

POLICE — FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

565. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the tragic family and domestic violence death of Lynn Cannon, which her family says could have been avoided if 000 calls for help had been responded to sooner.

- (1) With regard to the Western Australia Police Force, what possible explanation can there be for why it took police more than an hour to respond?
- (2) Does the minister think it is acceptable that it took more than an hour for such an FDV call to be responded to?
- (3) Does the minister agree that this is one part of a system that failed her on that tragic evening?

The SPEAKER: Just before I give the Minister for Police the call, can I just clarify whether any part of what you have asked could be sub judice? Are there matters before the court?

Ms L. Mettam: No; this is in relation to the police call.

The SPEAKER: If there are matters that are potentially before the court, I ask the minister to keep that in mind. The matters that relate to police response times, clearly the minister can respond to.

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for her question.

- (1)–(3) At the outset, I express my deepest condolences to the family over this tragic incident. Every death of this nature is an absolute tragedy and not something the police ever accept as being reasonable. I have to say at the outset that I am sure that the matter in question will be subject to a coronial inquiry at the very least. If there are matters relating to the nature of what occurred, they will be subject to investigation. I have to tell the member that I have not yet received a thorough briefing on the incident itself, so with regard to timings and the nature of phone calls made and whether they were responded to in the expected time frames, I cannot tell the member. I can tell the member that family and domestic violence incidents are treated with the upmost importance. They are treated absolutely as a serious crime—the highest priority crime. There is no incident in which police would not respond as a matter of course to it being serious, but I just do not know. I have not been briefed on the timings and the nature of the phone calls received and the detail around the police response.

I can say that sadly, in the past, Western Australia's community did not treat domestic violence as a serious crime. That has all changed. Every police officer is trained to recognise family and domestic violence as a serious matter and respond appropriately.