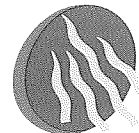




Hon Judy Spence MP
Member for Mt Gravatt



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Police, Corrective Services
and Sport**

Ref: 5653 F4 LT

20 FEB 2009



Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 9 October 2008 in relation to Petition No. 1134-08 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly. The Petition requests the House to support the Burdekin Community Action Group Against Crime by:

1. Strengthening police presence in the district;
2. Ensuring the enforcement of stronger laws and harsher punishment by the Courts to deter reoffenders;
3. Providing assistance for strengthening our capacity to prevent crime in our community.

In response, I can advise that the Bligh Government has given a commitment to continue increasing the number of police in Queensland and to providing them with the resources they need to fight crime.

The 2008-09 State Budget provides a record \$1.571 billion operating budget for the Queensland Police Service, an increase of \$134 million or 9.3% from the previous budget which was also a record allocation.

By October 2009, through the creation of an additional 200 new sworn police positions, the Police Service will have more than 10 100 sworn officers. This will more than meet this Government's commitment to maintain a police to population ratio above the national average.

Police numbers have also been boosted as a result of the Police Service civilianisation strategy which has released officers for frontline policing to the community. Since 2005-06, the Police Service has employed over 300 staff members under the civilianisation program in roles such as watchhouse, counter and administrative support.

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As the additional front-line, first response general duties police officers resulting from these commitments progressively become available for deployment, they will continue to be allocated throughout the State in accordance with the Queensland Police Service Staffing Allocation Model which is used to determine police staffing allocations across the State. The Model is continually revised and updated on the basis of assessments of relative workloads and the police staffing needs of all areas as identified through crime, population and traffic statistics, and various other service-delivery factors common to all communities.

Police stations in the Burdekin area, including Ayr, Home Hill, Clare and Giru, are staffed in accordance with that model. The Police Service is satisfied the current level of police resources within the Burdekin area is appropriate. However, staff numbers will continue to be monitored and revised as required to ensure an appropriate level of service is maintained.

Additionally, to assist with the policing of major local events and special operations, extra police officers are provided from the Townsville District. These officers are sourced from general duties and specialist areas including the Criminal Investigation Branch, Tactical Crime Squad, Traffic Branch, Dog Squad, Drug Squad and Forensic Services.

As well as providing police officer positions, funding received from the Government has enabled the Queensland Police Service to construct a new police station at Ayr. The station, designed to comfortably accommodate staffing increases into the foreseeable future, is currently under construction and scheduled for completion in January 2009.

The Divisional Inspector for the Burdekin area attends meetings of the Burdekin Community Action Group Against Crime (the Action Group). These meetings provide regular two-way discussions and consultation on crime and related issues. The views of the Action Group are taken into consideration and information provided at the meetings has assisted with the policing of those matters.

Furthermore, a number of successful operations have been conducted in Ayr over recent months with the assistance of extra police officers from the Townsville Police District. These operations have apprehended offenders for a large number of criminal, traffic and public order offences.

Additionally, the Townsville District Crime Prevention Coordinator has been active within the Burdekin area promoting crime prevention strategies. An electronic Crime Bulletin has also been launched with two issues already distributed. New editions will be circulated within the Burdekin on a bi-monthly basis.

The Crime Stoppers committee has been reinvigorated within the Burdekin area, with the District Officer of the Townsville Police District attending meetings and encouraging the committee to provide information specific to the Burdekin to the newly prepared Crime Bulletin.

As alcohol can be a major factor in assault offences, the new Ayr Liquor Accord was launched in July 2008 and will play an important part in deterring unruly behaviour around licensed areas. Liquor 'accords' have become a highly successful tactic in police districts to help reduce violence and antisocial behaviour in and around licensed premises. Senior police regularly meet with members of the business community, licensees and representatives of the various councils and other government departments to discuss the management of liquor related incidents and antisocial behaviour.

As a result of these meetings, action plans are undertaken in conjunction with officers from Liquor Licensing to target the inappropriate sale of alcohol at licensed premises and antisocial behaviour and is strongly supported by licensees, local business owners and government agencies.

Generally, the overall level of crime in the Burdekin area shows a downward trend in recent months, indicating the crime prevention and detection strategies are having a positive effect on local crime issues, including offences affecting personal safety.

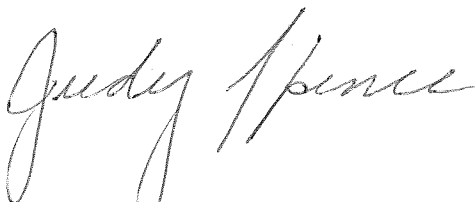
The Queensland Police Service is committed to investigating all reports of criminal activity and has an ongoing program of evaluation and review to ensure services and resources are effectively managed across all areas of the State, including the Burdekin.

Acting Superintendent Cheryl Scanlon of the Townsville Police District is available on telephone 4726 8639 for any further assistance required.

The issue of ensuring the enforcement of stronger laws and harsher punishment by the courts to deter reoffenders falls within the responsibilities of the Honourable Kerry Shine MP, Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland. I have therefore taken the liberty of forwarding a copy of your letter and petition to Minister Shine for consideration and direct reply.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Judy Spence". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Judy Spence MP
Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport