

METHAMPHETAMINE — USAGE

Statement

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [5.25 pm]: I want to respond to an assertion made by Hon Colin Holt during private members' business today that I had not really addressed the content of my motion. I can only agree. I would like to blame the fact that I did not have a clock to assist me, but it is probably the fact that I was verbose, and I will try to be succinct. I will not try to address all the issues that were raised, so that we can give other members the opportunity to talk. I want to talk about a couple of things, including monitoring. During the time I had to speak on the motion, I talked about the fact that the monitoring between 1996 and 2014 was, basically, by surveying different groups within our communities. They were the same groups, so we can have confidence in one respect that it was the same testing each year and so it was like for like and indicated that the use of illicit drugs was on the decline, which was good news.

With regard to current testing, I want to talk about the national wastewater monitoring program, which was financed by the federal government, and I commend it for that. It started in 2016 and tests the wastewater of about 50 wastewater depots around the country. People dispel the waste out of their body and then the drugs are picked up in the wastewater. It covers about 14 million people, so about 58 per cent of people in Australia. There are only four sites in Western Australia, so it is not comprehensive, but it measures like for like. Apparently, there are nine testing terms during the three-year period, which ends in 2019. It occurs in 17 other countries in the world and it is seen by scientists as the best way to get a beam on what is happening with both illicit and licit drug use and alcohol.

Hon Alannah MacTiernan interjected.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: Madam President, I will direct my comments to you because I know you are listening.

The PRESIDENT: I am listening.

Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD: It is like for like and, in that way, we can have some confidence that it gives us an idea of the trend. It is the best thing available to us at this time. There may be opportunities in the future to improve that. The 2016 or 2017 testing indicated that Perth was the ice capital of Australia and that Australia as a whole was, I think, second in the world in ice use. In 2018, like-for-like testing indicated that there was a 60 per cent drop within the Perth area. There was an 11 per cent drop in the regions, but as has been indicated, that figure is still extremely high. I tried to think through the motion that I moved quite specifically. I tried to direct the premise of my motion specifically to the interruption of the distribution of ice in Western Australia. I think I spoke about the three pillars that are used to try to help find a resolution to the use of ice in Australia.

That was very specific about trying to obstruct the distribution of ice, so the motion was very specific about the work the Minister for Police had done to provide the tools—I wanted to go through them, but I will not at this stage—that had been introduced in the last 18 months. I then wanted to specifically congratulate the Western Australia Police Force. As I mentioned in the short time I had at the end of private members' business, we gave them a job to do, and I think that the minister provided them with ways that they could achieve that. They did the job and they did it well. That in no way, shape or form suggests that we are on top of the problem of the use of ice in Western Australia. We are not. It is a massive problem. Whenever we debate this particular problem, I say that ice is the biggest scourge to our constituents and society in general, and it is one we all need to work together to try to solve. The motion was specifically raised so that we could talk about the ice problem, the distribution of ice and how we had managed to disrupt its distribution. This may not be the whole reason that there has been a reduction—I accept that—it is just one matter I wanted to talk about, and to praise the good work that has been done. I think the minister has done some good work in this area. People may say something different about her performance in other areas, but I think that she has done some good work in this area. I certainly want to congratulate the police, because I think that they have done everything we asked them to do in this area. I hope that answers some questions, and I have managed to do it in no more than my allotted time.