

# It's a dog's life

By Michelle Connolly,  
Media and Public Affairs Branch



In 2008, the Queensland Police Service Dog Squad will see a first.

Homegrown puppies – the first litters born at the Queensland Police Academy, Oxley – will be on their way to becoming some of the state's top crime fighters.

Eighteen police puppies were welcomed into the Brisbane Dog Squad this year with two litters born in February.

On February 3, German shepherd Chillie gave birth to a litter of seven females and one male, fathered by Police Dog Justice.

And on February 15, German shepherd Tessa gave birth to another 11 puppies (seven females and four males), fathered by Police Dog Ike.

Reg Worth, Police Dog Development Officer said while every addition to the Dog Squad was welcomed, the significance of these two births was doubly so as it was the first two litters to be born at the Dog Squad kennels.

"The decision to start breeding puppies at the kennels was made to continue the strong gene pool already at the squad.

"We have excellent stud dogs and

we thought we would find some good females to hopefully keep the blood lines going," Mr Worth said.

The \$500,000 14-kennel complex – which will house the new puppies for the next three to four months at the academy – was opened by Police and Corrective Services Minister Judy Spence in 2005 and is the first of its kind in Australia.

The kennel complex features a natural ventilation system and is designed to be easily cleaned and hygienic for the puppies. The kennels also feature outdoor runs, a vet room and a meal preparation area.

Mr Worth said the selection of prospective parents was based on the animals possessing traits required for a police dog, including boldness, courage, drive, temperament and health.

"Once the pups are about six to eight weeks old we will start to assess their abilities as working dogs through playing ball games with them and exposing them to loud noises and new surroundings to see how they each react," he said.

Once the police puppies have been assessed they are then fostered out to either current dog handlers or other police officers until they are ready to start life as a working dog.

Senior Sergeant Terry Cantwell, State Training Coordinator, Dog Squad said the puppies were usually fostered out to handlers and other police officers when they were about eight weeks old.

"We look at the dogs several times during the foster period and ideally we will put them on a course sometime around 16 to 18 months old," Senior Sergeant Cantwell said.

"A couple of months before the dogs go on course they are partnered with a handler so the pair can complete the course together."

Senior Sergeant Cantwell said the handler and the dog completed the course together to ensure a strong bond developed between them.

"The bond is fundamental to the training methodologies that we use.

"The course is also designed to give the handlers the skills to undertake all the responsibilities of a police dog handler," he said.