TOPIC

Mental Health Intervention Project

Mr JOHNSON asked the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (Ms SPENCE)

QUESTION:

With reference to the 2005 State Budget announcement that Mental Health Crisis Intervention Teams would be established and that 1,200 Queensland police officers would receive specialist training to improve the response to crisis situations involving people with mental health disabilities and due to the failure and the disastrous consequences of the Beattie Government's mental health policy, Queensland police are forced to become the frontline of crisis mental health services in this State-

(1) At what locations and how many (reported separately) Mental Health Crisis Intervention Teams have been established.
(2) At what locations and how many (reported separately) Queensland Police Officers have received specialist training to improve the response to crisis situations involving people with mental health disabilities.

RESPONSE

The Mental Health Intervention (MHI) Project incorporates the Queensland Police Service (QPS), Queensland Health (QHealth) and the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS). One of the major goals of the project is to provide a skilled capability to de-escalate situations involving people with a mental disorder.

The project aims to avert the development of a major incident and ensure the safer resolution of incidents involving persons suffering a mental disorder. The QPS has been given the lead role in this project.

Intervention will comprise trained mental health response police officers, ambulance officers, mental health staff at district and State level and an additional specialist mental health clinician. Mental health response trained police and ambulance officers will provide an early intervention response that will have the ability to identify and manage situations which may otherwise escalate.

These first response police officers are supported by Police Mental Health Co-ordinators. Police coordinators operating around the local health centres in each Region will be identified and nominated by the Regions, to provide a support and intelligence role.

Implementation of the MHI Project will be staged over three years.

District Mental Health Coordinator Committees comprising of representatives from the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Health and the Queensland Ambulance Service are in the process of being established at the following Health Service Districts.

> Logan and Beaudesert Health Service District – (South Eastern Police Region – Logan District).

> Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Health Service District – (Metropolitan North Police Region).

> Princess Alexandra Hospital Health Service District – (Metropolitan South Police Region).

> Bayside Health Service District – (Metropolitan South Police Region).

> The Prince Charles Hospital Health Service District – (Metropolitan North Police Region)

First Response Officer training days commenced in the South Eastern Police Region, Logan District on 24 January 2006. A tailored one day training session has been developed for first response police officers. This training primarily focuses on enhancing an officer's tactical communication skills. Initially, this training will be provided to each participating police district/region for responding to mental health calls.

As at 6 March 2006, 14 first response officer training days have been conducted. A total of 234 police officers have undertaken first response officer training.

First response officer training is continuing in the Logan District, Metropolitan North and South Regions and Operations Support Command.

The police coordinators for the five health districts identified have also received a one day specialised training session. This training includes procedures, local protocols, intelligence and incident command considerations.

It is anticipated over the duration of the project, training will continue in all police regions throughout the state until an adequate number of personnel are trained to support the rostering of a trained officer on every shift.