

Question on Notice
No. 542
Asked on 17 April 2007

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

QUESTION:

What are the outcomes of the Police Beat trial at Princess Alexandra Hospital?

ANSWER:

The Princess Alexandra Hospital Police Beat (PA Police Beat) became operational on 29 October 2005 and is a permanent police establishment. Its boundaries are the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PA Hospital) campus, the Centro Buranda shopping centre and the adjacent retail area. Being a community within itself the PA Hospital was considered an ideal facility to trial this unique police beat initiative.

The PA Police Beat has enhanced community safety in and around the hospital. Police working at the beat are able to field enquiries, provide advice and receive crime reports. They are involved in the implementation of problem solving and crime prevention strategies within the hospital and work closely with hospital staff, security and patients. This in turn has resulted in reduced calls for service, improved communications and client service delivery. Excellent partnerships between the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and Queensland Health have developed, particularly in the hospital's Accident and Emergency and the Mental Health Units.

In February 2007 the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) publicly released an evaluation of the PA Police Beat. The report found there were large reductions in the amount of time general duties officers from Metropolitan South Police Region spent travelling to and from, and at, the PA Hospital. The PA Police Beat officers manage all PA Hospital inquiries allowing other police more time to attend to policing duties external to the hospital.

The report further found the perception of safety among hospital staff had improved substantially, particularly with staff who worked after dark. Retailers in the Centro Buranda shopping centre also reported feeling safer when alone, especially when walking to nearby transport.

The CMC evaluation found that the level of stakeholder satisfaction with the PA Police Beat service was very high. Hospital staff and retailers expressed satisfaction with the service, professional conduct and courteousness, the quality of information provided, timeliness of the service and accessibility of the police officers. The overall conclusion of the evaluation was that the PA Police Beat is a great success.

A well regarded partnership between Queensland Police and the PA Hospital management has also been formed with positive recognition often being relayed to the QPS in monthly collaborative meetings. An example of this is the development of a statewide best practice whereby PA Police Beat officers manage PA hospital-related enquiries from all police. This practice facilitates a point of contact for all police where investigations involve victims who are, or have been, a patient at the hospital. This in turn has established a more professional, credible and streamlined means of communication between police and hospital staff.

The establishment of the PA Police Beat has resulted in a reduction in time taken to process coronial and mental health inquiries, as well as providing increased support and assistance to victims of crime attending the hospital. This has benefited hospital clients, their families and hospital staff.

The success of the PA Police Beat demonstrates the effectiveness of an excellent community, police and hospital collaboration.

The CMC's report is available at www.cmc.qld.gov.au.