

POLICE — FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TEAMS

**519. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to figures on the Western Australia Police Force website that across WA family-related offences were up 18 per cent from 2022–23 compared with the year prior and that the number of WAPOL officers dedicated to tackling family and domestic violence fell from 90 in 2020–21 to 87 in 2021–22. Why is it that with family and domestic violence rising in WA the number of WA police officers dedicated to family violence is fewer than it was two years ago?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

I thank the member for her question because it gives me the opportunity to clarify a couple of things. The member referred to the number of police officers dedicated to family violence teams. In the past, some governments ago, there may have been dedicated individuals who responded as primary responders, but they are not that now. Those teams the member refers to—it is 87.66 FTE; a difference of 1.4 FTE—review all responses to family and domestic violence incidents. As the member would be aware, thanks to the Speaker in her term as the Minister for Police, every police officer in Western Australia responding to an incident has a body-worn camera. They are activated in those instances. The encounters between victims and offenders are recorded and those officers review them to ensure that procedures have been followed. Every single police office in Western Australia is trained in FDV response.

The days of FDV not being considered as a serious offence are long gone. That is a good thing. It means that, increasingly, potential victims of family and domestic violence can feel confident that they can notify police, whereas in the past they may not have done that. They feel confident that they can and they will be treated respectfully, and the offence that they are potentially the victim of will be treated as a serious crime. That is a good thing and that is a part of the contribution to the increase we are seeing. It is not the only thing. FDV is an appalling thing. It was a hidden epidemic. It was something that was not recorded, reported or acknowledged in society. It is a good thing that that has now changed. It is terrible that it is there but it is great that we are increasingly focused on responding to it. I assure the member that there is no removal of resources for that. As she knows, we are training more police officers. They are all being trained in FDV. There are 300 officers at the academy right now, and 1 600 Western Australians and 1 335 international officers have applied to join the Western Australia Police Force. All of them will receive FDV training and all of them will respond appropriately.