

Tuesday 6 April 2010

## 1,600 ADDITIONAL POLICE TO MAKE OUR STREETS SAFE AGAIN

A Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Government will revolutionise policing and public safety in Victoria by boosting frontline police by an additional 1,600 recruits in the first term of government.

The \$344 million plan, *Making Our Streets Safe Again*, will end chronic statewide police shortages and restore public safety in metropolitan and regional communities.

We will make Victoria safe again.

This unprecedented investment by the Coalition in policing will see a dramatic increase in frontline police numbers. It will have a huge impact in protecting communities across Victoria and will be the largest single increase in frontline police numbers over one term of government in the history of Victoria.

Almost every region in Victoria is suffering from a lack of frontline police under John Brumby, with Victorians experiencing record levels of crime and violence. The Coalition will not tolerate crime, violence or anti-social behaviour.

Victorian families have a right to feel safe and secure in their community but under Labor, assaults and anti-social behaviour have reached record levels on our streets, with violent crime rising by 40 per cent and assaults increasing by 70 per cent.

It is a basic responsibility of government to protect its citizens. John Brumby has failed this test. Law and order has not been a priority of the Brumby Government, but it will be a priority of a Baillieu Government. Victorians have a right to expect to be protected.

The Brumby Government's soft-on-crime approach has failed to make our streets safe.

This policy will have an unprecedented impact in every suburb, town and region where police stations have been undermanned for years.

## **RECRUITMENT**

The Victorian Coalition will undertake a major police officer recruitment and training drive within weeks of gaining office.

The Victorian Coalition will recruit and train 1,600 additional police officers ready for frontline policing duties in the community.

These officers will be made up of Victorians who want to become police officers, as well as recruits from around Australia, who will be trained at the Police Academy. An extra \$8 million has been provided for capacity expansion at the Police Academy to accommodate increased recruit training.

## **POLICE NUMBERS**

Victoria has the fewest frontline police per capita and spends less on police resourcing per capita than any other state in Australia.

The Brumby Government has failed to provide Victoria Police with the resources required to protect communities and frontline police numbers have fallen well behind population growth and other states.

Victorian families no longer felt safe on the streets because John Brumby's soft-on-crime approach and lack of funding support had undermined the capacity and effectiveness of Victoria Police.

The only way we are going to stop the disturbing trend of record violent crime is to reverse the appalling neglect of police resourcing under 10 years of the Brumby Government.

## **FUNDING**

The Coalition will provide \$344 million over four years to fund an additional 1,600 police, plus an additional \$65 million capital allocation for operational equipment. This includes \$8 million for expanded training facilities and staff at the Police Academy.

Consistent with the Coalition's previous commitments to reduce the Brumby Government's spend on advertising, \$35 million per year – or \$140 million over the next four years – will be cut from the advertising budget to fund frontline police.

This will see a reduction in the government's annual advertising and public relations spend. The Auditor-General has found government total advertising spend to be 0.5 per cent of revenue, or approximately \$200 million in the current budget year.

Some of the advertising programs likely to be cut include the government's self-promotion of the desalination plant, transport plan (*It's all part of the plan*), economic performance (*We're not waiting, we're building*), and education performance (*Shine*). Advertising for essential services, safety and critical public information campaigns will not be affected.

Many of the Brumby Government advertising campaigns are nothing more than deceptive political advertising using taxpayer funds. Victorians can decide at the next election if they want more advertisements from John Brumby or more police from Ted Baillieu.

The remaining \$269 million, or \$67.25 million per annum, will be provided from funds available in the budget forward estimates and operating surpluses, which can comfortably accommodate this commitment within the state's budgetary parameters.

## **BACKGROUND**

Victoria Police has some of the best police officers in the nation, but Victoria does not have the number of frontline officers needed to properly protect communities against record levels of violent crime.

The Coalition will deliver the police required to make sure families can feel safe again on the streets, on public transport and in their own homes.

This announcement is part of an integrated plan to stop and reverse the culture of violence and growing levels of crime in Victoria. A significant increase in frontline police is crucial to all of these initiatives.

Many of the specific issues which have emerged over the last three years, including an increase in knives, alcohol-fuelled violence, gangs, hooners and anti-social behaviour, require a range of tailored responses – but any effective response needs an adequate number of police on the street.

## **OTHER COALITION LAW AND ORDER POLICIES**

- A safer train network – officers at every station
- Abolishing suspended sentences
- Tough new anti-hoon laws – crushing cars of offenders
- Banning violent drunks from licensed premises
- Banning the sale of knives to minors
- Shake up of liquor licence laws

# Policy

- Strengthening Neighbourhood Watch
- A new anti-corruption watchdog
- Ending home detention
- Outlawing criminal bikie gangs

## **INCREASE IN CRIME UNDER LABOR IN VICTORIA**

	<b>99-00</b>	<b>08-09</b>	<b>Per cent change</b>
Total Violent Crime (Crime Against the Person)	31,372	43,971	<b>Up 40.2%</b>
Assault	19,856	33,668	<b>Up 69.6%</b>
Rape	1,170	1,543	<b>Up 31.9%</b>
Weapons / Explosives	4,554	7,142	<b>Up 56.8%</b>
Property Damage	38,360	54,122	<b>Up 41.1%</b>

**Source: Victoria Police Crime Statistics**