



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

**Private Members' Statements**

16 November 2021

**BERESFIELD POLICE STATION**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (19:26):**

On Tuesday 6 April, an armed man walked into a takeaway shop on Lawson Avenue in Beresfield, threatening the two female employees, demanding cash, before fleeing along Beresford Avenue. A short time later, he threatened a 21-year-old man with the same firearm, demanding the man's phone and wallet. Thankfully, no-one was injured in either confrontation. The alleged perpetrator fled the scene and police began a large-scale search. Patrolling officers sighted the car on Woodberry Road and after a short pursuit arrested the man without further incident. I acknowledge the quick response of our hardworking local police officers. As usual, they did a fantastic job. I understand why local residents, though, are concerned, considering that directly across the road from the takeaway shop that was held up is the Beresfield Police Station, but it has been sitting for years unmanned. Unmanned.

Beresfield and Tarro constituents are deeply concerned about local crime and many feel that the police stations in Maitland and Raymond Terrace are too far away to render emergency care or assistance. I received a Facebook message illustrating this problem. A mum with young kids who lives in Beresfield told me,

*"I had the scariest experience. I was home with two kids asleep. Heard yanking noise at my patio. Next thing you know, I saw a man is trying to force himself into my kitchen through the dark glass door. He was yanking the door handle like mad, and I had never seen anything so frantic in my life. My TV was on. It was clear that someone was home, but still he was trying to madly get in. I rang 000 to get the police. They turned up over half an hour later, as Maitland is the closest station." I shudder to think what would have happened had the man got into the woman's house. She did the right*

*thing, of course, calling 000 and summoning the police, but in a situation where every second counts she was left without assistance for more than half an hour. She asked, "Who is protecting us and our little ones? We don't feel safe at all any more here."*

It is heartbreaking to hear. Beresfield and Tarro are wonderful little communities, but they are not getting the services and support that they need and deserve. Of course, it is not our police officers' fault; they do what they can to protect people in our community. It is the fault of this Government. It is this Government's fault that it does not seem to care about people in Beresfield, and about adequately staffing and resourcing police in the Hunter region. I have brought up this concerning matter in the area over and over again because the lack of a police presence in the western suburbs of Newcastle is a major problem for many local residents and business owners, as we see. A long-term resident wrote to me saying:

*Many in the community have lived local and were here when the station was manned previously. The benefits were that the officers tended to also live in the area and were part of the community. Their kids went to the local schools and played in the sport teams. They had relationships in the area. They knew when the local pubs and clubs closed and which way people went home and ensured nothing happened.*

Local policing, with on-the-ground experience and local knowledge is what is missing in the area. We do not have a local police station operational in the entirety of the Wallsend electorate. I call on the police Minister to do the right thing by communities in Beresfield, and Tarro and invest in the police resources and staff needed to make our communities safe.