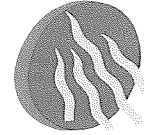




Hon Neil Roberts MP
Member for Nudgee



**Queensland
Government**

Our Ref: P/09/00422

QPS Ref: 9796 F1 LB

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

05 AUG 2009

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

Dear Mr Laurie

I am writing to provide my response to petition number 1234-09, which was lodged with the Legislative Assembly.

The petition seeks to draw the attention of the House to offences of graffiti, vandalism and hooning in the suburbs between Reedy Creek and Nerang/Carrara. The petitioners also request the upgrade of the Mudgeeraba and Nerang Police Stations to 24 hour counter operations.

The Government and the police share residents' concerns about property crimes. Graffiti is an eyesore, and together with other acts of vandalism, creates an atmosphere of decline. Clean-up is costly to the community. In recognition of the seriousness with which these offences are viewed, Queensland has introduced the toughest anti-graffiti laws in Australia. Offenders face up to seven years' imprisonment if the graffiti is obscene or indecent, or the property affected is an educational institution.

This Government has already introduced legislation aimed at reducing the prevalence of graffiti offences committed by young people. Tough new laws have been introduced to ban the sale of spray paint cans to minors. Under these laws, shop owners and their employees must request proof of age before selling spray paint to a person, unless satisfied the buyer is an adult.

The Bligh Government has also introduced legislation to give authorised government and council officers the powers to remove graffiti from private properties.

The Queensland Police Service advises it uses a number of strategies to combat graffiti offences. Intelligence officers in various police districts monitor the incidence of graffiti within their areas. The intelligence generated by these officers is used to initiate intelligence-driven patrols targeting identified problem areas.

Profiles of suspected and known graffiti offenders are also produced and circulated to patrol crews. Problem areas may also be targeted through special operations by divisional police or district-based Tactical Crime Squads.

Level 24 State Law Building
50 Ann Street Brisbane 4000
PO Box 15195 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3239 0199
Facsimile +61 7 3221 9985
Email police@ministerial.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

Additionally, the Police Service actively addresses graffiti through educational programs conducted by crime prevention officers, school based police officers, "adopt-a-cops" and community beat officers.

The Queensland Police Service, as part of its community engagement strategies, utilises partnership programs with other government departments, including local government, local community groups and the media, to develop and implement proactive and preventative strategies to reduce the incident of crime, including graffiti. The Crime Stoppers program is a well known, highly successful example of such an initiative.

In addition, police and local government authorities utilise surveillance technology and information-sharing intelligence to increase the capacity for apprehending graffiti offenders.

Police recently conducted graffiti audits throughout suburbs within the Mudgeeraba and Nerang Police Divisions, utilising these community partnerships.

The Police Service advises it initiated contact with local representatives of the Queensland Main Roads Department in respect to instances of graffiti on road assets. As a result, the Police Service, the Department of Main Roads and the Gold Coast City Council have developed a collaborative approach to graffiti management and prevention.

The police advise a review of reported graffiti offences within the western corridor of the Gold Coast does not indicate any prevalence of these offences or emerging crime trends. Indeed, for the year 2009, significant reductions have been achieved in the levels of reported graffiti offences. In comparison to the same year-to-date period in 2008, there has been a 41% reduction throughout the Gold Coast Police District in these offences. Police enforcement actions appear to be contributing to a reduction in this crime category, in no small way attributable to the arrest of numerous graffiti offenders to date in 2009.

On the issue of hooning and dangerous and irresponsible driver behaviour generally, the Government has already given police the power to combat hooning behaviour on Queensland roads. The *Police Powers and Responsibilities and Another Act Amendment Act 2002* introduced tough new measures to allow for vehicle confiscation against motorists apprehended for certain offences ("type 1" offences) such as dangerous driving, careless driving, conducting speed trials, and making unnecessary noise or smoke by spinning the wheels of a vehicle.

Further amendments to the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* were introduced state-wide on 1 July 2008. These laws allow for vehicle impoundment, including permanent forfeiture of vehicles to the State, as a sanction for "type 2" vehicle related offences which encompass:

- driving illegally modified vehicles, including noisy exhausts;
- unlicensed driving;
- driving unregistered and uninsured (Compulsory Third Party) vehicle;
- drink drive at or over 0.15% or;
- fail to provide a specimen of breath/blood or driving while under 24 hour suspension.

The Queensland Police Service advises it is committed to conducting traffic enforcement and ensuring that appropriate action, including prosecution if applicable, is taken where sufficient evidence of traffic offences is found.

Mudgeeraba and Nerang police regularly conduct traffic enforcement patrols between Reedy Creek and Nerang to address community concerns of offending motorists in these areas.

These local level resources are frequently deployed during joint policing operations with members from the Gold Coast District Traffic Branch and the State Traffic Task Force, undertaking proactive traffic enforcement actions in these and adjacent areas. Further multi-agency traffic operations are planned for the future.

On the issue of police resourcing, local residents will be aware of the current construction of the Robina Police Station, which is expected to become operational soon. Policing operations from this 24 hour station will boost community safety through the provision of additional police officers, infrastructure and state of the art resources, which will increase the level of police services to this area.

I am also pleased to advise that the new Coomera Police District is scheduled to commence operations from 1 October 2009. The new District will have an allocated strength of 163 police officer positions, including 35 new positions. Of the 35 new positions, 10 will be new traffic officer positions.

The new District will service Mudgeeraba, as well as the areas of Coomera, Nerang, North Tamborine, Canungra, Beaudesert and Rathdowney.

The complex will accommodate the new District Officer, Coomera District and support staff, together with district functions, including: criminal investigation branch; child protection and investigation unit; traffic branch; training office; crime prevention unit; domestic violence coordination; and forensic services.

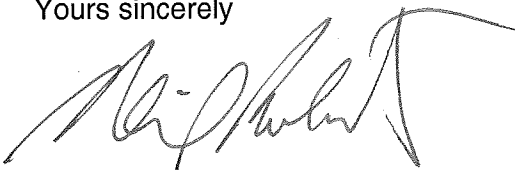
It is expected significant benefits will accrue from the deterrent effect generated by a greater police presence in the local area and the capacity to develop proactive community partnerships and crime prevention initiatives focusing on local issues. In addition, the increased police presence will provide a stronger traffic enforcement capability, including a faster response time to traffic incidents.

The petitioners' request for the upgrading of Mudgeeraba and Nerang Police Stations to 24 hour counter operations has been reviewed by senior police management. The police advise regular reviews of local policing arrangements has not identified a need to modify current rostering of police patrols and/or counter services at Mudgeeraba or Nerang Stations. Nonetheless, police managers remain active in ensuring optimum police service delivery is provided to the Mudgeeraba and Nerang communities and staffing levels are subject to ongoing review, which takes into consideration calls for service, changes in local demographics and community needs.

Acting District Inspector Shane Holmes (Western Divisions), is available on telephone (07) 5503 8911 for any further assistance which may be required.

I trust this information is of assistance to petitioners.

Yours sincerely



Neil Roberts
**Minister for Police, Corrective Services
and Emergency Services**