

Monday, 6 April 2009

MAJOR DISRUPTION TO CANNABIS CULTIVATION

Minister for Police, Tony Kelly today congratulated the State Crime Command Drug Squad's Plantation Unit for taking more than \$18 million worth of cannabis off the street over the last five months.

"This past summer the pro-active work of NSW Police Force managed to put a huge dent in the illegal cannabis trade across the state.

Mr Kelly said that seven Cannabis Eradication Programs (C.E.P's) were conducted from November last year to the end of March this year, in the Tweed/Byron, Richmond, Manning/Great Lakes, Mid North Coast, Far South Coast, Coffs/Clarence and New England Local Area Commands. The results include

- 9,645 cannabis plants were located, seized and destroyed
- 20 people were either charged or issued with Field Court Attendance Notices in relation to the cultivation and/or possession of cannabis.

"During peak cannabis growing season the police successfully pulled out thousands of plants, cutting into the sale of cannabis on the streets by attacking the source.

"This sends a clear message about the Police's determination to attack the illegal drug trade at its foundations.

Mr Kelly said the State Command's Cannabis Team is made up of Drug Squad detectives working with the Police Air Wing, Dog Squad, Radio Electronics Unit and officers from the various Local Area Commands, all working together to locate and destroy cannabis crops across NSW.

"These different units have successfully pooled their resources with the single focus of disrupting the cultivation and distribution of cannabis.

Mr Kelly said that the success of the operations across the whole state, in particular the north, was pushing the growers into increasingly remote terrain, forcing them to use increasingly sophisticated irrigation systems.

"The use of helicopters combined with the use of sophisticated intelligence and local knowledge has allowed the police to reach these crops no matter how well-hidden or remote they might be.

Since 2001, the Cannabis Eradication Programs have resulted in the seizure and destruction of 100,536 plants, valued at more than \$206m.



The Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Police
Minister for Lands
Minister for Rural Affairs
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council

Mr Kelly said that anyone with information about the location of cannabis crops is urged to contact their local police or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

“It is important that to remember that the Drug Squad also relies on the support of the community.