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MEDIA RELEASE

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Cost shifting of police resourcing in Geelong

The State Government has been accused of shifting the cost of providing resources to equip Geelong police onto Greater City of Geelong ratepayers.

In raising the issue at Lakes Entrance this week at the regional sitting of the Legislative Council, David Koch, Member for Western Victoria said Geelong police have been provided with Council motorbikes since August 2007 so they can detect illegal activities, particularly those involving riders of unregistered recreational motorbikes in public parks and on road reserves.

“This is another blatant example of the Brumby Government cost-shifting on to local rate payers to pay for services and equipment that should be funded and supplied by the State.

“The Premier and the Police Minister have persistently refused to properly equip, resource or increase police numbers in the Geelong region and now local residents are paying through their rates to provide police with motorbikes.

“Labor claimed it would do everything in its power to address rising crime rates in the Geelong region, but it has again failed in its obligation to meet 2006 election promise.

“The Minister says the Government is committed to providing additional resources and equipment to assist police in their work, but this Government is expecting rate payers to provide motorbikes for police in Geelong”, David Koch said.

The City of Greater Geelong, along with community leaders and those affected by street violence have long called on Police Command and the State Government to increase police resources and numbers in the Geelong region.

“In response to an earlier matter in relation to the Geelong community’s request for a greater police presence to patrol trouble spots in Geelong’s CBD, the Minister claimed the State Government had increased police numbers by over 1,400 across the State and that the Brumby Government is committed to providing safe streets.

“The Minister continues to push this line that Victoria Police is well resourced, particularly in the Geelong area even though the Police Union says there is still a shortfall of 200 police in the Geelong region.

“He says police are using new technology, tactical and strategic redeployment of members and maximising resources through critical path analysis of crime patterns and now the latest strategy is to deter further violent behaviour with Hummers supplied on loan by General Motors.

“The Minister will try anything instead of putting more police on the ground, even calling on car makers and local governments to provide council-owned motorbikes to patrol known trouble spots.

“Again, I call on the Minister to properly fund Victoria Police so that they do not have to rely on Geelong City rate payers to provide motorbikes for police to carry out their patrols”, said David Koch.

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