



MEDIA RELEASE

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CRIME UP IN REGIONAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA WHILE THE STATE FIGURE FALLS

Federal Member for Grey Tom Venning MP has called on the State Government to explain why reported crime has climbed in Grey's largest centres since Labor came to government, while the statewide figure has fallen.

South Australia Police figures, published by the State Government, show that over Labor's four years in office, reported offences rose 17.6 per cent in Port Augusta, 36.9 per cent in Port Pirie and 9.1 per cent in Ceduna. Port Augusta has gone up in every one of those four years.

Across South Australia, reported offences fell 1.3 per cent.

"Crime is going down across South Australia and up in Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Ceduna. This Government wants the credit for the first number and takes no responsibility for the second," Mr Venning said.

"Port Augusta has gone up every single year Labor has been in office. That is not a bad patch. That is a trend."

Since Labor came to government, break-ins to houses are up 56.5 per cent in Port Pirie, 51.9 per cent in Port Augusta and 22.5 per cent in Whyalla. Across the state, the increase was 2.3 per cent.

"That gap did not happen by accident. It shows where this Government has sent officers and resources, and where it has not."

In May, the State Government announced that South Australia had its full complement of police officers for the first time in nearly a decade.

Three months later, the Coober Pedy Police Station has eight of its 19 positions filled. In January the figure was 10.

"Labor spent this year telling South Australians the police force is full. Coober Pedy is at 42 per cent, and going backwards," Mr Venning said.

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TOM VENNING MP

Member for Grey



The Police Association of South Australia has written to the Deputy Premier warning of critically inadequate policing resources in Coober Pedy, raising the case of a repeat offender described as ‘high-risk’ who was released on bail without an ankle monitor, and a separate incident in which the police station was allegedly attacked.

In May, the South Australian Employment Tribunal recommended measures to attract officers to Coober Pedy. SA Police rejected them, citing budget constraints.

"That is not an operating decision. That is a budget decision, and budgets are set by this Government." Mr Venning said.

Mr Venning said councils across Grey had been left dealing with a problem they did not create and cannot fix. Whyalla has introduced a city-wide dry zone after a long consultation with residents, with the council noting at the time that a lasting fix would need a multi-agency response including increased police resources.

"Councils can run a consultation and draw a line on a map. They cannot recruit a police officer," Mr Venning said.

"Only the State Government can do that. Only the State Government can decide what it takes to get people to regional, rural and remote South Australia and keep them there." Mr Venning said

Member for Giles, Eddie Hughes MP, whose electorate covers both Whyalla and Port Augusta, has been missing in action as regional South Australia grapples with a growing crime crisis. Hughes’ dismissal of criticism from frustrated community leaders as “unfair” shows just how out of touch he is with the concerns being raised across the region.

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Media Contact

Joanna Tucker: 0459 942 506

Scout Carmichael: 0422 206 023

Crime figures: South Australia Police crime statistics published at data.sa.gov.au, comparing the 2022-23 and 2025-26 financial years. Figures are calculated on local government area boundaries.