



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**BRUCE BAIRD, MP**

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR COOK

23 July 2002

The Hon Bronwyn Bishop MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Legal &  
Constitutional Affairs  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

RECEIVED  
12 AUG 2002

BY:.....

Dear Mrs Bishop,

**Re. Inquiry into Crime in the Community**

Thank you for your request of 27 June 2002 for a submission to the above inquiry.

I would like to confine my contribution to some comments on the importance of this issue to people living in my electorate at present.

Without a doubt, crime is the single issue causing the most anxiety to constituents in the electorate of Cook. Phone polling done before the last federal election showed that it was the issue that respondents rated as the most important - far above even overdevelopment, which has been a huge concern locally.

A further illustration of how deeply concern about crime is pervading the community here comes from a survey that I initiated through my electorate office specifically on that issue. The response I received far exceeded the response to any other subject I have canvassed in such a manner with my constituents - 1,559 people took the time to return their forms.

Of this number: -

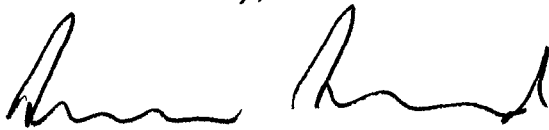
- 95% thought that our local area was **less safe** than it was 5 years ago.
- 53% (over half) felt threatened by gangs in our neighbourhood.

- 93% felt that the police were losing the war against crime.
- 83% were unsatisfied with the police presence locally.
- 91% did not even feel safe travelling by train at night, despite the presence of private security guards on CityRail trains.

To me these figures indicate the existence of real unease in my electorate about levels of crime and the community's ability to address it. This is compounded by the large number of public meetings I have attended on the issue during my term as the member here. People have particularly expressed their concern about the move away from a localised police presence and the effect that this may be having.

I am sure that the committee will take many submissions from experts more qualified than I am with respect to effective measures the Commonwealth might take in countering and preventing crime. Nevertheless I thought the committee should be made aware of the huge importance of this issue to my electorate.

Yours sincerely,



**Bruce Baird MP**  
**Federal Member for Cook**  
AT0643