



Speech by

Hon. Judy Spence

MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Law and Order

Hon. JC SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (10.30 am): Being a police officer is not an easy job and, as we have read in recent media reports, policing in Indigenous communities is the most difficult policing work in Australia. However, the good news is that Queenslanders' support for and confidence in our police officers is increasing.

This year's *Report on government services*, released last week, shows that public satisfaction with policing in Queensland is on the rise. Last year, the national report showed that for every 100,000 Queenslanders 47 made complaints against police. This year, that rate has dropped to 39 complaints per 100,000 people.

The report also shows increasing community satisfaction with the way police deal with public order complaints. Satisfaction levels rose by 9.3 per cent—up from 52 per cent of Queenslanders in 2005-06—to 61.3 per cent this year. These increasing levels of satisfaction and support for our Police Service are no doubt fuelled by less crime and increased community safety.

The report shows that Queenslanders generally feel safer than their national counterparts and are less likely to fear crime in their neighbourhood. In most categories of perceived safety—whether it is how safe they feel at home, while walking or jogging, or on public transport at night—Queensland scored higher than the national average. In addition, the report showed that armed and unarmed robbery offences and property crimes have all dropped, while Queensland achieved the second lowest rate of car theft in the nation. This report is in line with the Queensland Police Service Annual Statistical Review, which shows that crime levels have been dropping since 2000-01 and stabilised last year.

While the *Report on government services 2007* is a great score card for Queensland police, officers will continue to work hard to further reduce crime and increase community safety. There is still room to improve and the commissioner and his senior executive are maintaining the pursuit of continuous improvement. For example, while the satisfaction level of people coming into recent contact with police increased in the past year and is now at 81.5 per cent, it is still slightly lower than the national average of 82.6 per cent. Similarly, the public opinion of how police treat people fairly and equally rose in Queensland from 62.9 per cent to 67.4 per cent, which is slightly under the national average of 68 per cent.

I know that police officers will continue to work hard to reduce crime and increase public safety, just as this government will continue to maintain the police to population ratio that we now enjoy, which is higher than the national average. Our record investment in law and order in recent years is delivering good results for Queensland, with more police on the beat than ever before. We have increased police numbers from 6,800 when we were elected in 1998 to what will be 9,728 by October this year. Crime rates have fallen by 16 per cent since 2000-01 and this good work has been maintained in 2005-06 with levels remaining static in comparison to 2004-05.

This government recognises that it is vital for police to have the appropriate resources and equipment to support them in their work. We will continue to ensure that we meet the public's expectations for a safer Queensland.