



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Private Members' Statements

30 July 2019

WALLSEND POLICE STATION

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:08):

Not a day goes by without constituents calling my office complaining about petty crime or antisocial behaviour. Understandably, the community has been feeling very unsafe. On 16 July I joined the Newcastle City Police District as it hosted the Wallsend pop-up station.

The pop-up police station provided Wallsend locals with an opportunity to meet and speak with local police about any issues they felt were important to them. A police mobile command centre was set up and officers patrolled the streets. I thank Superintendent Brett Greentree, Commander, Newcastle City Police District, and Acting Inspector Lisa Jones. Superintendent Greentree is working with me and my office to provide much-needed increased policing in the Wallsend electorate. Acting Inspector Jones, who has helped to spearhead a number of extraordinary community outreach programs, said to me:

I think it's a basic premise: I think what's missing in our world at the moment is the opportunity to actually speak to each other. But it's that grassroots of standing with someone and saying, "This is where you live; I want you to tell me what you think is wrong and I want to try and help fix it." I think that is the basic message that we have here today.

Her statement illustrates why the pop-up police station has been so very welcomed in Wallsend. However, it is only a partial solution. The western suburbs of Newcastle and the north-western suburbs of Lake Macquarie need a police station. People are rightly concerned about response times and police numbers. The distance from Newcastle Police Station to Minmi is 20.3 kilometres along the best route. That takes 32 minutes to travel but with traffic the travel time could be as much as 40 minutes or more. Waratah Police Station is 14

kilometres away; with even moderate traffic that is a 20-minute time frame. Of course, police cars do not just sit at the station. A car could be as far away as Stockton, which is 30.3 kilometres from Minmi—a trip that takes more than half an hour even in the best traffic conditions and in bad traffic could take more than 55 minutes.

Beresfield and Tarro are 12 kilometres or 15 minutes away from Maitland Police Station and 16.2 kilometres or 18 minutes away from Raymond Terrace Police Station. The Port Stephens -Hunter Police District covers remote communities in the Hunter Valley all the way up to Dungog. In a worst case scenario a car at Dungog could take 50 minutes or more to travel the 61.2 kilometres to Beresfield. All of this presumes optimal traffic times and conditions. The areas of Glendale, Edgeworth, Cameron Park and West Wallsend have seen extraordinary growth in the last few years but the nearest police stations are at Toronto and Belmont. It takes about the same time to travel from Toronto as it does the 15 kilometres from Belmont Police Station. A car at either Swansea or Wangi Wangi responding to a call in Glendale would take more than half an hour to arrive on the scene.

When pushed on the matter of response times and police strength in the Wallsend electorate the police Minister is evasive. The local police go out of their way and do the best they can to help residents of the Wallsend electorate, limited only by a lack of resources and staff. Unfortunately, the Minister fobs off my attempts, made in good faith, to gather information with generic non-answers. All options need to be put on the table. I am committed to working productively with the Government on this important matter. All of this leaves me asking: How can Wallsend electorate residents and business owners feel safe to invest in the community unless the community invests in them?