

13/5/04

Ministerial Statement
The Honourable Judy Spence, MP, Minister for Police and Corrective Services

NAPRANUM POLICING

Thursday, 13 May 2004



Mr Speaker, yesterday in question time the Opposition selectively released a small part of a draft preliminary assessment of the Napranum Alcohol Management Plan.

I would like to make it clear this report was not commissioned by the Queensland Government or any Government Department and it does not reflect the views of the Queensland Police Service.

I have now obtained and, with the Commissioner's office, reviewed the draft document's statements on police resources and would like to respond.

As I said yesterday, in the majority of indigenous communities, the police to population ratio is above the State average.

I acknowledge that resources in Weipa have been stretched, however, police have proactively monitored and enforced the alcohol restrictions at Napranum and continue to respond to all other calls for assistance in the area.

The Far Northern Regional Tactical Crime Squad, which has 21 members, has supplemented local resources in policing Alcohol Management Plans.

The Squad has made four visits to the Napranum community since the alcohol restrictions came into effect, and more visits are planned.

In order to further strengthen the Police Service's response in Weipa, the Far Northern Region is currently negotiating the purchase of a duplex to house extra officers who are expected to be stationed there.

The service has reviewed the resource requirements of the Cairns police district, which includes the Cape York communities, and I am advised that the regional Assistant Commissioner will soon receive an additional 27 police for the areas of most need.

They include nine detectives who will play an important part in resolving serious crimes that occur in Cape York communities.

I have been advised that even more police will be appointed to the Cairns district under the 2004-05 staffing allocation. However, the number is yet to be determined.

Next month the Commissioner and I will travel to the Cape to meet with community leaders and local police to discuss resources.

As I said yesterday, how police are allocated across the State is a matter for the Queensland Police Service.

However, it is because of the Beattie Government's commitment to safer and more supportive communities that we have been seeing an unprecedented increase in police numbers.

We have funded an extra 300 police in each of the past six years, and by September next year will reach our target of 9100 police. This government will then continue to fund police growth, ensuring Queensland stays above the national average police to population ratio.

Mr Speaker, enforcing these Alcohol Management Plans is not easy, but I am proud of the commitment, proactive approach and leadership being shown by our police. The Opposition should acknowledge that instead of trying to reflect negatively on their ~~fine~~ work.

It is reasonable to expect there will be an increase in reporting and detection of some offences. This will continue to be monitored and responded to by staff attached to the Far Northern Police Region.