



Speech by

**Paul Hoolihan**

**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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## LAW AND ORDER

**Mr HOOLIHAN** (Keppel—ALP) (6.23 pm): In rising to support the amendment of the minister for police, I note that the National Party has never learnt anything about the doctrine of separation of powers. Members have come into this House and talked about minimum sentencing. Perhaps they should go back and have a look at the history. Once again we see the opposition whipping up another contrived crisis. It never ceases to amaze me that the shadow Attorney-General and the shadow minister for police have so little grasp on their own shadow portfolios that we have to endure untruths and innuendo which will no doubt be reproduced tomorrow in that august journal, the *Courier-Mail*, as some justification for ignoring the real facts. Heaven help the people of this state if these people ever come out of the shadows.

I say to the members opposite and to the media that just because they say there is a crisis it ain't necessarily so. Remember the Normie Rowe song? The people of Queensland understand the efforts of our government to protect them and make their community safe. There is always more that can be done, but the current actions by the government and the resultant numbers of police officers and expanded capital outlays are meeting the aspirations of Queenslanders.

For all of my working life I worked in the court system and worked closely with police officers, and they are the ones who usually feel demeaned when their efforts are pummelled by the opposition. Crocodile tears and false hand-on-heart comments from members such as the member for Noosa are the reason for the quiet support of our government by our excellent Police Service.

How about one overall fact—and we heard it from the minister. In 1998, which was at the end of the period of the Borbidge-Sheldon government, overall police numbers in Queensland were 6,833. At the end of 2006, numbers were 9,269. Over the past year I understand the total strength has risen further to approximately 9,700, or approximately 35 per cent. We saw in this House during the last sitting week confirmation of a further increase in both urban and regional station manning and also the use of civilian employees to release uniformed officers for outside duties.

Take my own region, which covers central Queensland generally even though my electorate is coastal and in north Rockhampton. There are a number of stations which have vacancies, but that is the norm for such a large service. Those vacancies will be filled in normal operational actions, but that does not detract from the work undertaken by our dedicated officers. With a background in law, I know that the various legislation which gives our police the tools to carry out their duties have been strengthened and penalties increased both as a punishment and as an example to others who would break the law that they will be caught and punished.

Police also work with the community and with groups such as Crimestoppers and Neighbourhood Watch. A measure of the success of police operations is that most crime statistics are trending downwards. Even though there is more to be done, people are aware of that, even though the media do not fall over themselves to always report the operational success.

In the past nine years major station upgrades have been undertaken in Rockhampton, north Rockhampton and other stations throughout central Queensland. We have tenders currently being called for a \$6.4 million station in Yeppoon. The strength of the Yeppoon station has increased to 18 officers plus

CIB and water police. There are also civilian clerks. Approved strength for the Rockhampton district is currently 283, whereas it was 211 in 1998. An extra 17 positions in Rockhampton will include six new uniformed officers, thereby further increasing operational strength.

There have been from time immemorial those people who would break the law and a measure of the success of policing is the number of miscreants who are caught and punished either by fining or other measures designed to bring home to those people the danger for themselves in what they do. No person who stood up to support the motion of the member for Caloundra seems to have looked at the statistics for clean-up of crime. Successive Labor governments have provided the accommodation, the equipment and the manpower as promised to the people of Queensland. Operational matters are left to our dedicated officers to implement the laws which are being currently updated and strengthened, as they should be, by a dedicated and supportive government.

Perhaps opposition members have forgotten the work of a bloke called Fitzgerald in relation to interference in the work of our police by government. Forget it at their peril. This motion is derisory and is based on a house of straw or twigs. I know that the government has built its house out of bricks. They can squeal like stuck pigs if they like, but the truth speaks for itself. I will be rejecting the motion and supporting the amendment.