



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

Notice

19 October 2017

WALLSEND ELECTORATE POLICING

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (12:58):

In reply: I thank the members for the electorates of Drummoyne, Charlestown, Fairfield and Oatley for their contributions to this debate. The member for Charlestown spoke eloquently about the need for people to feel safe in the Hunter. She said that the Central Hunter Local Area Command requires additional resources. She noted that local area commands in the Hunter are under-resourced and are unable to meet the needs created by the growing population and the tyranny of distance. I agree with her.

It is all very well for the member for Drummoyne to talk about these sorts of issues, but Wallsend covers a large area and it is impossible for a police officer to get from Stockton to Minmi in a short time when there is an emergency. That tyranny of distance affects anyone who lives in rural or regional areas. The member for Oatley talked in generic terms about how wonderful the police force is, and I agree with him. But he did not talk about the need for additional resources and staff in Wallsend for which we are crying out. He gave us some archival stories about the number of police officers and police Ministers when Labor was in power, but that was more than six years ago. I was a member of the Labor Government at the time and I argued with the Government about better police resourcing. I am passionate about making sure that our police service is well resourced. I will argue for that whether Labor is in government or in opposition.

No-one has ever suggested that I do not have courage. I am consistent about the fact that I want a better police force now and when Labor is in office in 2019. The member for Fairfield talked about his attendance at two community forums, which were well received. Hundreds of people attended and they told him that they thought police response times were poor. They all respected the police, as do the member for Fairfield and I, but everyone knows that if a police car is at one end of a large geographical area it is impossible for it to attend to an emergency at the other end. The people of Beresfield and Tarro, who have a police station that is

operational only one morning a week, need more police in the area. The member for Drummoyne has been quoted as saying, "We are awash with police." He suggested that the local area command has "more bodies than seats" and that there are not only more officers on the ground but also they are walking the beat.

I invite the member for Drummoyne and any other Government member to come with me to any community forum at Beresfield and Tarro, put that to the local community and see how they respond. The problem is that police are invisible in that area, not through any fault of their own but because they are underresourced and understaffed to meet the demands of a growing population in a large geographical area. I say to the Government that we need more resources as the demands of a growing population are not being met. I urge members to support this motion.