

Question on Notice

No. 1764

Asked on 11 October 2016

MR KNUTH ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND MINISTER FOR TRAINING AND SKILLS (HON Y D'ATH) –

QUESTION:

Will the Attorney-General advise what actions are being taken to ensure that families and communities are adequately informed when a convicted violent criminal is living in close proximity to them?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Dalrymple for his question.

As Ministerial responsibility for the information required to answer this question rests with the Honourable Bill Byrne MP, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services, I am advised of the following by Queensland Corrective Services (QCS).

Victims, families and communities may be provided information in several ways.

Pursuant to section 341(3)(e) of the *Corrective Services Act 2006* (CSA), the Chief Executive or their delegate may disclose confidential information if a person's life or physical safety could otherwise reasonably be expected to be endangered, or it is in the public interest to do so. This information may pertain to offending details, the private residential address of an offender or their identity.

In appropriate circumstances, QCS proactively provides such information to residents of neighbouring properties or those persons whose life or safety are endangered. The nature and extent of such disclosures are determined by an assessment of the presenting risk and offenders' circumstances.

Recipients of this confidential information subsequently become 'informed persons' and must not disclose the information acquired to anyone else, unless disclosure is permitted under section 341(3) of the CSA.

The QCS Victims Register enables information pertaining to the status of or a change in circumstances regarding a prisoner sentenced for violent or sexual offending, to be provided to eligible persons pursuant to sections 320 and 325 of the CSA.

These eligible persons may include the victim of the offence, their immediate family (if the victim is deceased), the victim's parent or guardian if the victim is under 18 years of age or has a legal incapacity, or another person who provides documentary evidence as to the offender's violence against them, or who demonstrates that their life or physical safety could reasonably be expected to be endangered because of a connection between the person and the offence.

Information released to an eligible person may include the prisoner's current location, their security classification, their transfer between corrective services facilities, eligibility

dates for discharge or release, results of the prisoner's applications for parole orders, or the death or escape of the prisoner.

Victim Assist Queensland (VAQ) is a business unit within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. VAQ provides a central point of contact for victims of violent crime to access financial assistance and specialist support services.

VAQ currently funds Relationships Australia Queensland to provide the Victims Counselling and Support Service (VCSS) to deliver counselling to victims of violent crime, their family and friends. In 2016-17 the VCSS will receive over \$1.3 million under the Victim Services Funding Program.

DANGEROUS PRISONERS (SEXUAL OFFENDERS) ACT

QCS closely monitors offenders subject to continuing supervision under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* (DPSOA) orders. Offenders managed under DPSOA are subject to rigorous supervision in the community through surveillance, intensive case management, and intervention. Unless determined as not required by the Supreme Court, offenders subject to DPSOA orders are also supervised through 24/7 GPS monitoring.

If a sexual offender has been determined suitable by a Court for ongoing supervision in the community, a stringent suitability assessment of proposed accommodation is undertaken to determine whether any risks are present in the environment and whether they can be mitigated.

QCS routinely shares and provides information with the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to assist with the management of violent and sexual offenders within the community.

In this year's Budget, the Palaszczuk Government committed an additional \$5.1 million over four years and funding of \$1.3 million per annum ongoing to modernise the technology used to electronically monitor high risk sex offenders in the community and implement a Geographic Information System. The Palaszczuk Government will continue to ensure the safety of Queenslanders remains the highest priority.