

Question on Notice
No. 299
Asked on 7 March, 2007

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

QUESTION:

How successful has the chroming trials been and what programs/funding are in place?

ANSWER:

The Beattie Government has taken a strategic approach to addressing the issue of volatile substance misuse, which is sometimes referred to as 'chroming'. Volatile substance misuse is the deliberate inhalation of a volatile substance, such as aerosols, paint, glue and petrol. These substances are referred to as "potentially harmful things" in the relevant legislation. Chroming refers to the specific use of chrome-based aerosol spray paints.

The response undertaken over the past three years has been in line with the National Drug Strategy and includes responses based on supply reduction, demand reduction, treatment and a direct response to substance misuse.

Legislation was introduced by the Beattie Government in April 2004 to address supply issues by making it an offence to knowingly sell "potentially harmful things" to a person, who the retailer/ salesperson would reasonably expect may inhale or ingest the "potentially harmful thing".

The *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* provides all police with explicit search and seize powers with respect to these "potentially harmful things" if a person has or is about to inhale or ingest the substance.

A trial of additional police powers has been undertaken in seven locations or trial zones in Queensland. The trial zones are Cairns, Mt Isa, Townsville, Brisbane City and Logan (since July 2004) and Rockhampton and Caboolture (since July 2006). These powers mean a police officer may detain a person who has recently used, or is using these substances, and take them to a place of safety. The place of safety can include a hospital (if the person requires medical attention), the person's home, a relative or friend's home or a designated "place of safety".

Since the inception of these police powers 668 people have been moved to a place of safety.

The Beattie Government, through the Department of Communities, funds places of safety in the seven trial zones. An amount of \$13.3 million has been allocated over four years to deal with the issue of volatile substance misuse as follows:

Cairns – up to \$450,000 a year;

Mt Isa - up to \$470,000 a year;

Townsville - up to \$450,000 a year;

Brisbane City - up to \$900,000 a year;

Logan - up to \$580,000 a year;

Rockhampton - up to \$400,000 a year; and

Caboolture - to \$405,000 a year.

The places of safety being funded provide a mixture of accommodation, support, substance abuse intervention, case management and Indigenous related support services to balance the Beattie Government's response to this issue.

The aim is to provide recovery care and support for people affected by volatile substances. Also in the long term, support is provided to help them deal with the underlying factors associated with their activities. This approach strives to help reduce the risk of harm to the person and also deals with the impact of misuse on individuals, families and communities.