26 p.m.): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Nowhere are the issues referred to in that motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition more evident than in the Queensland Police Service. The provision of a soundly performing Police Service should be a core responsibility of any state government. When Queenslanders need the police, they should be confident that they will turn up. Queenslanders are entitled to that security. Instead, all they get is meaningless slogans and rhetoric. They get response times for property crime that range from a minimum of two hours to an incredible 36 hours in at least one case that I am aware of.

Queenslanders have all heard the meaningless chant—even those who are still waiting now for the police to show up. They have heard the chant about being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. If only that were true. If only the reality was pursued with the same degree of zeal as the rhetoric. If only the chanted slogans were translated into action that could produce some results. But of course they are not.

Despite the chanted slogans, suburbs and towns throughout Queensland are in the grip of a growing epidemic of drug-induced property crime. This epidemic of drug-induced property crime is striking at the homes and the sense of security of ordinary Queenslanders to finance the illicit drug trade. When we look past that rhetoric, when we look at the facts and the figures, we see that the Beattie government is playing at the fringes while the drug trade and the property crime that feeds it booms in Queensland.

Yesterday in this House we heard the offended howls of distress from the desperate Police Minister and a couple of his cronies up the back as they tried to defend the indefensible. They tried to defend their pathetic record in tackling this epidemic of drug-induced property crime. In doing so, they also tried to criticise the National Party's policy to set up a dedicated police drug squad in every police district. They set out to ridicule that proposal to change the focus of the Police Service to give more priority to this epidemic of drug-induced property crime.

The Queensland Nationals drew up that policy prior to the 2001 state election after consulting some of the most senior and experienced police investigators and administrators in the state. They pointed out that the biggest problem confronting police and the communities that they serve is drug-induced property crime, particularly break-ins to people's homes and businesses. They said that the one thing that the police would like to have to attack the source of this drug-induced property crime was a dedicated drug squad in each police district. They did not want chanted slogans and stunts. They wanted some action to have a regionally based drug squad in each police district. They did not want the statewide drug squad based in Brisbane to fly in and fly out. They wanted a local drug squad for each police district. Such squads could use that local knowledge to deliver localised, specialised, nonstop harassment and investigation so that drug dealers can be locked up and taken out of the system. We took that advice from the police and we made it part of our policy that we would establish a drug squad in every police district. We will continue with that policy, because it is gaining widespread support throughout Queensland.

Our policy is a practical plan to tackle the biggest law and order problem currently in existence in this state. It is a law and order problem that the Beattie government is choosing to ignore, while focusing on meaningless slogans and stunts. If the Beattie government was fair dinkum about being

tough on crime and the causes of crime and if it knew what that slogan meant, it would be embracing our proposal and supporting us.

Let us consider the facts, starting with the allocation of funds for drug squads in Queensland. How absurd it is that \$133 million—15 per cent of the entire Police budget—will be spent this year on traffic policing. In comparison, just \$5 million will be spent on Queensland's drug squads. How does one reconcile that with the government's slogan? But that slogan has never been more than meaningless rhetoric. It is just another government gimmick. It is simply more of the stunt politics that this government focuses on—and the statistics prove it.

The minister claims that his seven-member Brisbane based flying squad—his fly in, fly out policing—is working. However, the statistics prove him wrong. In comparison with 1999-2000, the number of robberies reported in Brisbane has increased by 93 incidents or 36 per cent; they increased by 780 incidents or 29 per cent in Toowoomba; and they increased by 5,743 incidents or 14.5 per cent in Rockhampton. The number of sexual offences across Queensland increased by seven per cent. They are the facts. They are the facts that give the lie to the rhetoric. They are the facts that give the lie to the slogans. They are the facts that give the lie to the ridiculous amendment the Premier has moved tonight.

Time expired.

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