

**Question on Notice
No. 873
Asked on 18 August 2004**

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

QUESTION:

Will she advise of the work of the new Tactical Crime Squads and details of their successes to date?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question and interest in the performance of the Tactical Crime Squads. The Tactical Crime Squads provide investigative and operational support within their District, support District detectives in crime investigations, carry out covert surveillance, conduct District-based operations and supplement criminal investigations and general duties police. There are Tactical Crime Squads in the Police Service's Far Northern Region, Townsville, Mount Isa, Mackay, Rockhampton, Sunshine Coast, Redcliffe, Wide Bay, Toowoomba, Ipswich, North Brisbane, Brisbane Central, Oxley, South Brisbane, Logan and the Gold Coast.

An overview of some of their achievements to date is provided below.

Far Northern Region Tactical Crime Squad

The Far Northern Region Tactical Crime Squad focuses on property crime, drugs, liquor enforcement and monitoring of the Alcohol Management Plans introduced in communities across Cape York. This unit also supports the Region's plain clothes and uniform police.

The unit commenced in May 2002 and has a current strength of 21. Since its inception, the Far Northern Region Tactical Crime Squad has initiated charges against 2,395 persons for 3,165 offences.

The most notable successes for the Far Northern Tactical Crime Squad include:

- the interception of a vehicle carrying 27 bales of illegal tobacco. A further 13 bales were located in two other vehicles. Each bale was valued at \$26,000.
- the detection and seizure of alcohol worth in excess of \$2,000 in Pormpuraaw. This investigation identified that the suspect was carrying out the illegal business activity of selling alcohol in a restricted area with sales exceeding \$26,000 over a three month period. The offender has been successfully prosecuted.
- in a recent liquor enforcement operation in Kowanyama, police detected and seized in excess of \$1,300 worth of alcohol in the restricted area of the Alcohol Management Plan. A total of 14 persons were charged with liquor related offences regarding these seizures.

The Squad is also currently participating in Operation Raywood, targeting break and enter offences in the Cairns Division.

Townsville Tactical Crime Squad

The Townsville Tactical Crime Squad commenced operations in December 2001. By 23 August 2004, the Squad had carried out 209 operations and charged offenders with 118 assaults, 600 drug offences and 488 property offences including the unlawful use of 50 motor vehicles. They have arrested 759 people for good order offences and detected 417 liquor offences. In addition they have carried out 14,709 random breath tests and apprehended 348 drink drivers. They have issued 3,162 Traffic Infringement Notices.

Mount Isa Tactical Crime Squad

Since the Mount Isa Tactical Crime Squad commenced on 14 January 2004 it has been deployed to centres throughout the District on a total of 15 occasions including four times to Doomadgee and twice to Mornington Island in relation to the enforcement of Alcohol Management Plans. The Squad has been involved in six operations targeting criminal activity since inception.

Members of the Squad have charged 99 offenders with indictable offences and 97 with simple offences. In addition, 28 suspects, nominated in ongoing investigations, have been located and handed over to the Mount Isa Criminal Investigation Branch and Juvenile Aid Bureau.

The Mount Isa Tactical Crime Squad has issued 36 Liquor Setons, 134 Traffic Infringement Notices, executed or satisfied 83 warrants, conducted 9 drug diversions, conducted 3,682 random breath tests and attended or assisted other police on 370 occasions.

Mackay District Tactical Crime Squad

The Mackay District Tactical Crime Squad commenced on 1 July 2002 with a primary role of providing investigative assistance to the District, particularly in drug and property offences. The Squad conducts operations targeting drug offenders. Examples of the outcomes are Operation Bellona, in which 84 offenders were charged with 219 drug related offences, and Operation Sakhee in which 93 offenders were charged with 325 drug, weapons and property offences.

By 26 August 2004 the Squad had charged 1,959 offenders with 3,195 offences including 570 property related offences and 1,749 drug offences and recovered over \$138,000 in stolen property.

The activities of the Mackay District Tactical Crime Squad have contributed significantly to the reduction of crime in the Mackay Police District, particularly in Unlawful Entry Offences.

Rockhampton District Tactical Crime Squad

The Rockhampton District Tactical Crime Squad was established in July 2002, and has focused on crimes against the person, offences against property and drug offences. Since July 2002, the squad has dealt with 1,631 offenders on a total 2,008 offences. It has preferred 97 charges relating to offences against the person. The Squad has also preferred 477 charges relating to offences against property.

The Rockhampton Tactical Crime Squad has focused on the link between drug offences and offences against property and preferred 922 charges relating to drug offences including two Trafficking Dangerous Drug offences.

The Rockhampton Tactical Crime Squad has initiated over 60 special operations and has also assisted other units, such as the State Flying Squad and the State Drug Investigation Group, during these operations. As a result of one operation, 62 persons were charged with 119 offences including Trafficking in Dangerous Drugs.

The Rockhampton Tactical Crime Squad has recovered 160 items of stolen property valued at \$201,181, including an operation which targeted a group of organised car thieves, during which 14 offenders were charged on 202 charges.

The Squad has also conducted numerous operations targeting public nuisance offences. As a result, 414 offenders have been charged with a total of 543 Liquor and Good Order Offences.

Sunshine Coast District Tactical Crime Squad

The Sunshine Coast District Tactical Crime Squad was established on 24 December 2001. Its achievements include:

- recovery of stolen electrical items, sporting goods and clothing valued at \$95,000 from six operations;
- seizure of illegal liquor supplies valued at \$350,000 in a combined operation with the Liquor Licensing Authority;
- seizure of \$11,695 (cash) from five operations;
- recovery of property valued at \$13,187 from general investigations; and
- preferring in excess of 900 property related charges, 1300 drug related charges and 800 good order/liquor related charges.

Redcliffe District Tactical Crime Squad

The Redcliffe District Tactical Crime Squad commenced on 17 May 2004. In July 2004 it conducted a drug operation in and around the Redcliffe District which resulted in 12 offenders being charged with 61 offences.

Wide Bay Tactical Crime Squad

The Wide Bay Tactical Crime Squad (based in Maryborough) became operational on 12 June 2004. Since then, it has been involved in 17 operations in the Gympie, Maryborough and Bundaberg Districts.

The squad has been responsible for 141 arrests including 20 street offences, 18 criminal charges, 6 drink driving offences, and 97 drug charges and has also been responsible for the recovery of stolen property valued in excess of \$30,000.

Toowoomba District Tactical Crime Squad

Since its inception on 19 April 2003, the Toowoomba District Tactical Crime Squad has focused on crimes against the person, offences against property and their link to drug offences, and has dealt with 1,756 offenders on 2,771 offences. It has preferred 89 charges relating to offences against the person, including offences of robbery, grievous bodily harm, assault occasioning harm, unlawful stalking and wilful obscene exposure.

The squad has preferred 1,078 charges relating to offences against property, including 190 unlawful entry offences, 451 fraud offences, 147 handling stolen goods offences, 33 motor vehicle theft offences, 193 other theft offences and 64 property damage offences.

The squad has preferred 1,365 drug offences including 101 supply dangerous drug offences and four offences of trafficking in dangerous drugs and has also located 12 clandestine laboratories and recovered 305 items of stolen property at a recorded value of \$143,526.

The squad has initiated over 40 special operations involving the State Flying Squad and the State Drug Investigation Group, such as an operation in which 62 persons were charged with 250 offences including 139 property offences and 82 drug offences. Police recovered stolen property to the value of \$15,000, located two amphetamine laboratories and seized heroin, amphetamine and cannabis.

Ipswich District Tactical Crime Squad

The Ipswich District Tactical Crime Squad commenced operations on 8 March 2003 with a charter to target drug and property offenders and has been involved in operations at Charleville, Cunnamulla, Dalby and Warwick and in combined operations with South Brisbane and Oxley Districts from the Metropolitan South Region. The Squad also assisted the Gold Coast District, South Eastern Region in the policing Schoolies 2003.

Since its inception, the squad has preferred 1,821 charges against 1,177 offenders. The charges include 42 unlawful use of motor vehicle offences, 520 offence against property including break and enter offences and 730 drug offences. The drug offences include producing, supplying and trafficking in a dangerous drug.

It has also recovered over \$135,176 in stolen property and recovered 28 vehicles.

During a recent operation the squad recovered \$25,000 in tainted cash, a loaded .38 revolver and 1kg of cannabis in one residence. Five people were arrested on 16 charges relating to drug, weapon and property offences.

North Brisbane Tactical Crime Squad

The North Brisbane Tactical Crime Squad commenced operation on 1 May 2004. The Squad operates within both the North Brisbane and Pine Rivers Districts. Between its inception and 16 August 2004, the squad had been responsible for 350 arrests on 536 offences as well as carrying out a range of other functions.

Brisbane Central District Tactical Crime Squad

The Brisbane Central District Tactical Crime Squad commenced operation on 26 March 2002. In 2002 it was responsible for 1,390 arrests for 1,794 charges and 44 operations. In 2003 it made 1,828 arrests for 2,631 charges and conducted 69 operations. Between 1 July and 31 December 2003 it was responsible for the seizure of a drugs and \$204,954 in property. Between January and August 2004 it was responsible for 1,195 arrests for 1,801 charges, with 43 operations conducted so far, resulting in the seizure of drugs and \$241,739 in property.

These arrests and charges are mainly for drugs, property crime, street and prostitution offences.

South Brisbane District Tactical Crime Squad

Since the commencement of the South Brisbane District Tactical Crime Squad on 24 February 2003 until 31 July 2004, proceedings have been commenced against numerous offenders on a total of 1,838 charges.

Oxley District Tactical Crime Squad

Since the commencement of the Oxley District Tactical Crime Squad on 23 February 2004 until 31 July 2004, proceedings have been commenced against numerous offenders on a total of 733 charges.

Logan District Tactical Crime Squad

The Logan District Tactical Crime Squad commenced operations on 1 January 2002. Between 1 January and 31 December 2002, officers attached to the squad arrested 866 offenders on 1,614 criminal, traffic, drug or other charges. Between 1 January and 31 December 2003, members of the squad arrested 878 offenders on 1,664 charges. Between 1 January and 13 July 2004, members of the squad arrested 415 offenders on 826 charges.

Significant property seizures and recoveries this year include 37kg Cannabis valued at \$259,000, 121 Cannabis plants valued at \$300,000, stolen property valued at \$260,000, and "tainted" property valued at \$49,000

Gold Coast District Tactical Crime Squad

The Gold Coast District Tactical Crime Squad commenced formal operations on 24 December 2001.

Between 24 December 2001 and 31 December 2002, officers attached to the squad arrested 858 offenders on 1,197 criminal, traffic, drug or other charges. Between 1 January 2003 and 31 December 2003, they arrested 1,147 offenders on 1,671 charges. Since 1 January 2004 they have arrested 709 offenders on 1,204 charges.

Since December 2001 the squad has seized or recovered illicit drugs worth \$2,028,184, stolen motor vehicles valued at \$767,875 and stolen property valued at \$264,353.