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MEDIA RELEASE

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Geelong region needs more police

Despite the Brumby Government's rhetoric about adequate police numbers in the Geelong region, the reality is there are simply not enough front-line police to provide a visible presence and a timely response to community safety issues.

"A greater visible police presence is needed to reinforce measures aimed at improving community safety; this has been a proven method of making the streets in Geelong safer," said David Koch, speaking in parliament this week.

"But first let me say that police are doing a great job under enormous pressure in fighting crime in the Geelong region and I congratulate the *Geelong Advertiser* on launching its Just Think campaign last week to fight alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour in the city centre by improving public safety awareness in the community.

David said that calls for extra police have fallen on deaf ears among local Labor MPs, even though the Police Association has continually identified a significant shortfall in the Geelong region.

"While the coalition does not always agree with the police union, on this issue we are in agreement. We are totally committed to ensuring that the shortage of police in Geelong, on the Bellarine Peninsula and along the Surf Coast is addressed.

"The Brumby Government should be ashamed that the chronic shortage of police officers in Geelong prevented a police kiosk being established in the city just a few weeks after federal funding was announced.

"There is still much support for this initiative, and it is disappointing that a lack of police officers to operate the kiosk means that it will not go ahead.

"Geelong is in critical need of additional police; recent published figures relating to Geelong, the Bellarine Peninsula, and the Surf Coast indicate that there is a shortage of up to 200 police.

"This shortage is forcing officers to work on their days off and is draining resources from the Bellarine Peninsula and the Surf Coast, which means other police stations, like Torquay and Ocean Grove, cannot be fully utilised because of the lack of police. More front-line police will allow these and other stations in the region to be properly resourced.

"People living in the greater Geelong region have every right to be outraged by the lack of support they are getting from the Brumby Government in fighting crime and the antisocial behaviour in the region.

"I call on the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Bob Cameron, to encourage the Chief Commissioner to urgently address the shortage of front-line police in the Geelong, Bellarine and Surf Coast regions so policing demands are met", said David Koch.

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