

Mrs Jean Kennedy
Macrossan Street
RAVENSWOOD QLD 4816

Dear Mrs Kennedy

I refer to a your petition requesting the establishment of a new police station at Ravenswood, which was tabled in the Queensland Parliament by Mrs Christine Scott MP, Member for Charters Towers.

I am pleased to advise that the construction of a new police station and residence at Ravenswood is listed on the Beattie Government's Capital Investment Strategic Plan for the Queensland Police Service. At this stage the project is planned to begin in the 2003-2004 financial year, subject to other statewide priorities.

We propose the progression of this project would see the existing Mingela Station remain operational until such time as the proposed new Ravenswood Station is completed, following which the Mingela Station would be closed. The Mingela Police Division is part of the Townsville Police District and there are no plans to create a new police district centred on Charters Towers.

The Beattie Government recognises that the needs of different areas across Queensland change in terms of population and policing requirements. Population figures for the Mingela Police Division indicate that the Ravenswood area is a growing community, whereas the population of Mingela has steadily declined to only 14 people. That is why we have a progressive capital works program for the Police Service.

In terms of current policing arrangements in Ravenswood, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Northern Region appreciate community concerns about the need for an effective policing service in the area at all times. The Assistant Commissioner wishes to assure you and your fellow petitioners that every possible effort will continue to be made to ensure that the Ravenswood community remains safe.

In addition to the current policing services provided by the Mingela Police, the Assistant Commissioner reports that officers attached to the Townsville District Tactical Crime Squad and Traffic Branches at the Townsville and Charters Towers Stations also assist with service delivery in the area through their attendance at local events and the conduct of mobile patrols.

I assure you that the unique requirements of policing in rural and regional areas of the State are taken into account when decisions are made about the allocation of resources to the Queensland Police Service's various organisational units. This is an issue in which I take a close personal interest, given the number of rural and remote communities in my own electorate, and I fully appreciate the sentiments you and your fellow petitioners have expressed.

Both the Beattie Government and the Queensland Police Service are committed to the delivery of high quality policing services in all Queensland communities and, to this end, have progressed a number of programs and activities to improve service delivery in rural and regional areas, including:

- Maintenance of a policing presence in more than 150 one and two officer stations in rural and remote centres throughout Queensland;
- Continued support for the north Queensland campus of the Queensland Police Academy in Townsville, which was established in 1996 to encourage recruitment and retention of police officers in central and north Queensland;
- Operation of Queensland Government Agent Program Offices in police stations at Bedourie, Birdsville, Jundah, Isisford, Windorah and Thargomindah, providing these communities with access to a broad range of government information and services;
- Employment of Police Liaison Officers throughout the State to establish a positive rapport between police and Indigenous and ethnic communities (Officers are currently located at Thursday Island, Laura, Charters Towers, Normanton, Mount Isa, Cunnamulla, Charleville, Goondiwindi and St George);
- Use of a Part-Time Cell Visitor Scheme, specifically designed to assist persons in custody in smaller centres, including Roma, Collinsville and Palm Island, where full-time diversionary centre organisations are not available;
- Continued upgrading of police radio and communications facilities and capabilities with a particular focus on rural and remote areas of the State;
- Ongoing support for the Rural Watch program which, similar to Neighbourhood Watch, encourages rural communities to participate in small groups to improve the safety and security of their families and other neighborhood residents.

I reiterate that the Beattie Government won't turn its back on people in rural and remote communities – our commitment to maintaining essential policing services in these communities is steadfast.

I trust this information is of assistance to you and your fellow petitioners, and serves to demonstrate the Beattie Government's determination to deliver effective policing services to all Queensland communities.

Yours sincerely

TONY McGRADY
Minister for Police and Corrective Services
and Minister Assisting the Premier on the
Carpentaria Minerals Province

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