

POLICE — VOLUNTARY SEVERANCES

**838. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Police:**

Before I ask my question, can I just quickly acknowledge the great win that the parliamentary cricket team had against the media on Friday.

Can the minister please update the house on how today's announcement on voluntary severances for police officers will enhance the delivery of front-line services for people in my electorate?

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:**

I thank the member for Forrestfield for this question and his continued interest in law and order matters and policing in his electorate.

This program of voluntary severances for WA police officers is about enhancing and improving the front-line service capacity of WA Police. Today, I was pleased to announce that the state government has given approval for WA Police to offer voluntary severance to 196 police officers. These officers have an average age of 57 years. Some of these officers have served their entire careers with WA Police. I would like to put on the record that many of them have had long and distinguished careers of great service to WA Police and the Western Australian community. This voluntary severance package is about offering police officers who are no longer fit for front-line duties the opportunity to exit WA Police with dignity and respect and to move into retirement or other employment. Generally, Western Australian police officers join the force because they want to deal with the community and serve on the front line, something the government and the community values highly. When police officers become chained to a desk and no longer able to do front-line work, inevitably, if they are given the opportunity to exit with dignity and grace, they will take it. This, the member for Forrestfield will be pleased to know, will not affect our ability to achieve our election commitments of 2008 or 2013 to recruit additional officers to serve on the front line. If the 196 officers choose to accept the voluntary severance package offered by the government, they will leave the police force over the next few months until March 2014. We will therefore see a temporary dip in our overall numbers, but over time with our aggressive recruiting and with the capacity and known throughput at the academy, we intend to achieve the commitment that we put to the community to enhance front-line services with those additional 550 police and police auxiliary officers from 2013.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Plus the 200 you just got rid of, so it's 700!

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Victoria Park!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Indeed. Member for Victoria Park, I thank you so much for reiterating what was received by members of the community as this side of the house listened to their concerns about wanting front-line police services enhanced in their community.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Victoria Park!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Of the commitment we made in 2008, we have 100 additional officers to recruit, and indeed we will do that by June 2014, with the remainder of the 550 police and police auxiliary officers to come online by 2017. This is also part of our reform program. As part of the reform program for those 196 police officers who will take up the voluntary severance package, we are having a look at the jobs that those officers are doing to determine whether that function is required by WA Police and to see whether we can find another way of performing that function and flattening our structure.

I am very pleased to say also that WA Police, through reform, doing things more efficiently and more effectively and spending its dollars more wisely, has been able to fund this \$37 million package from within its budget. It is therefore a win-win situation; 196 Western Australian police officers are now very, very pleased to have been offered the voluntary severance package that was made available to other public sector employees. I look forward to making further announcements in this house about the enhancements through the reform 2020 program to our front-line service delivery.