




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 14 February 2024

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Taskforce Guardian; Police Services, Polair

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (10.01 am): The Queensland Police Service is relentless in targeting those who wish to cause harm in the community. Police adopt innovative operational strategies to disrupt and prevent crime. Taskforce Guardian is one such example. Taskforce Guardian is a dedicated flying squad of experienced officers, working alongside hardworking local police and youth justice personnel.

The taskforce is deployed on an intelligence-driven basis to target hardcore youth offending. The group deployments across the state to date include Townsville, Cairns, Ipswich, Logan, Toowoomba, South Brisbane, Mount Isa and Rockhampton. The teams focusing on youth crime have charged over 800 young people with almost 2,700 offences ranging from stealing to unlawful use of motor vehicles, burglary, assault and robbery.

While even one instance of criminal offending is one too many, yesterday, as a result of the collective efforts of police, Youth Justice, other partner agencies and the community, the Queensland Police Service in Toowoomba released new information showing that youth crime in the Darling Downs district has decreased by 16 per cent and the number of offenders has declined by 15 per cent. Police advise that these results are off the back of the hard work of all partner agencies in the community but also associated with the operational efforts of Taskforce Guardian and the extreme high visibility of police patrols funded by this government under Operation Whiskey Unison.

Police advise that, also thanks to Taskforce Guardian's activities in Townsville, in recent times there has been a substantial reduction in car theft and robberies. Police advise there has been a 50 per cent reduction in car theft by youth offenders and a 70 per cent reduction in violent crime and robberies associated with youth offenders.

As a result of a request by the Queensland Police Service, for the first time another important innovation in the north of our state has been the Miles government's investment in a Polair helicopter that is based in Townsville. The Miles government acted immediately when the Queensland Police Service requested this for the first time—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, the minister is making what I am hearing as a factual ministerial statement. I ask you to hear that statement, as I would like to.

Mr RYAN: The Miles government acted immediately when the Queensland Police Service asked for the first time for this asset in North Queensland. We are the first government to fund a permanent Polair in Townsville. Townsville's Polair capability became operational in December. Since then the aircraft has been deployed on more than 20 occasions for over 70 flight hours.

Some of the successful deployments include that in December the helicopter: provided immediate success in identifying and locating a vehicle of interest and supporting ground crews; assisted in tracking a male person who had run from police and assisted with the locating of that person, who was then arrested and charged; assisted in searching large areas to find missing people; and assisted in the tracking of occupants from a crashed stolen vehicle. In addition, the helicopter conducted a surveillance flight in February at the request of the Townsville CIB to find a stolen boat on a rural property. Finally, the helicopter was recently utilised to track a male who allegedly ran from police, providing advice to police crews on the ground to keep them safe and result in a quick arrest.

I take this opportunity to commend the Queensland Police Service in every corner of this state. They are working relentlessly to support community safety and they have the support of this government. The government will always invest in the personnel and resources our police need to keep the community safe.