

CAPEL POLICE STATION

**862. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to keeping Western Australia safe and strong through its unprecedented investment in police resources across the state. Can the minister update the house on this government's investment in police stations across WA and outline how this investment is not only supporting hardworking police officers, but also local jobs in the WA economy as we recover from COVID-19?

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:**

I thank the member for Belmont for the question and for her very strong commitment to supporting our Western Australia Police Force. The member for Belmont is quite right; the McGowan Labor government has put unprecedented investment into supporting Western Australia's police officers. We have taken our total commitment up to 1 100 police officers. We are in the process of delivering them. In addition, we have provided them with new personal-issue vests, body cameras and mobile phones, and provided additional support for meth enforcement in particular.

More recently, we announced \$90 million to build, renovate and upgrade police stations across the state. The new Armadale complex is already under construction. Only last week, I was in Collie with the Premier—the member for Collie—Preston is waving to me—to open Capel Police Station. We are very proud of that station. It was an election commitment by the McGowan Labor opposition. The member for Collie—Preston had lobbied very strongly on behalf of his community for the project. These projects support and deliver for our police, making our communities safer, and also provide jobs locally. Many of the refurbishment projects we do will provide some very local jobs. For example, the Capel station was constructed by Bunbury based builder Devlyn Australia Pty Ltd. That station project alone created jobs for about 18 local businesses and employed about 200 workers during construction. It is a particularly good station. It is fit for purpose and the most environmentally friendly station we have ever built. I understand that it is expected to achieve net zero power use status, which means it will produce as much power as it uses over the course of a year. We have a specialist operations room there. Capel is a strategic location where all kinds of strategic operations and multiagency operations can take place—be that a missing person or child, or a bush fire or other natural emergency. This will mean a significantly increased police presence.

I know from the start that people did not want to see a police station in Capel; at the last two elections the Leader of the Opposition said it was not needed. Unfortunately, it appears that that is still the Liberal Party's position. I was pretty incredulous, on Tuesday, 27 October, to hear comments from Liberal upper house member for the area Hon Dr Steve Thomas on ABC radio. It was said on ABC radio —

A new police station has opened in Western Australia's South West region, but despite being located near a notorious stretch of highway there is debate about whether it is needed at all.

...

South West Liberal MP Steve Thomas said he did not think a police station was needed in Capel ...

He went on to say —

“Capel is not a high-crime location—it's actually a pretty safe little town.

I do not know who else has been down to the south west in recent times, but it is a rapidly growing region. There is a lot of residential development throughout the region. The Liberal Party tried to suggest that there would not be additional officers, but they would be borrowed from Bunbury or another area. We have promised extra officers and we have delivered them to Capel. We put additional officers into that south west district to cater for that. One of the key tasks of those officers based in Capel will be to do traffic patrols of those roads. Tragically, only recently, we saw again how dangerous Bussell Highway and other roads in that region are. This police station is set near a 17-kilometre stretch of Bussell Highway. It will be an ideal position for our traffic police to police from. This will keep the community safer. It adds to our commitment to keeping our communities safe and strong.