

Question on Notice
No. 1111
Asked on 29 September 2004

MRS SULLIVAN asked the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (MS SPENCE) -

QUESTION:

- (1) How many active Neighbourhood Watch groups are there in Queensland?
- (2) How important are they in their community?
- (3) Is there anything that can be done to encourage more people to join a local Neighbourhood Watch?

ANSWER:

- (1) There are currently 685 active Neighbourhood Watch areas throughout the State.
- (2) The Queensland Police Service views the Neighbourhood Watch program as one of its primary crime prevention initiatives. The program provides an opportunity for the community and the Service to work together to reduce the incidence of personal and property offences.

The program also provides a vital link in bringing communities together to discuss local issues in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. This enables members of the community to raise and address their local concerns. It also builds a sense of ownership in the community.

- (3) The Queensland Police Service is anxious to encourage the participation of members of the community. All residents and business owners in a Neighbourhood Watch area are entitled to belong to their local Neighbourhood Watch. The program encourages members to apply crime prevention principles in their day-to-day lives. This includes improving personal, household and business security, reporting suspicious activities and engraving or marking their property. Meetings are advertised in local Neighbourhood Watch newsletters and the media, and members of the community are invited to attend these meetings to discuss local issues. In addition, a quarterly statewide Neighbourhood Watch newsletter is distributed to all Neighbourhood Watch areas and community outlets.

The Neighbourhood Watch Program is also encouraging the continued community participation in established areas that have achieved a high level of crime prevention awareness, through the implementation of the Community Safety Project. This is a joint project between targeted Neighbourhood Watches, the Department of Emergency Services and the Department of

Housing through the Community Renewal Program. The project was conceived in 2001 by Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson and Michael Kinnane, Director-General of the Department of Emergency Services, who saw the project as an opportunity to update and to incorporate Department of Emergency Service's community safety strategies into the Neighbourhood Watch program. The project is aimed at broadening the current crime prevention focus of the Neighbourhood Watch Program to include a focus on safety, particularly in the home.

The Community Safety Project provides personnel, resources and funding to support community safety initiatives within the targeted Neighbourhood Watch communities. To date, the project has been implemented in nine Neighbourhood Watch areas - Maryborough 3, Andergrove (Mackay) and Camp Hill 1, Kirwan 8 (Townsville), Riverview 1, Highfields (Toowoomba) Upper Mt Gravatt 18, Harris Fields (Woodridge) and Edmonton (Cairns).

The State office of Neighbourhood Watch continues to research and monitor Neighbourhood Watch programs in other jurisdictions, both within Australia and overseas, to identify best practice models. Encouraging greater community participation in the program is a high priority for the improvement of the program.