

CASHLESS DEBIT CARD

24. Ms L. METTAM to the Premier:

I refer to the Albanese Labor government's removal of the cashless debit card, which has seen domestic violence-related assaults, alcohol-related assaults, break-ins and vehicle thefts significantly increase across affected areas in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Does the Premier support the Albanese Labor government's decision to abolish the cashless debit card, which is now having a profound impact in WA's remote communities such as Laverton?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

There is some significant misleading going on around crime rates across Western Australia. In 2022, crime rates were down by 12 per cent compared with the rate in 2016. The number of burglaries and break-ins has decreased significantly since this government has been in office—by 15 per cent. I will go through some of them. Car theft is down by 25 per cent, stealing is down by 25 per cent, property damage is down by 24 per cent and drug offences are down by 42 per cent. We have more police on the streets than ever before and we are recruiting more police than ever before. What we are finding, and I heard it today in a range of speeches, is total misleading by the Liberals and Nationals. They just make it up. Police publish these statistics on how many offences are being committed. They are the facts. Going out there and just saying that black is white does not work, because the facts are published. That is the reality of the situation out there.

As I said in answer to an earlier question, the issue in many places is the abuse of alcohol. It is a difficult issue to address. I fully understand that. What we need is cooperation. We need cooperation from businesses, communities and councils in relation to these issues. That is the overwhelming issue.

Ms S.F. McGurk interjected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes, hoteliers. We need cooperation from hoteliers in relation to the measures that are being taken. We cannot have communities where everyone agrees and one hotel does not. If we have that, everyone of course goes to that hotel to get their alcohol when they cannot get it somewhere else. That is the situation we face. That is why we are trying to get accords in place in many of these communities and to look at other measures that can be put in place to address these issues, because it is causing a lot of grief across some communities in Western Australia.