



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT**

**Private Members' Statements**

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10 October 2017

**WALLSEND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:27pm):**

When she realised there was no active Wallsend neighbourhood watch, local resident Maree Miller decided to take the initiative and start one. Maree noticed a wave of petty crime in the Wallsend area and was volunteering at the Maryland Neighbourhood Centre when Bill Hackney, Hunter area community policing officer, gave a talk about the Neighbourhood Watch program. When Bill asked whether anyone was interested in setting up a neighbourhood watch, Maree answered the call. She said, "I put my hand up and said I'd do it".

According to the NSW Police Force, Neighbourhood Watch is a community-based, crime prevention organisation that aims to reduce localised crime and fear of crime by promoting and coordinating multifaceted approaches to prevention and problem solving. Neighbourhood Watch has been active in New South Wales since 1984. It receives no funding from the NSW Police Force or from the Government. Instead, Neighbourhood Watch relies on fundraising, sponsorships, grants and, most importantly, dedicated volunteers in the community—volunteers like Maree. Maree said:

There wasn't a Neighbourhood Watch at Wallsend or Blue Gum Hills, which would feed into Maryland, Minmi, and all those places.

Now Wallsend Neighbourhood Watch meets monthly, has more than 150 members and an active Facebook page. A monthly newsletter is in the works. It states:

Wallsend NHW has been formed to help reduce crime in our area and to make Wallsend an area where we get to know our neighbours and look after each other.

Wallsend Neighbourhood Watch has gone beyond that, of course. We all know that when children do not have an outlet, they are more likely to engage in petty crime and vandalism. Maree Miller and Wallsend Neighbourhood Watch have a solution, trying to engage local children in constructive community initiatives. Maree Miller told Newcastle Weekly:

Those who get involved with community projects will take pride in what they do, and it'll have a flow-on effect. There are better things for them to do than vandalise businesses.

Our local Neighbourhood Watch helps bring people together introduces neighbours to one another and creates a stronger sense of community. I applaud Maree and all the other volunteers who have done so well to get Wallsend Neighbourhood Watch up and running. They could not do it alone. Neighbourhood Watch needs the support of local police. The Newcastle local area command does the best it can with limited resources, but it needs more. In the last few years, no new police officers have been assigned to the Newcastle local area command. I have lobbied for many years for a police station in the Wallsend area. I have worked with the member for Maitland to improve staffing at the Beresfield police station. The Government has done nothing.

This Government failed to keep its promise to build a new police station in Glendale. Even when more than 10,000 Wallsend residents signed a petition calling for a Wallsend station, still nothing was done. Residents and businesses in Wallsend have been taking steps to secure their properties. In the past, I have hosted community forums to ensure residents are aware of best practice. In recent weeks, my office has advised residents to make sure that they do not keep valuables in their cars. I applaud Maree and the other volunteers for stepping up to help make our community safer, but they need more support. I urge the New South Wales Government and the Minister for Police to do the right thing and to allocate more resources and more officers to the Wallsend area. Our community deserves their support.