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MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 12 June 2008

IEMMA GOVERNMENT 'SPIN' ON CRIME NO MATCH FOR THE FACTS

...'recent research showed that 75% of every police officer's engagement on the street involves alcohol as a factor...' Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione (St George & Sutherland Shire Leader, 17 April 2008)

Latest figures from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research expose Iemma Government claims that crime is falling as just spin, Shadow Police Minister Mike Gallacher said today.

"In the past two years 15 of the 17 major crime offence categories have remained stable – that is not crime falling," Mr Gallacher said.

"Most concerning is many of the crimes which are showing increases are those involving anti-social or bad behaviour, which is often linked to excessive alcohol consumption.

"Offensive conduct and language head this category, rising 25.7% and 11.8% respectively.

"It's clear David Campbell and Morris Iemma are taking a 'near enough is good enough' approach when it comes to cutting crime," he said.

"These latest figures also show a substantial increase in the possession or use of narcotics (29.1%) and ecstasy (16.8%), as well as a 9.5% increase in the possession and use of other drugs.

"These figures support what we're hearing anecdotally, that there is a movement away from cannabis to harder drugs.

"The Iemma Government has really dropped the ball when it comes to tackling drug crime with no significant falls in any major category over the past two years.

"This is concerning, given latest figures show it may be a symptom of a lack of staffing in the major drug fighting squads with 29 vacancies in drug and other squads tasked with catching dealers.

"There is no doubt police on the streets are doing the best they can with what they've got. It's now up to David Campbell and Morris Iemma to ensure they provide officers with better strategies to drive crime down and the resources to make it happen," Mr Gallacher concluded.