

Question on Notice
No. 352
Asked on 8 March 2007

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

QUESTION:

With reference to parliamentary research which shows that on a per capita basis when compared with the rest of Australia, Queensland spends the least amount of money on law enforcement and given that on 5 February the Premier and Cabinet approved the expenditure of \$84,740.57 excluding GST on advertising which contradicted the police union's claim that Queensland police are under-resourced –

Would it have been more sensible to spend taxpayers' money on the delivery of police services instead of political advertising, and if not, why not?

ANSWER:

Funding provided to the Queensland Police Service by the Beattie Government is spent entirely on the delivery of policing services. Queenslanders are nevertheless entitled and interested to know how taxpayer dollars are being directed to the Queensland Police Service as part of the Government's priority of protecting our children and enhancing community safety. The advertising to which the Member refers was a legitimate Government activity aimed at assuring Queenslanders that this Government is providing the high level of policing services that they expect and indeed, deserve.

The research referenced by the Member appears to be drawn from the 2007 Report on Government Services, published by the Australian Government Productivity Commission. When interpreting the data from the Report on Government Services the definition of real recurrent expenditure does not include revenue from own sources or outlays on payroll tax, and is adjusted according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics price deflator. This may restrict a more comprehensive analysis of real costs spent on police services across jurisdictions. In addition, variations in policies, socioeconomic factors and geographic/demographic characteristics have an impact on expenditure requirements for police services in each jurisdiction.

What the Member does not say is that the 2007 Report on Government Services shows that the Beattie Government's real recurrent expenditure on providing police services increased by \$11 per head of population in 2005-06 to \$274 per head of population.

This Government has continually highlighted that a comparison of expenditure across jurisdictions for policing cannot be accurately compared due to different definitions and locations of particular functions. For example, in Queensland, Crime Prevention is managed across two portfolios. Police and Communities. Communities' Crime Prevention budget is at least \$26 Million. This has an influence on spending attributed to police services per head of population.

The real recurrent expenditure in itself does not tell the full story as to the extent of the Beattie Government's spending on the delivery of policing services. The Queensland Police Service operating budget for 2006-07 is a record \$1.3 billion, an increase of \$121.9 million or 10.3% over the 2005-06 Budget, which itself was a record allocation. The QPS

capital acquisitions budget for 2006-07 is \$197.8 million, an increase from \$160.453 million allocated in 2005-06.

Overall there has been an increase of almost 3,000 police officers since the Beattie Government first came to office in 1998. In 2005-06 the Beattie Government boosted police numbers to 9,378 raising Queensland's police to population ratio to 1:438, which is above the national average. A further increase to 9,728 police officers by October 2007 is on target and this will provide Queenslanders with an extra 350 front-line, first response general duties police officers.

Recently, brand new police stations were opened in Gympie, Ingham and Halifax. Planning is well underway for police stations to be built in Stuart and the Mango Hill/ North Lakes areas. Caboolture station has recently undergone a multi-million dollar upgrade and similar work on Fortitude Valley station will soon commence. This year will see the completion of 25 new Neighbourhood Police Beats and \$3.5 million will be spent to finalise seven police beats in that program. Hemmant Police Beat recently began operation and residents in Edens Landing and The Strand are set to receive new Police Beats. These capital works are part of the \$260 million Beattie Government election commitment to create six new police divisions and construct in excess of 20 new police stations and facilities around the State over four years.

In addition, extra resources have been announced for police officers working in indigenous communities. This included funding of the installation of closed circuit digital recording equipment in all custodial areas within police stations. Work on this project commenced immediately at Woorabinda, Palm Island and Aurukun.

The Beattie Government is determined to ensure that Queensland's police officers are well equipped to work with the community to fight crime. The 2007 Report on Government Services, record budget allocations and the continuing growth in police numbers demonstrate that the Beattie Government is directing taxpayers' money to the ongoing delivery of high quality, responsive policing services by providing our police officers with the resources they need to carry out the important job of protecting the community and fighting crime.