

**Question on Notice
No. 1811
Asked on 1 November 2007**

MRS STUCKEY asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport (MS SPENCE)—

QUESTION:

With reference to police in the Gold Coast region—

- (1) How many operational police officers based at stations within the Gold Coast Region are currently on stress leave?
- (2) What is the average length of officers' stress leave for 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 (reported separately)?
- (3) What are the identifiable and/or reported reasons for the stress?
- (4) What will the Government undertake as a means to reduce the stress placed on these officers?

ANSWER:

As at 5 November 2007, six police officers from stations in the Gold Coast Police District were on sick leave for psychological conditions. The current approved strength of the Gold Coast District is 704. This represents less than one per cent of police officers in the District.

The reasons given for the current absences are:

- exposure to traumatic/violent events (three officers);
- non-work related reasons (two officers); and
- depression resulting from an alleged needle-stick injury (one officer).

The Queensland Police Service has a number of interventions in place to minimise the risk of psychological impacts arising from policing activities. These include the employment of psychologists and social workers, and the services and support provided by the Police Chaplaincy and Peer Support Officer networks. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that officers involved in critical incidents receive appropriate support to reduce the risk of psychological injury.

An Absence Management Committee, comprised of Queensland Police Service and Union representatives, closely monitors all extended absences and rehabilitation programs for police officers within the Gold Coast District.

In addition, an early intervention program provides external counselling for officers who have reported with symptoms requiring specialised treatment.

The Queensland Police Service is committed to supporting its members and will continue to endeavour to reduce the incidence of stress-related illnesses suffered by police officers.