

**Question on Notice
No. 602
Asked on 18 April 2007**

Mr Gibson asked the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (MS SPENCE) -

QUESTIONS:

With reference to Question on Notice No.149 asked of the Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services Queensland, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Seniors and Youth on 20 February 2007 and the Youth Violence Taskforce, established in October 2006-

- (1) How many taskforce meetings have occurred since its members were announced?
- (2) What progress has the Taskforce made in reducing youth violence?

ANSWER:

- (1) I announced the establishment of the Youth Violence Taskforce (the Taskforce) with the Premier on 1 October 2006. The Taskforce has been established to consider the causes and impacts of youth violence and provide practical, achievable recommendations to assist in its reduction. The Taskforce consists of members from government and community organizations. The Taskforce has met on the following occasions:

6 November 2006;
4 December 2006;
13 February 2007;
26 March 2007; and
23 April 2007.
14 May 2007.

Meetings are scheduled monthly.

- (2) The Sunday Mail noted in April this year that issues being examined by the Youth Violence Taskforce "...are a demonstration that the taskforce is more than a gabfest and has much to offer in tackling the problems of youth."

The Taskforce has identified 5 key priority areas for further examination in relation to youth violence. These are

- The role of alcohol and drug usage;
- Family environments and structure;
- Behaviour management;
- Group violence and social violence;
- and Education.

The Taskforce has and continues to examine detailed statistics relating to youth violence, prevention strategies and programs from Queensland and abroad, discussion papers on the causality of youth violence.

Emerging Trends:

The Taskforce has identified 15-19 year olds as the primary target group. This is because they are the most likely to be the perpetrators of violence and are also the most likely to be the victims of violence.

Taskforce deliberations have determined there are within this age bracket, two distinct groups in which strategies need to be tailored.

- 1) High risk young people who have the potential or have a history of offending.
- 2) Low risk young people who become involved in uncharacteristic or extraordinary circumstances.

Current major initiatives commenced and/or planned by the Taskforce aimed at reducing youth violence include:

Examination of the use of knives and other weapons, by young people.

In response to a number of recent events involving young people and knives and other weapons, I have asked the Taskforce to examine this specific issue.

The Taskforce has been presented with research showing young men between 15 and 19 make up the single highest category of offenders against other people in Queensland. In 2005-06, they also made up a significant proportion of all Weapons Act offences.

Preparing a submission to the current review of the *Liquor Act 1992*

During its initial meeting in November 2006, Youth Violence Taskforce members canvassed a range of issues relating to youth violence, with the role of alcohol and drugs being examined in detail at the December 2006 meeting. An Alcohol and Drug Steering Committee (the Steering Committee) has been established to canvas a range of options for curbing young people's access to alcohol and drugs.

Research shows alcohol is a primary cause of violence amongst young people, particularly young men. At the December meeting the Taskforce identified secondary supply of alcohol to minors by parents and regulating Internet sales and supply of alcohol to young people are two areas of concern. The Steering Committee is currently finalising recommendations on behalf of the Taskforce which will be presented to the Liquor Act Review for consideration .

The Taskforce is also looking at the impacts of peer pressure and rites of passage for young people, education about responsible alcohol consumption, and the need for short and long term strategies to address these issues.

In addition, the Taskforce will also recommend increased monitoring of alcohol promotions and has made a submission to Drinkwise for funding for a detailed education campaign in regards to alcohol consumption.

I encourage all Queenslanders to have their say on issues and concerns in relation to violence and young people by making a submission to the Youth Violence Taskforce via the Queensland Police Service website at www.police.qld.gov.au.

Youth Violence is a complicated social issue and the Taskforce are formulating short, medium and long term recommendations in response to this complexity.