

LIVESTOCK THEFT

40. Hon COLIN TINCKNELL to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

Recent reports in the *Countryman* of 8 March noted an increase in reports of livestock thefts to police. Similar stories were published by the ABC on 21 August 2017 and again on 28 February this year. Considering the police budget for the stock squad was transferred to the Department of Agriculture and Food, what steps are the department taking to investigate, prevent and deter the recent rise in livestock thefts?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

Following the disbandment of the WA Police rural crime squad in April 2008, a memorandum of understanding was established between the department and WA Police. Under the MOU, the department assists the police dealing with stock crime by promoting compliance with stock identification and movement legislation, and providing technical support and assistance to police investigating stock-related crime. The department is responsible for administering the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (Identification and Movement of Stock and Apiaries) Regulations 2013, which regulate the identification and traceability of livestock primarily for food safety and disease control purposes. WA police officers are recognised as inspectors under the BAM (IMSA) regulations, and as such can enforce livestock traceability requirements. Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development inspectors attend livestock congregation centres such as saleyards and abattoirs to check livestock for compliance with regulatory requirements for identification and movement. If there are suspicions that a particular line of stock may have been stolen, inspectors are authorised to check the vendor's details, carry out preliminary inquiries and collect evidence such as copies of waybills before referring matters to the WA Police Force.

In September 2017, the department, with the support of WA police, conducted a statewide compliance activity—Operation Waybill—to raise awareness of compliance with stock identification and traceability requirements. DPIRD inspectors and detectives from the WA police regional crime and operations coordination division visited saleyards, abattoirs and other locations to check stock for correct identification and audited movement documentation. DPIRD regularly promotes awareness with livestock identification and movement requirements via regional field days, such as the Wagin Woolorama last week, electronic newsletters and the department website.