

ORGANISED CRIME AND OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS

770. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's unprecedented efforts to crack down on organised crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on how the first round of firearm prohibition orders have kept guns out of the hands of organised crime figures and domestic violence offenders?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how these orders are making our suburbs and streets safer?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for his question and his fulsome support of the Western Australia Police Force, particularly in his own patch of Forrestfield.

- (1)–(2) I can tell the member that the first round of firearm prohibition orders have been served on some of the highest-profile organised crime participants, the outlaw motorcycle gang leadership in Western Australia and some of our worst domestic violence offenders.

On 21 November, the gang crime squad served 15 notices on people in Western Australia and another six on people in other jurisdictions. These orders are serious. It means, of course, that the people who receive a firearm prohibition order can no longer be anywhere near a firearm. They cannot have a licensed firearm, cannot be near a firearm, cannot be in a place where it is expected there might be a firearm and cannot be with anyone else who has a firearm. That means that on the day, some 12 firearms were removed from people. They were seized by police. Six of them were licensed to one individual and another six to partners or family members of others who were served with firearm prohibition orders. From now on, the people who received these firearm prohibition orders are subject to search without warrant at any time. They can be stopped and have their vehicle, the people with them, their home or their place of employment searched to confirm that they are not carrying firearms and they are not with someone who has a firearm.

That is a very serious matter. It is a very serious power, but it targets them for a very serious reason. In March last year, the Commissioner of Police and the Deputy Commissioner of Police came to the government and told us that during COVID, they learnt that we can stop meth coming into Western Australia. It is brought here and distributed by outlaw motorcycle gangs—organised criminals. It does the most harm. In 2020, when the borders were closed tightly and everyone entering was met by a police officer, meth consumption in Western Australia dropped by over 50 per cent. Crime went down by a commensurate level. There was about a 41 per cent drop in crime. A lot of the damage done in Western Australia can be traced to meth. If we can stop meth coming into the state and being distributed by the people who bring it here, we can have a serious impact. That is the intent.

At the end of the media conference this morning, I reflected on how it has been received. It has been universally commended or accepted as positive by those present. At the time, I was thinking it probably would be universally recognised as a good thing by people across the state, with the exception of those who had received an FPO, I imagine. Then I thought there are probably some other parties in Western Australia who might not be as supportive or receptive. I remember when we brought this legislation to Parliament. Not so much in this house, but in the other place the opposition—the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA—sought to delay the passage of the legislation for no other reason than to get to the end of the sitting week and go into a recess of six weeks so that it would delay these laws and the regulations being delivered to the state. The Liberal and National Parties of Western Australia are probably, with the bikies and some of these FDV offenders, the only people who did not accept and did not support the legislation.

I know that is the case because only last week the Liberal Party was writing op-eds that referred to the exorbitant amount of time I spend beating up on bikies as being a bad thing. I hope that now we have served these orders, the Liberal and National Parties—the opposition in Western Australia—might reflect on their behaviour and contemplate which side they are going to support in the future as we pursue disrupting the bikies and the harm that they do to our community.