

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 525**  
**Asked on 16 April 2008**

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

**QUESTION:**

Will she provide details of operations conducted by Gold Coast water police in relation to young people operating water craft and how these operations contribute to safe boating in the Gold Coast area?

**ANSWER:**

For approximately five years the Gold Coast Water Police have operated a program known as the Juvenile Marine Cautioning Program. This program was initiated in response to increasing numbers of juveniles being detected operating small vessels within the waterways of the Gold Coast. As a result of the success of this program, it has been incorporated into the daily operations of the Gold Coast Water Police.

The program assists the police in responding efficiently and effectively to complaints about the operation of vessels by juvenile offenders. It also provides for follow-up marine education, with parental involvement. If continued breaches are identified, the juveniles are dealt with by way of the *Juvenile Justice Act 1992*.

Under the program, the parents of first-time juvenile offenders are sent a marine education letter outlining details of the offence committed and the consequences of further breaches of marine legislation. If a second offence is identified, an appointment is made for the juvenile offender and his or her parents to attend the Gold Coast Water Police office and speak with an officer authorised under the *Juvenile Justice Act* to administer juvenile cautions. This meeting has a strong emphasis on education in relation to safety and compliance.

Depending on the seriousness of the offence/s and the number and history of offences committed by the juvenile, the Officer in Charge of the Gold Coast Water Police may instruct investigating officers to issue a Marine Infringement Notice or a Notice to Appear for the juvenile to appear before the Childrens Court or attend Community Conferencing.

In addition to this initiative, officers from the Gold Coast Water Police deliver lectures at secondary schools on the Gold Coast that incorporate marine studies in their curricula. A POPP (Problem Oriented Partnership Policing) initiative is currently being developed to expand this educational interaction with secondary schools on the Gold Coast. This initiative will emphasise safe boating, legislative compliance and good seamanship principles.

The Gold Coast Water Police also have developed a marine complaint database which records complaints by members of the public about the operation of vessels. This database information is supplemented by a combined agency initiative between Maritime Safety Queensland, the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol and the Gold Coast Water Police whereby members of the public can access the Maritime Safety Queensland website ([www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au)) and access a “whistleblower” link which enables details of marine complaints and digital photographs to be uploaded.

This information is then collated and analysed to assist with the intelligence-driven tasking of Water Police patrols. If individuals are able to be identified from the information provided, they are contacted and appropriate action is taken for the offences detected.

The Gold Coast Water Police regularly conduct operations in localities identified from complaints as problem areas for marine offences.

These proactive measures demonstrate the strong commitment of the Gold Coast Water Police to providing a safer marine environment on Gold Coast waterways.