



**Response to Estimate Committee - Police Portfolio
GLEN ELMES**

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Hansard, 2007

Mr ELMES (Noosa--Lib) (2.43 pm): Today I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on Estimates Committee B, and the police force portfolio in particular. The principle requirement of a peaceful society is an orderly society. Without order there cannot be a society; there can only be anarchy. In our community the Queensland Police Service is delegated with maintaining law and order, and they have a very difficult job to do.

To highlight how difficult the QPS job is, members can simply look at how often reports regarding the QPS appear in our media. Whenever something goes wrong, whenever a particularly heinous crime is committed or whenever an offender gets injured, the media is on hand to give wide coverage to the police response. We never get to hear about reports of calm, uneventful days when the peace is maintained. However, for every day that is peaceful and for every day that we can walk around the streets of our cities and towns, we owe the QPS thanks for maintaining the peace and good order.

With such a difficult job to do, one would expect that the government would give the QPS every support that it asks for, yet this is far from the case. In my electorate at the Noosa Heads Police Station there is around 332 fine Queensland police personnel. However, when we really need police on the streets, at night and on weekends, they are stretched to their absolute limits. The numbers do not stack up when one considers that since 1991 the number of police stationed at Noosa Heads has remained the same while the population of the area has virtually doubled. On top of that, given that Noosa is one of the top tourists locations in Queensland and attracts over 1.7 million tourists and visitors every year with the expected seasonal peaks, no allowance is made for the growing number of tourists in the QPS staff allocations.

There is a second problem that faces the QPS every day, which is the growing disrespect for police amongst our youth. I am disgusted to hear reports of syringe attacks and spitting attacks on police. Despite what Minister Spence may say from spin central in George Street, the QPS does not receive the support its deserves and should expect from the Queensland government. The simple fact of life is that the government is not doing enough to ensure that the offenders against police are taught some respect. Attacks on police are not just attacks on society; they are attacks on the very ties that bind society together, which allow it to exist in the first place.

My colleague Rob Messenger and I believe that the QPS deserves better. It should be given every support, including support from the courts in the form of the swift and, if necessary, mandatory punishment of those who attack police. There should be no quarter given to anyone who attacks police who are acting in the course of their duty. I urge the Beattie government to reconsider its position and demonstrate to the community that the police are to be respected by showing the police respect first. I suggest that it drops this pay charade and makes an example of Queenslanders' respect for the police with its chequebook.

Secondly, if people do not have respect for police to the extent that they perpetuate attacks on police officers, the Beattie government must ensure that those attackers are made an example of with swift punishment to send their message that Queenslanders respect and will protect their police. I suggest that a regime of mandatory sentences be implemented to ensure that a loud and clear message is sent. Offenders against police must be taught respect. By failing to do this, the Beattie government has failed the QPS, just as it has failed the people and the police of Noosa.
