



Greg Aplin MP
Member for Albury

MEDIA RELEASE

21 August 2017

IMPROVED JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF STOCK THEFT

The NSW Government will strengthen laws concerning stock theft, trespass and illegal hunting following a review of the current law by former NSW Police Force Assistant Commissioner Steve Bradshaw.

Member for Albury, Greg Aplin said the Bradshaw Review identified a number of areas for improvement in responding to rural crime from both an operational and legislative perspective.

“The unique features and challenges of crime in rural and regional areas demand a tailored response,” Mr Aplin said.

“We must ensure that the police respond to reports of crime in a timely fashion and have the necessary skills and knowledge of their local communities to hold those responsible to account for these crimes.

“That is why the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government appointed, for the first time, a dedicated NSW Police Force Deputy Commissioner for Regional Field Operations, Mr Gary Worboys APM.”

Mr Worboys said the NSW Police Force is committed to improving outcomes for the victims of rural crime.

“I welcome the findings of Mr Bradshaw’s Review and look forward to making the necessary operational changes to improve our response to rural crime, in consultation with the Rural Crime Advisory Group,” Mr Worboys said.

“The NSW Police Force has already taken a number of steps to improve officer training and education when it comes to rural crime, including the updating of the rural crime manual and the introduction of workshops led by the Department of Primary Industries, and experienced regional officers.”

Minister for Police Troy Grant said through the current re-engineering of the NSW Police Force there will be increased flexibility to place specially trained police in the areas they are needed most.

“Our justice system must also maintain the confidence of victims of stock theft, trespass and illegal hunting,” Mr Grant said.

The Bradshaw Review highlighted a number of common concerns amongst victims, including that the costs associated with rural crime are often not reflected in the penalties delivered by the courts, as well as deficiencies in the law regarding trespass.

In response to these issues raised in the report, the NSW Government will propose:

- a new aggravated trespass offence where there is an enhanced biosecurity risk, intent to engage in stock theft, or the presence of hunting equipment;
- a specific reference to a victim's geographical isolation as an aggravating factor on sentence;
- the ability to apply to the Local Court for a forced muster order, which will assist victims of stock theft;
- a deeming provision that will help to provide certainty of ownership to those who harvest rangeland goats for commercial gain;
- increased flexibility for police to seize vehicles connected with a game hunting offence; and
- the doubling of the maximum penalty for illegal hunting on private land from \$1,100 to \$2,200.

“These measures will ensure that the NSW Police Force has the right legislative tools to address theft, trespass and illegal hunting and the courts have appropriate penalties available.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will continue to consult with key stakeholders and will always strive to improve the response to rural and regional crime.”

The Bradshaw Review Report can be found on the NSW Department of Justice website: <http://www.justice.nsw.gov.au/>

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