




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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ADJOURNMENT

Policelink, Crime Statistics

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (7.18 pm): I rise on a serious issue. To put it bluntly, it equates to a systemic, chronic and I fear possibly deliberate underreporting of crime across the state, that is, the flaws of the Policelink crime-reporting system. Anyone who has had any interaction with Policelink in recent years probably would not need to listen to this speech because they would understand it all too well.

Policelink is designed to deal with non-emergency calls where law enforcement is required to attend or need to provide support for the community. Basically, if there is no emergency or threat to life or property, people would ring Policelink. If they are broken into they would ring Policelink. If someone is assaulted by a person in the street who then runs off, they would call Policelink. If a person's home is vandalised they would call Policelink. If someone throws rocks at a person's car in Mount Isa they would ring Policelink.

We know that police time is precious and they need to be free to respond to emergencies, so you try and ring Policelink. Don't worry, triple-O has some foes at times as well. The police minister does not release the figures as a matter of course. The best estimates are that more than a million calls and more than a million online contacts are made to the service each year. In 2021, this resulted in 72,700 actual phone crime reports and 183,000 online reports being made. Out of this number—a total of 256,000—only 31,000 charges were laid. Out of more than a million calls made a year, the estimates are that around one-fifth of them are unanswered and abandoned due to long wait times.

There are nightmare stories. I have some myself. There was a baker in Ravenshoe who had his business broken into. He rang triple-O. The operator asked if it was occurring. He said, 'No, they've just left.' He was told to ring Policelink. He hung up on triple-O and called Policelink, but they told him to go online and report it. The report could not be logged by the operator over the phone, so after three attempts he has given up.

A 78-year-old woman at Tolga had a wait time of 30 minutes. Another elderly woman had two incidents at her place and no-one came to follow up. Someone in Cairns the other day told me that he waited about 30 minutes and ended up just calling someone he knew. I have done the same thing myself. Not everyone has the benefit of having those police contacts as we do as members of parliament. I rang Policelink just to test it out. Once while driving to the airport I drove past a fight occurring on Abel Smith Parade in Mount Isa. I had to race onto the plane so I had to hang up on Policelink about 15 minutes later. They were still trying to take the details, so no-one reported that I guess. Not only are crimes not being reported so they are not being recorded in statistics; we are also not doing our job out there. They have removed the call centres. We have big problems and we are not collecting correct data on what is happening in the state.