



More recruits to lift beat in state's South

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TASMANIA'S reputation as the safest state in Australia has received a boost, with 30 additional police officers set to join the front line this year.

The \$7.8 million investment will take Tasmania's police force to a total 1276 sworn officers.

Kingston, Bridgewater and New Norfolk have been identified as areas that would benefit most from the additional recruits.

Police Association of Tasmania president Randolph Wierenga said the extra police would bring welcome relief for the overstretched force.

Premier David Bartlett announced the three-year investment at the Kingston police station yesterday, say-

ing the money would be available immediately.

"It is not an election promise, it is provided for in the mid-year financial report, it is new money," Mr Bartlett said.

"This is the Government getting on with business — we always said that as revenues improved following the global financial crisis, we were determined to put every dollar into front-line services."

Mr Bartlett said additional intakes at the Rokeby Police Academy would begin immediately.

Mr Wierenga said the association had been campaigning for additional staff since the introduction of the domestic violence program Safe at Home in 2004.

When the program was introduced 48 extra police were added to the force, he said.

However, it was his belief it was never enough.

"They're under the pump in relation to the workloads and that's why we've been calling for more officers," he said.

Whether the additional police were enough to deal with the increasing demand would be monitored very carefully, Mr Wierenga said.

"We'll be keeping watch and assessing the impact of the 30 officers when they come online," he said.

Southern District Commander Peter Edwards said having additional staff on the beat was great news for the station, which protects Tas-

mania's fastest-growing municipality.

The current 30 officers, including four CIB detectives, cover Kingston, Huonville, Cygnet, Dover, Bruny Island and Woodbridge.

Though the crime rate in the area had dropped, the number of incidents had risen dramatically, Mr Edwards said.

"Our statistics indicate that the demand on police services over the past 15 years has increased by about 40 per cent," he said.

"This means extra police here, which increases our capacity for the Kingston division to improve response times and community safety."



BUSY: Southern District Commander Peter Edwards yesterday.

Picture: CAROLYN DOCKING