



Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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CURRUMBIN ELECTORATE, POLICE RESOURCES

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (6.54 pm): The people of the Currumbin electorate seek a guarantee from the minister for police that during peak event periods such as Indy and schoolies local police resources will not be severely depleted as is the usual habit. In recent weeks our police have publicly acknowledged serious staffing shortages at Coolangatta and Palm Beach. These are further eroded during the five-week period of Indy and schoolies.

I will not stand idly by and allow the southern Gold Coast to be stripped down to dangerously low levels of police. This situation places our hardworking officers under enormous duress and erodes residents' confidence that there is a satisfactory police presence. A block of up to 18 police have been taken from Palm Beach station alone in past years to cover these events in Surfers Paradise. Coolangatta suffers similarly. No-one disputes the need for sufficient police resources in Surfers Paradise, but it should not be at the expense of our local community's safety or for such an extended time. Other reports indicate staff at Palm Beach are presently down to around 22 operational staff when they are supposed to have 44, including two at the Elanora beat.

From a local perspective, we do not benefit from Indy or schoolies; rather, we lose out badly. The Police Union figures speak for themselves, highlighting the fact that southern divisions are worst off. Despite years of fighting for more resources, the circumstances here are still the same. Few would dispute the financial benefits of Indy, but this year's disgusting antics by some individuals at Indy even made the Premier see red. I agree with her that drunken and provocative behaviour are not images that we want beamed around the world, nor are they acceptable in a family atmosphere. Over 262 arrests were made which was 34 more than last year, most for being drunk and disorderly.

Residents in Currumbin have been further put out by taxi scarcity. Refusing to even take bookings for people to catch flights from the airport over this period highlights the strong argument for more taxis on the Gold Coast. Residents of this area deserve better. Our local police urgently need more resources and it is time the police minister had the fortitude to accept the situation which has reached breaking point. She is very lucky that there was not a major incident on the southern Gold Coast.

Our local councillor this month wrote about her concerns with respect to our low police resources. She cited figures of 1,724 tourist rentals in division 14 and commented on the fact that these figures are not factored into police allocation numbers. Coolangatta police are pushed to the limits already, spending many shifts outside nightclubs as drunk patrons spill out onto the streets in the early hours of the morning. With ongoing poor pay, low morale and a culture of bullying in all departments, it is no wonder our Police Service is having trouble attracting enough recruits.

It is criminal to bleed our local stations of operational staff as they are already suffering reduced levels of resources. Why should the police have to bear the brunt of this Labor government's ineptitude and mismanagement and why should the people of Currumbin? We have had enough of the minister spruiking about Palm Beach being a 24-hour station when the reality is far different. The truth is that this station is a police station with a 24-hour patrol car.