



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Tuesday, 15 April 2008

QUEENSLAND POLICE ACADEMY INDUCTION PARADE; POLICE LIAISON OFFICERS

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (9.25 pm): On Friday, 14 March 2008 I was privileged to attend the service induction parade for 19 recruits who had completed the Recruit Operational Vocational Education Program at the north Queensland campus of the Queensland Police Academy. The reviewing officer was the Queensland Police Commissioner, Mr Bob Atkinson. Musical support for the induction parade was provided by the Queensland Police Pipes and Drums, and might I say that they were outstanding.

The ceremony was a particularly special event for me, because a good mate of mine, then recruit but now Constable Stuart Jones, graduated from the academy with distinction. I am extremely proud to say that Stuart was the recipient of both the Queensland Police Commissioner's award for the highest achievement based on academic results, ethical attitude, diligence, integrity, service and skills performance, and the Dux award, sponsored by the Queensland Police Union, for the highest level of achievement in academic studies. I congratulate Stuart and wish him all the very best in his career as a Queensland police officer. His partner Sarah, son Ty, his family and friends are very proud of him.

Police liaison officers have been very welcome and effective in my electorate of Hinchinbrook. At the Ingham Police Station, Tracey Prior and Willie Morganson are police liaison officers who are very active in the local community and are very positive role models, especially for young people in the Herbert River district. At the Innisfail Police Station, police liaison officers Clinton Epong and Carol Lewis are very recognisable and prominent in the local community, frequently taking a lead role in public relations and community engagement activities in the Innisfail area. There was previously no police liaison officer at the Tully Police Station until August last year following the appointment of Ben Ketchell as a PLO. Benny Ketchell is an old mate of mine, having attended Tully State High School. We played a lot of junior Rugby League together when we were growing up in Tully. Benny comes from a local family originally from the Torres Strait and he has made a positive contribution since commencing his duties as a PLO.

Ben has taken it upon himself, in addition to working closely and cooperatively with the local Indigenous community, to work on reducing truancy at Tully State High School. I understand he is having some success. Earlier this year I attended the presentation of seniors badges to year 12 students at Tully State High School. After the ceremony I was speaking with our new principal, Robyn Sprott, and Benny Ketchell. Principal Sprott mentioned how pleased she was with Benny's efforts in cracking down on students playing truant. I remarked that Benny had an unfair advantage and that his success was likely due to him knowing all the good spots around town! With the appointment of Benny Ketchell in Tully, communities in the Hinchinbrook electorate are now very well serviced by police liaison officers and I would like to record my thanks to all of them for their contribution to policing and community engagement.