

## **POLICE MINISTER ANNOUNCES PROJECT TO TURN THE SCREWS ON CRIME**

Queensland Police are tightening the screws on number plate thieves. Today Police Minister Judy Spence launched the trial project "Turning the Screws on Crime", which is on display at the Queensland Police Service exhibit at the Brisbane International Motor Show.

Under the project, police are providing free 'one-way' screws for number plates, which cannot be removed using conventional tools. "Numberplate theft costs countless Queenslanders thousands of dollars each year," Ms Spence said. "A regular set of replacement plates costs \$70, while personalised plates start at \$395. "That's just the start, as numberplates are typically stolen for their use in more serious crimes such as break and enters, robberies and service station drive-offs.

"This project has the potential to eliminate the ability of criminals to disguise a stolen or unregistered vehicle with false number plates, making it more difficult for them to avoid police detection." Ms Spence said over the next six months, motorists would be able to attend community awareness days at Bunnings hardware stores in North Brisbane, Pine Rivers and Redcliffe police districts where they can have the screws fitted free of charge. Community awareness days will be held on:

- April 8 - Carseldine
- April 22 - Lawnton and Morayfield
- April 29 - Rothwell
- May 6 - Stafford.

Ms Spence said the six month trial project had been selected for the area following increasing rates of number plate theft in those suburbs. "Last year, between January and September, 107 number plates were stolen in the Pine Rivers District," Ms Spence said. "In Pine Rivers, 25 per cent of all stolen number plates were used in drive-off offences. "During the same period last year, 492 number plates were stolen in North Brisbane."

Acting Police Commissioner Dick Conder said: "By making it more difficult for people to steal number plates, it will impact on a criminal's ability to avoid police detection by disguising a vehicle with stolen number plates."

The Turning the Screws on Crime exhibit will remain part of the Queensland Police Service stand at the Motor Show, which begins today and runs until March 12. Also on display at the police stand will be one of the high-visibility Holden Monaro highway patrol cars, and a BMW R 1150-P police operational motorcycle.