



**Adjournment Speech by
GLEN ELMES**

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Hansard, 15 February, 2008

Queensland Police Service, Noosa Electorate

Mr ELMES (Noosa--Lib) (6.07 pm): I rise tonight to again comment on the appalling lack of police allocated to the Noosa electorate by the Bligh Labor government. We are fortunate in Noosa that murders, rapes and other serious crimes are rare. What we do have, though, is an older population that is very attuned to crimes and disturbances such as public drunkenness, violence, hoonings, bashings, assaults, vandalism, petty theft and the like. These are growing problems and we do not have sufficient numbers of police to deal with them. In her many criticisms of me, the minister chanced the line that many of these crimes have decreased in number.

The fact is that many of these crimes go unreported, because residents know that even if the police are able to attend it would be long after the perpetrators have disappeared. On the Australia Day long weekend some here tonight may have noticed news reports about the assaults on police in Noosa. Some 100 to 150 teenagers and young adults had gathered in the Noosa Woods area drinking heavily, with at least some intent on trouble. The trouble came and assaults on police were made and sufficient backup was not available to give police assistance when it was required.

The minister and senior police tell me that there are 37 officers on the roster in the Noosa division. On the Australia Day long weekend the facts were that seven officers were on some kind of leave, with one of these officers on long-term sick leave and unlikely to return to work. A further three officers were assigned to other duties outside Noosa but were still on the books, and a further four were unfilled vacancies. Of the remaining 23 officers, three of those are first-year constables who, as interested members of this House would know, are not able to work unsupervised. This leaves a figure of just 20 out of a roster of 37.

Twenty policemen and women cover a police station, two police beats, and provide 24-hour police protection to Noosa residents. The police minister says that the police to population ratio in Queensland is one to 429. If we take the total number of police available in the Noosa shire--and I now include those stationed at Cooroy and Pomona--and divide it by the 2006 census population data, the police to population ratio in Noosa is one to 1,047. It is a disgrace. Judy Spence knows it is a disgrace and she goes out of her way to cover up the facts.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! The member will refer to other members by their title.

Mr ELMES: The minister, I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. She and the Labor government have failed in the first responsibility of government and that is the protection of its citizens. As a starting point, the people of Noosa would be delighted if they could just have the police that this Labor government tells us we do have. On their behalf I would like to see the four vacancies at the Noosa Heads Police Station filled. We would like to see the three officers assigned to other duties returned to Noosa and then we would like some meaningful progress on seeing police numbers actually increase without the cover-ups and sleight of hand.