



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (4.01 p.m.): I am pleased to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2003. This is a particularly important bill containing major reforms that reflect the Beattie government's commitment to continually address law and order issues with the best interests of members of our community in mind. Our government never has and never will shirk its responsibility on law enforcement issues. The bill addresses 13 significant legislative amendments.

I would like to outline how police are proactively addressing law and order issues on the Sunshine Coast. In the Sunshine Coast district, individual officers in charge of stations work in partnership with police intelligence officers, specialised sections like the Juvenile Aid Bureau and Tactical Crime Squad, community members and local organisations to identify seasonal, historical and potential issues with their respective areas of command. Specific patrol objectives are set to address these issues, and regular operations are conducted to proactively deter offenders from committing crime. Examples include events like schoolies week and other holiday periods and other major events that occur. POPP—problem oriented partnership policing—programs have been established in the Sunshine Coast district, where police work in close partnership with community groups to further identify problems in the community and develop strategies to reduce and resolve these problems.

I would like to put on record how the Beattie government intends to ensure an increase in police numbers in regional areas that experience population increases. Our government is committed to increasing police numbers across Queensland to 9,100 sworn officers by the year 2005. This will represent an increase of almost 20 per cent during the Beattie government's second term. The Sunshine Coast district is an area that is currently experiencing high population growth, and since the election of the Beattie government in 1998 the approved sworn policing strength of our district has increased significantly.

I am very lucky to have some marvellous Neighbourhood Watch groups on the Sunshine Coast. The police coordinator, Sergeant Di Kirkman, and other local police do a marvellous job working with our community. I would like to commend not only the police but also all those involved in Neighbourhood Watch programs within the Sunshine Coast police district, as they offer benefits to residents including improved personal safety and household security, and a reduction in the number of preventable crimes. Neighbourhood Watch receives support from local police officers and the District Crime Prevention Unit, which provides community members with information and advice concerning crime and the prevention of crime in our community. This information is provided to encourage members of the community to report suspicious activity to police, improve home security and reduce the likelihood of offences occurring in their community. Officers also gain valuable feedback from local residents on issues affecting the community and are able to develop strategies to address these issues and provide an optimum delivery of service.

Our government has and will continue to increase police numbers, build more police beats and shopfronts. We have developed the State Flying Squad to boost police response in targeted areas. We have established tactical crime squads, expanded the drug court trial, passed new laws to allow Queensland police to fully exploit DNA technology as an investigative tool and a formidable crime fighting weapon. Our government introduced legislation which allows police to confiscate the vehicles of those drivers who participate in illegal drag racing and other dangerous driving. We introduced new civilian confiscation laws to give law enforcement agencies powers to seize assets and freeze bank

accounts of criminals. We introduced the Sexual Offences (Protection of Children) Bill 2002, which will make our maximum penalties for indecent treatment the toughest in Australia.

Importantly, our government's approach to crime is working. Queensland police statistics show an ongoing decrease in total offences against property. I would like to advise the House of a very successful initiative on which I was very proud to work with Kawana Waters Senior Sergeant Paul Sarquis and Sergeant Jed Graham to deliver. Quad bike patrols in the Kawana police district commenced on 19 February 2001. The mobility of these vehicles makes them ideal to access and patrol beaches, sand dunes and parklands not previously accessible by police. The significant increase of police in these areas has assisted in providing a safer environment for our community.

Quad bike patrol police have attended numerous incidents such as wilful exposure, stealing and searches. A number of arrests for offences including break and enter, possession of a dangerous drug and indecent behaviour have also been made. The quad bikes have increased mobility in difficult terrain and allow a timely response when calls for service are received. Local residents as well as beach users have regularly contacted both the Police Service and the Caloundra City Council praising the patrols as a recognised security improvement for successful policing initiatives. I also know very well the leader of the Caloundra council lifeguards, Stuart Cordingley. He has told me that Caloundra council lifeguards have noticed a significant increase in the number of women who are coming back onto beaches who were formerly frightened away by deviants and perverts. But now that these police quad bike patrols have increased security, women are coming back in their numbers, which is a very good thing.

The success of the quad bike patrols has seen state government funding for the recent purchase of two more quad bikes. Currently there are two quad bikes at Kawana Waters Police Station and one at the Caloundra Police Station. We had a ceremony where we named the police bikes in honour of Reverend Colin Munns, who was the long serving local police chaplain for the area. He was also stationed at the Bokarina Uniting Church for quite a period of time. The other was named after Brian Rush, a former police officer who retired not long ago. He was a very good friend, a very good worker in the community and a fellow Lake Currumbundi/Kawana Lion.

Policing on the Sunshine Coast is set to receive yet another boost because police beat shopfronts will be built at Kawana Shopping World, and a police beat shopfront will also be built at the Middys complex in Buderim. Our investment in policing has translated into good news for the Sunshine Coast, with new police facilities set to enhance the area's presence. This represents the culmination of a lot of hard work by residents throughout the community. The establishment of a police beat shopfront is a proactive policing initiative designed to reduce demands and complement the work of existing services. Police beat shopfronts create an increased and highly visible police presence in the community which acts as a deterrent to crime.

The Beattie government holds a firm view that we need to strengthen ties between police and the community to fight crime, and I am very confident that these two new police beat shopfronts will help achieve that. The announcement followed the news that the police budget would tip the \$1 billion mark for the first time this year, with an \$84 million increase compared to previous years, creating the highest police operating budget on record.

Our community will also benefit from the continuation of work of the Sunshine Coast Tactical Crime Squad. Based at Kawana Waters Station, the tactical crime squad has achieved impressive results in attacking drug and property crime on the coast. The broader Sunshine Coast community is also benefiting from the Beattie government's commitment to boost police numbers, with approximately 300 additional police to be employed this year across Queensland. The Beattie Labor government has already provided well over 100 funded police positions for the Sunshine Coast district since coming to office. Our community will continue to benefit from this program to boost police.

On behalf of my community, I thank the minister for providing a \$459,000 state-of-the-art water police vessel for the Sunshine Coast Water Police, which we launched last year.

In closing I would like to put on record some correspondence I have received from Sunshine Coast residents following the antihooning legislation. I quote from an email I have received—

Congratulations on the anti-hoon measures being introduced. It is great to see something positive happening in this area.

The negative impact hoons in cars and on foot have on tourist accommodation in Mooloolaba and surrounds is enormous. I hope the tourists see that the government are doing something positive and listening to the electorate.

It came from one of the accommodation managers that the minister has met. I thank the minister for coming up and meeting with them on more than one occasion as we attempt to address the Liquor Licensing issues.

Finally, this is a letter from a resident of Alexandra Headland. While it is out of my electorate, the person wrote to me about the hoons at Alexandra Headland—

I am delighted that headway is being made regarding this matter. I now see police up this way and they are making a difference. I am in touch with many residents and your letters to me go down to the grapevine to those who have had an absolute gutful of the situation.

I have obviously kept in regular contact as I have forwarded these letters to the minister and his department—

To use Aussie vernacular to yourself, the Assistant-Commissioner of Police, Peter Beattie and the Police on their rounds, "Good on ya"!!!!

For years residents have been loudly voicing our woes and at last something is being done. I cannot thank you enough for your concern, correspondence & most of all, action regarding the "hoons".

In closing, I would like to commend the minister for being a very positive minister, this being my first time in the Beattie government. I have found the minister very open and easy to approach. I am glad to be able to host him on the Sunshine Coast next week. I also say that the police commissioner is beyond reproach and one of the best that I have ever seen. I commend the minister and his department, and I am very proud to support the legislation before the House.