




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Police Resources

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.56 pm): Earlier today I stood up in this place during question time and asked the police minister what I thought was a pretty straightforward, simple question: are there more or less frontline operational police on the beat today compared to two years ago? What did we get? More spin from this bumbling, incompetent minister; more spin than a Hoover washing machine. It is well and good to talk about approved officers and approved positions, but what the people of Queensland want to know is how many police officers are out there? When they make the call, how many officers are available to respond? That is what the people sitting here in the audience want to know today. They want to know how many officers there are in Cairns and how many officers there are in Mareeba, because they are getting hammered. They are sick and tired of their houses being broken into and their cars being stolen. When they leave here today they would like to know that when they get home their house is still intact and their vehicle is still in the car park when they walk outside.

It is not just me asking that question. Kev Groth, regional rep for the central region of the Queensland Police Union, stated in the *Police Journal*, 'It is clearly evident that the government's commitment of 2,025 by 2025 is now nothing more than a pipedream.' What is even more telling is the reference shortly thereafter to the results of the Working for Queensland survey, in which he describes morale and faith in senior management as being at an 'all-time low'. He goes on to ask what the government has done to address what he calls obvious issues. The answer, according to Kev Groth, is three simple words: 'not a thing'. Think about that: 'not a thing'. Despite all the promises, it is clear that our police on the front line are stretched to breaking point.

I know the Premier and minister stood up here today and talked about interstate and international recruitment. It is clear their strategy is to just keeping pouring money into that big bucket and then let's hope and pray these police are magically going to appear and join the Queensland Police Service at a time when morale is at an all-time low and at a time when we know that attrition is outstripping recruitment. To what extent is that occurring? Let me share these figures with you. For the first five months of this year to the end of April, 225 left and 90 were recruited. The majority of those who left resigned. These are not medical retirements or age retirements; these are resignations. That goes to—

Mrs Frecklington: Culture.

Mr LAST: I take that interjection—the culture in the Queensland Police Service. We need to back these guys. They are here today. There they are, up the back. We need to be backing those police officers—the men and women of the Queensland Police Service who go out there every day and put their jobs on the line for us—for Queenslanders. This is a crisis, and it is a crisis that this government made.

Let us talk about the scrapping a week ago of the commissioner's own signature project—the service delivery program. This project, according to the commissioner, would 'create optimisation for our front line to be able to be more preventative and proactive'. As the people here in Cairns and across the state know, Queenslanders need our police now more than they ever have. To say that the outcomes of this project were less than impressive would be an understatement.

This was the signature program, with many millions of dollars spent. When we went to the minister and asked him for comment, what did he say? He said, 'That's an operational issue. I don't have anything to do with that.' I am afraid to say that the buck stops with the minister. The buck absolutely stops with this minister regarding the scrapping of the service delivery program. This signature program was going to make all the difference to this state of Queensland—gone. We now have three questions. What is going to replace that program? Are we going to see the report as to why that program was scrapped?

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr LAST: I take that interjection. How much did it cost Queenslanders? Because they deserve to know. This goes to the heart of law and order in this state. This goes to the heart of what we all expect of the Queensland Police Service who are out there every day putting their lives on the line for each and every one of us. What we have seen is continued failures by this government, and it is not good enough.