




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2023

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Police Resources

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.00 pm): Is the thin blue line at breaking point? It would appear that when it comes to police numbers in this state that is the case. That should be ringing alarm bells right throughout Queensland. Queenslanders will cop many things, but what they will not cop is reduced police numbers or police stations with no officers, particularly during the worst juvenile epidemic this state has ever seen. We need police on the beat and we need them on the road. In fact, we need police everywhere.

This morning media reports revealed that the total headcount of the Queensland Police Service has risen by just 0.75 per cent, four single officer stations have no officer assigned and seven stations are operating below approved strength. If we cast our mind back to the 2020 state election, the Premier and the police minister made a commitment to Queenslanders regarding policing numbers in this state—2,025 additional police personnel by 2025. At the estimates hearing in December 2020 the Police Commissioner confirmed the commitment included 1,450 extra sworn officers. Deputy Commissioner Smith, answering on behalf of the Police Commissioner, outlined the plan. We were told in 2021-22 that attrition would be covered and that 330 additional officers would join the ranks of the Queensland Police Service. What was actually delivered, as advised by the commissioner at estimates on 3 August last year, was 143 additional officers—less than half the target.

What does that mean? Based on current figures, it will take this government 32 years to add the 1,450 additional sworn police officers that they announced at the last election. I am going to say it again. According to these reports, the Palaszczuk Labor government will take 32 years to deliver on its police numbers. Is it any wonder Queenslanders no longer trust the Palaszczuk government to keep them safe.

The minister is quick to talk up recruitment targets; however, according to the *Government Gazette*, 289 staff resigned from the QPS in the 2022—more resignations than we saw in the previous two years. Figures provided to me paint an even grimmer picture and indicate that in the last six months of 2022 there was a reduction of 98 sworn officers and that between 1 July 2021 and 31 December 2022 the number of sworn officers reduced by 279. Our state is facing a youth crime crisis and it is time the police minister set the record straight.

(Time expired)