



Speech by

Hon. Neil Roberts

MEMBER FOR NUDGEЕ

Hansard Wednesday, 17 June 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Police and Ambulance Officer Numbers

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (9.56 am): Last Friday 148 new police officers were inducted into the Queensland Police Service during a ceremony at the Police Academy at Oxley. This is the third induction ceremony I have attended in as many months, with more than 300 first-year constables hitting the streets as a result. This clearly demonstrates the Bligh government's commitment to law and order in Queensland.

Since 1998, Labor governments have increased police numbers by more than 3,300 or 49 per cent from 6,800 officers in June 1998 to 10,149 officers in June 2009. In Queensland the police to population ratio has grown from one officer to every 507 people in June 1998 to one officer to every 434 people in June 2008, which is better than the national average of one to 437. However, we are not resting on our laurels. This government has demonstrated that it is prepared to make the tough decisions in tough times to ensure we can continue to build on police numbers and services. We went to the election with a commitment to add a minimum of 600 extra police officers to the Queensland Police Service over the next three years and the government is determined to deliver that commitment.

Similarly, the Bligh government is committed to maintaining its strong support of the Queensland Ambulance Service, despite the global financial crisis. By 30 June some 250 additional ambulance officer positions will have been created in the Queensland Ambulance Service thanks to funding from our government. This is in addition to the 255 extra positions created in the 2007-08 financial year, bringing the total number of additional officers over the past two years to 505. Queensland's ambulance officer to population ratio is amongst the best in the country. Our ratio is one officer to every 1,527 people, which is streets ahead of the national ratio of one officer to every 2,079 people.

By taking the tough decisions in these tough times, the government is also able to support the ongoing implementation of the recommendations made in the Queensland Ambulance Service audit. Already the proportion of operational to non-operational staff has increased from 77.6 per cent at the time the audit was conducted to 81 per cent in the 2007-2008 financial year, which is an increase of 3.4 per cent. A renewed focus on frontline services was a key recommendation of the audit. Despite the global financial crisis, the Bligh government is committed to our police and emergency services agencies and that commitment remains as strong as ever.