

METHAMPHETAMINE

112. Mr S.A. MILLMAN to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to not only crack down on the supply of methamphetamine in WA, but also reduce demand for this insidious drug in our community. Can the minister update the house on what the latest results of the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program show about this government's success in reducing the use of methamphetamine in Western Australia?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for Mount Lawley for that excellent question and for raising such an important issue in this house. I think everyone here knows what a terrible scourge methamphetamine is on our community and how it wrecks lives and families. That is why our government embarked on a methamphetamine action plan and invested the best part of \$250 million additional money to target methamphetamine. Over half of that money has gone to the WA Police Force and we have engaged 100 additional sworn officers and 20 other staff to tackle it. The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission has been monitoring wastewater sites right around Australia for some years now. It does that roughly every four months, in April, August and December of each year. I am very pleased to say that results released today from the testing in August 2019 indicate a significant decline on April. The last two sets of results have shown quite dramatic declines. In fact, for the metro area, we have seen a decline of some 19 per cent between April and August 2019, and in regional areas a decline of 10 per cent. This is very useful information for people right around Australia, to see how we are tracking what drugs are being used in the community and what proportions they are being used in.

When I looked back to the peak of meth consumption, I saw that, according to the wastewater results, it peaked—no surprise here—in December 2016, after years of neglect by the former government, a government that ignored the issue of methamphetamine in the community. Since then we have put enormous resources into it. In addition to the additional officers and the \$126 million that has gone into policing and disrupting the supply of methamphetamine into this state, we have also equipped police with the tools that they need to do the job. We have X-ray screening that we can deploy to the regions. We have specialist, what we call “meth trucks” that we are also deploying in the regions; we are disrupting those transit routes. We are also X-raying at parcel post centres and the like to disrupt the supply. In the last three years alone, police have intercepted some 2 000 kilos of methamphetamine in Western Australia. That is a record. We know that side by side with police intercepting more than 2 000 kilos of methamphetamine, the rate of consumption in the community has gone down. From that high in 2016, it has gone down by 25 per cent. That is very significant. Does it mean the job is done? No it does not. We will continue to invest in that resource. We will continue to target those people who traffic methamphetamine. People may remember that one of the first actions of the McGowan government was to signal life imprisonment for those people who traffic methamphetamine. That was a significant message to those people who might traffic meth in our community. Unlike those opposite, I say well done to the Western Australia Police Force. I am thankful that our government has given us the resources we need to tackle those people who deal in death in our community, who wreck lives and families. I also commend our government for putting in place rehabilitation and support facilities and targeting the demand area for methamphetamine as well. These are very promising results. We will not rest on our laurels though. This is an ongoing fight against this scourge in our community.