

Question on Notice
No. 1382
Asked on 26 October 2023

MR B MICKELBERG ASKED MINISTER FOR POLICE AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (HON M RYAN)—

QUESTION:

With reference to Sunshine Coast Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators having expressed concern about a lack of support from the Queensland Police Service and recently, longstanding coordinators have resigned— Will the Minister advise (a) what QPS support has been given to Sunshine Coast Neighbourhood Watch groups, including how the District Crime Prevention Unit proactively support individual groups and (b) how the State Government intends to improve the provision of support to Neighbourhood Watch groups who perform an important role keeping our communities safe?

ANSWER:

I am advised by the Queensland Police Service (QPS) there are 13 active Neighbourhood Watch groups (NHW) in the Sunshine Coast District (SCD).

To support the SCD NHW groups, I am advised by the QPS that both the District Crime Prevention Unit (DCPU) and divisional Officers in Charge actively and regularly engage with these groups to discuss upcoming events, crime trends, local policing issues and resources. Local examples of police engagement and partnership with NHW groups include the Sippy Downs Police division participating in a 'question and answer' community forum in mid-2023, and 'Coffee with a Cop' events held regularly at local shopping centres in both Nambour and Sippy Downs.

District coordination of SCD NHW groups is the responsibility of the DCPU. The DCPU encourages active consultation and negotiation from all NHW stakeholders within the district. To ensure a coordinated, overarching approach is maintained, the DCPU chairs a quarterly meeting with committee members, fostering information sharing, consultation, program promotion and networking opportunities.

SCD DCPU provide guidance and assistance to afford SCD NHW members and groups the greatest opportunity to achieve the aims and priorities of NHW. The QPS collaborates with NHW Area Coordinators working alongside them at community and crime prevention forums, coordinating local NHW groups to attend major events (such as the Sunshine Coast Emergency Services Expo and the Nambour Show), providing advice on current crime trends, providing resources and merchandise, monitoring and advising on local NHW Facebook pages, and encouraging group membership and growth, including conducting annual vetting on newly voted committee members.

The Sunshine Coast District greatly appreciates and recognises the outstanding contribution of the many NHW volunteers and participants towards a safer Queensland. Recognition is achieved through both an extensive awards program and nomination of members for representation at the NHW State conference. The DCPU is highly involved in these nomination processes.

I am advised by the QPS that the Communications, Culture and Engagement Division (CCED) of the QPS is responsible for the state-wide coordination of Neighbourhood Watch Queensland (NHWQ). CCED provides information and resourcing to assist with the functioning of NHWQ which includes crime prevention messaging information, expert crime prevention advice, administration of the NHWQ website to support consistent crime prevention messaging and the facilitation of the annual Neighbourhood Watch State Conference. This year's conference was recently held in Brisbane and saw over 100 NHWQ volunteers come together with police officers from DCPUs to collaborate and share information to build safer communities.

I understand that NHWQ is currently in the process of updating and improving several facets of the program. These changes will improve the processes and systems currently in place, and provide better support, training and information for the area coordinators of NHWQ Groups and administrators of NHWQ social media pages.