

RETAIL WORKERS — ASSAULTS

5. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Can the Premier guarantee to the people of WA that these more severe penalties will actually be imposed by our court system?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

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The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

The Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Vasse, said just a short while ago that we are seeing an escalation of crime in Western Australia. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is that we saw a 53 per cent decrease in dwelling burglaries in 2023 compared with 2016. There has been a 26 per cent decrease in motor vehicle theft, a 20 per cent decrease in property damage and a 33 per cent decrease in drug offences. I am very pleased to say —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr R.H. COOK: The other point the opposition talks about is youth crime. In 2016–17, there were 6 593 offences committed by people aged 10 to 17. In 2022–23, there were 6 278, so youth crime is actually going down. It is true to say that we are seeing an increase in the reporting of family and domestic violence, but, of course, that is a unique part of our system. We want people to report incidents of family and domestic violence. We know that the police force now treats those accusations of alleged offences with much higher priority, so they gain greater prominence and therefore people are further encouraged to seek the protection of the law in relation to family and domestic violence. That is a good thing. It is sad that we continue to see high rates of family and domestic violence in our community, but it is great that we now see more cops on the beat and a reduction across a whole range of areas of offending. This is a record that we should be pleased with, but it is a record we will continue to make sure we see further improvements on, and we will do that by continuing with our record recruitment of police officers.