



Speech By  
**Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk**


**MEMBER FOR INALA**

---

Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2016

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Townsville**

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.36 am): Last week I took the cabinet to Townsville and the Deputy Premier and I spent the rest of the week up there governing from the north. It was the perfect opportunity to listen to members of the community about their needs and aspirations. I heard from them about their need for more and better front-line services. I heard from them about the need for economic development in their city and the entire region. I heard from them about their concerns surrounding youth crime. Just under a month ago the Townsville Strikeforce was created, sending 30 additional officers to Townsville for a 30-day blitz to tackle those issues. After 22 days we have seen 455 arrests on 833 charges, mostly around property crime, drug and traffic offences. There have been 967 street checks conducted and 1,503 traffic infringement notices issued, and this is a fantastic effort from police. I was fortunate enough to visit the Townsville Rapid Action and Patrols headquarters along with the Minister for Police, Minister O'Rourke and local members to personally thank the officers for the great work that they are doing, and they have done it in consultation with the Stronger Communities working group looking at a whole-of-government approach that runs parallel with the front-line police response.

It is a wonderful start, but we know the job is not done yet. Today I can announce that the Queensland Police Service will enter into phase 2 of Operation Oscar Merchant. A minimum of 10 additional officers will remain in Townsville to continue to focus on youth crime issues. The Police Commissioner will continue to assess operational needs on a monthly basis and I am assured that, if the need arises, more officers will be sent in. The acting commissioner has advised that, as part of phase 2, police will continue the operation's momentum by using intelligence already gathered to target recidivist offenders and will continue to include specialist policing units including the Rapid Action and Patrols group, the Tactical Crime Squad and the Dog Squad. I want to thank the Police Service and the Minister for Police for their willingness to respond swiftly and strongly to these challenges. I also want to thank Minister O'Rourke and the local members for Townsville and Thuringowa, who have been very strong advocates for action on this issue. Most of all, I want to thank the Townsville community. Townsville is a fantastic place to live and raise a family, and we want it to be the safest place to raise a family. The community has worked in partnership with the government and police and we are determined to deliver for them.