



Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

Ref No: 13645 P2 JF

Mr Neil Laurie
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Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition number 2222-14 lodged with the Legislative Assembly on 13 February 2014. The principal petitioner is Ms Cheryl Roxburgh of Osborne. The petition calls for an increase in police staffing numbers allocated to the Ayr and Home Hill Stations.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) advise that policing within the Burdekin area is undertaken by officers from the Ayr, Home Hill, Giru and Clare Police Stations. Officers from these four divisions are generally responsible for attending and managing police-related issues within their respective divisions. Each of the stations is managed by an Officer in Charge who monitors all offences within their division and allocates resources appropriately. Officers from each of the divisions regularly undertake joint operations targeting crime, good order and traffic-related matters within the Burdekin area to address any identified increases in offending.

With regard to the Ayr and Home Hill Stations, the QPS staffing allocation model dictates the number of sworn officers at each station. Currently the Ayr Station has an approved strength of 18 officers, which includes the Officer in Charge and 17 general duties officers/shift supervisors. The Ayr Station is also supported by two Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB) officers, two Road Policing Command (RPC) officers, one Child Protection and Investigation Unit (CPIU) officer, one Scenes of Crime officer and two Police Liaison Officers. One of these 'support' positions, the only one not occupied as at 1 March 2014 was the CPIU position, which has recently been advertised in the QPS gazette. In addition, there is one position at a Youth Club in Ayr which is currently vacant, but is filled on a relieving basis.

The Home Hill Station has an approved strength of four officers, which includes the Officer in Charge and three general duties officers. All four positions are currently filled, however, recently one of these officers has been seconded to other policing activities within the Burdekin area. Both the Ayr and Home Hill Stations receive additional support from administrative staff. Additionally, officers from Townsville including the CIB, CPIU, Tactical Crime Squad and RPC staff travel to the Burdekin to assist local officers with specific tasks.

I have been advised that the staffing allocation for both Ayr and Home Hill Stations will be reviewed as part of the QPS annual planning and budgetary processes.

Northern Region Acting Assistant Commissioner Paul Taylor will continue to monitor the situation and will consider every opportunity to further support the Burdekin community in the provision of policing services.

The Newman Government is committed to revitalising front line policing by providing an additional 1,100 new police officers over four years. To date, the Government has delivered over 600 additional officers who have been allocated throughout the State to areas of critical need. This increase in frontline police will enable the QPS to commit more officers to proactive policing tasks.

In addition, members of the Burdekin community are reminded that any time they wish to report a non-urgent crime or incident or for general police enquiries they should call Policelink on telephone 131 444 or alternatively via the Policelink@police.qld.gov.au online services and the Policelink mobile application. However, if a crime is occurring at the time or there is a life-threatening situation or suspected offenders in the area, triple 000 should be called immediately.

Public information received through these channels is forwarded for intelligence and investigation purposes. Some examples of the type of non-urgent incidents include wilful damage to property, stealing offences, break and enter offences, stolen vehicles and lost property. It is worth noting that generally the rate of offending with regard to break and enter offences across the Ayr and Home Hill policing divisions is decreasing as indicated in the table below.

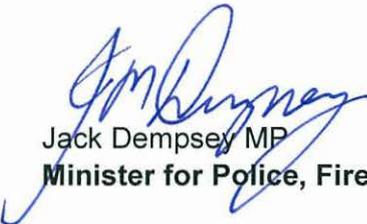
OFFENCE TYPE	2011	2012	2013	2014
BURGLARY	118	103	84	14
BREAK AND ENTER (SHOPS)	9	8	7	0
BREAK AND ENTER (PREMISES)	34	46	54	8

Should Ms Roxburgh and the petitioners have any further enquiries, Inspector Glenn Doyle, Southern Patrol Group, Townsville District, is available on telephone (07) 4799 8962.

In relation to the reference in the petition to the strengthening of penalties for break and enter offences, as this matter falls within the responsibilities of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, I have taken the liberty of forwarding a copy of this correspondence to the Honourable Jarrod Bleijie MP, for his consideration.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely


Jack Dempsey MP

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

CC: The Honourable Jarrod Bleijie MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice



The Hon Jarrod Bleijie MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

In reply please quote: 558960/1, 2492144

Your reference: 10.4 Petitions

16 MAY 2014

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
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Cnr Alice and George Sts
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jarrod', written over the text 'Dear Mr Laurie'.

I refer to your letter dated 13 February 2014 to the Honourable Jack Dempsey MP, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services, regarding Petition No.2222-14, presented to the Queensland Legislative Assembly, petitioning for an increase in Queensland Police staffing numbers allocated to the Ayr and Home Hill Stations. Minister Dempsey referred your letter to me for my consideration regarding the issue of strengthening penalties for break and enter offences.

This Government has acted swiftly and decisively to deliver on our pre-election commitments to ensure the safety, welfare and order of our communities. We have made major reforms to the criminal justice system to make offenders more accountable and to deter them from future offending. I wish to assure the residents of Ayr and Home Hill that we are serious about making Queensland safe for everyone and we will continue to be tough on crime.

We have introduced a suite of reforms to strengthen sentences through increased maximum penalties and the establishment of new mandatory minimum sentencing laws. In particular, since being elected this Government has introduced new laws that better protect police officers in the performance of their duties; strengthen the punishment regime for the offence of murder; target child sexual offenders; and target serious drug offenders, given the far reaching and often devastating consequences of drug use upon our society.

Importantly, on 18 March 2014, the Queensland Parliament also passed laws to ensure that for any offender convicted of any offence, prison is no longer to be regarded as a sentence of last resort. This is anticipated to result in an overall strengthening of the sentencing regime in Queensland, including for break and enter offences.

In many cases property offences such as break and enter are committed by young people. We have listened to community concerns about youth crime and have taken steps to tackle the problem head-on. The first steps were to introduce a trial of youth boot camps, which aim to instil discipline, values and respect through a highly structured program that involves the young person's family. Following early evidence of the program's effectiveness, we have expanded the trial of these boot camps so that more Queensland communities can benefit.

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The *Youth Justice Act 1992* (the Act) has been reviewed and the Queensland Parliament recently passed amendments to the Act to improve community safety and ensure young offenders are held accountable for their actions. The changes include:

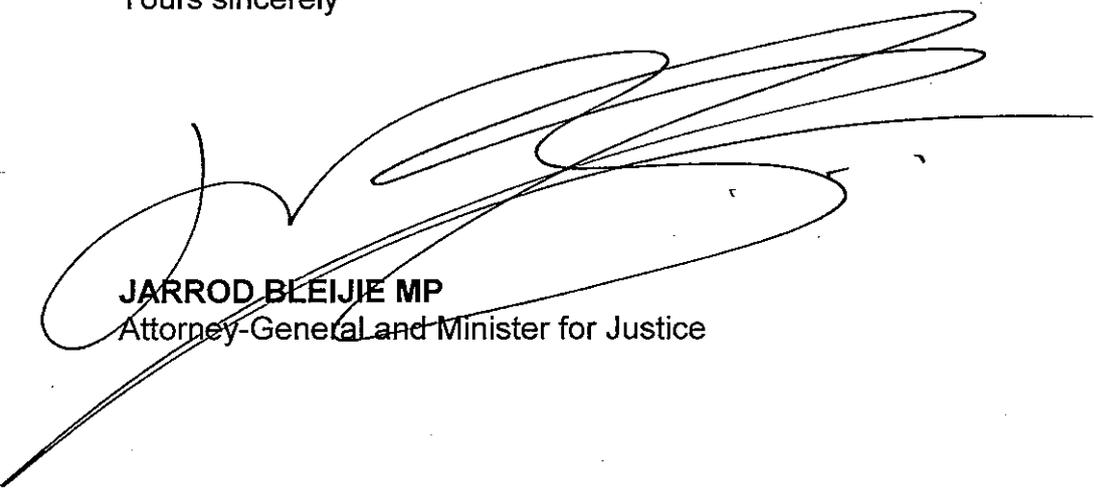
- opening the Childrens Court to the public and enabling repeat offenders to be publicly named;
- creating an offence when a young offender commits a further offence while on bail;
- automatically transferring offenders from youth detention centres to adult correctional facilities when they turn 17 years of age, if they have six or more months remaining to serve; and
- making juvenile findings of guilt admissible if the same person is later sentenced for offences committed as an adult.

The Act was also amended to require the Childrens Court to order that repeat young vehicle offenders who live in a prescribed area participate in a youth boot camp program as part of their sentence.

The next stage in reducing youth crime and transforming the youth justice system is to finalise and implement the *Blueprint for the Future of Youth Justice in Queensland* (the Blueprint). The Blueprint is a substantial reform strategy that shifts the focus of the youth justice system from responding to crime to also addressing the causes of crime.

I thank the petitioners for raising this important issue.

Yours sincerely



JARROD BLEIJIE MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice