




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 9 March 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Police Resources

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.08 am): The Queensland Police Service is world class and the Palaszczuk government is supporting community safety by providing the Queensland Police Service with record levels of police personnel and resources. Recently the Police Commissioner has announced a raft of significant new senior appointments and is now formalising new boundaries aimed at delivering better outcomes for local communities. Among those chosen for higher duties, Chief Superintendent Mark Wheeler has been promoted to assistant commissioner. As chief superintendent on the Gold Coast, Mark Wheeler was in direct control of the border controls with New South Wales. As chief superintendent he coordinated what would turn out to be a marathon effort by police, making sure the Chief Health Officer's border controls were adhered to.

Chief Superintendent Wheeler was also in charge of the police response at the Gold Coast Airport and the conduct of hotel quarantine. Those multiple police operations played a critical role in helping stop the spread of COVID-19 and helped keep Queenslanders safe. Newly promoted Assistant Commissioner Wheeler has now been appointed to lead the newly formalised northern region. The assistant commissioner will be based in Townsville and will be in charge of policing in the new region. As an experienced senior officer, Assistant Commissioner Wheeler will make a significant contribution to the Townsville community.

Police Commissioner Katarina Carroll, who grew up in North Queensland and spent many years working there, has a solid understanding of the issues that matter most to local communities. Following the rationalisation under the Newman government of police regions, the Queensland Police Service is now restoring the two discrete police regions: the northern region, with Townsville as its hub, and the far northern region, with Cairns as its hub. The far northern police region will also now have a dedicated assistant police commissioner based in Cairns. Assistant Commissioner Brett Schafferius, an experienced and outstanding police officer, has been appointed the new boss for the far northern region. Assistant Commissioner Schafferius is well known in the Far North and has significant policing experience. Early in his career he spent time in the Cairns Drug Squad and the Mareeba Criminal Investigation Branch as a detective senior constable. More recently, he held the position of chief superintendent and district officer of the Far North district.

The government is delivering the biggest investment in police personnel in more than three decades. This will see the deployment of an extra 2,025 police personnel. The commissioner has stated that this investment will result in the deployment of a minimum of an extra 150 police officers to each policing region across Queensland. With the commissioner's decision to split the north of Queensland into two separate regions, it means that the newly created northern region centred in Townsville will get a minimum of an extra 150 officers, as will the newly created far northern region based in Cairns.

This government has a laser-like focus on governing for all Queenslanders. In the north of our state we are seeing the benefits of that approach. We are seeing sensibly redrawn policing regions, with dedicated assistant commissioners, and the deployment of the biggest investment in police personnel in three decades. We should all be very proud of our government's commitment, not only to the Queensland Police Service but also to the people of the north and, more broadly, all Queenslanders.