

**Question on Notice
No. 400
Asked on 13 March 2008**

MR PURCELL asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport (MS SPENCE)—

QUESTION:

How many police dogs are trained to detect drugs and how many are in training?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Police Service's Drug Detection Dog Unit is attached to the Brisbane Dog Squad and provides specialist drug detection support to operational police in all parts of Queensland. There are currently 17 general purpose dog teams which are not trained in drug detections. The Drug Detection Dog unit consists of nine teams. Each team consists of one handler and a dog.

The Drug Detection Dog Unit provides an important specialist support role for police operations and its teams will continue to undertake training to maintain their expert role. The unit is a proactive response to current drug trends and have proven their effectiveness throughout the State.

The unit has a Specialist Training Officer. All teams are trained to locate Heroin, Cocaine and amphetamines. The detection dogs are trained in both active and passive response. This allows for operations to be conducted that targets major hard drug locations.

Recent changes to the *Drugs Misuse Act 1986* allowed greater opportunity to target drug use in public places and nightclubs.

A couple of successful operations include:

On 21 February 2008, a member of the Unit attended Samsonvale to assist the Ferny Grove Child Protection Investigation Unit with the execution of a warrant. During the search the drug dog located 136.5 grams of amphetamines. The offender had decamped prior to the arrival of police, but has since been located and arrested.

On 22 February 2008, Operation "Golf Cactus" was conducted in the Toowoomba nightclub precinct. During this operation drug dogs located 7 grams of cocaine, LSD tablets and ecstasy tablets.

On 5 March 2008 as part of Operation "Echo Coma", members of the State Drug Investigation Unit and dog handlers attended an address at Buderim in relation to the execution of a search warrant. During this operation a police dog located approximately 247 grams of Amphet which had been hidden behind a microwave in a Tupperware container. An attempt had been made to conceal the odour by taping around the seal of the lid. Further items located by the dog were steroids (located in a pantry) and a sum of cash (located in a draw in the offender's bedroom). The offender was arrested.

The Queensland Police Service has a dedicated dog development unit.

The role of the development unit is:

- Develop pups and young dogs into potential police dogs
- Facilitate the socialisation of young dogs to allow for training as a police dog
- Overview and manage the foster program

- Breed suitable working line German Shepherd dogs
- Breed suitable working Labrador dogs
- Purchase of suitable breeding stock and associated infrastructure.
- Produce police dogs for all regions and commands.

The Dog Development Program is of significant benefit to both the community and the QPS. As crime trends change the role of police dogs is ever increasing and expanding. Dogs are providing much greater support to operational police, thus having a significant impact on the detection of offences and the apprehension of offenders.