

CRIME STATISTICS — AUGUST

**780. Mrs M.H. ROBERTS to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to the just-released crime statistics for August, which show increases in multiple areas, including a 21 per cent jump in burglaries and a 23 per cent increase in vehicle theft.

- (1) Is this not now a clear trend and proof that the 20 per cent increase in crime in July is not just a one-off spike?
- (2) Given that Operation Sweep provided no additional resources to tackle this, what is the minister doing to address this unprecedented increase in crime?

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

- (1)–(2) It is true—there has been another spike in the August figures in a number of areas that we measure police by in overall reported crime—but I think that we should also have a look at what police are doing to respond to this. Operation Sweep has been incredibly successful, with over 7 000 charges now being laid against offenders in the Perth metropolitan area —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Over 7 000 charges have been laid against offenders in the five to six weeks since it has been in operation. Police are well resourced to respond to these sorts of spikes in crime. I think we need to get this in context and look at crime trends in general. When we look at the figures corrected for population growth from 2007–08, when we came to government, to now, the figures are very compelling to show that crime is on a downward trend, notwithstanding that we have had some spikes in recent months. As an example, non-domestic assault is down 34 per cent since 2007–08 when the opposition was in control, and burglaries are down 16 per cent, trending down consistently since we came to government. I expect that burglary figure will probably go down even further now that we have the “three strikes and you go to jail for two months” mandatory sentencing finally through both houses of Parliament, after the filibustering of the opposition to try to avoid that legislation going through.

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale, I have been lenient with you, and we are only one minute into question time. I call you to order for the first time.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Non-dwelling burglaries, there were 619 of those per 100 000 when they were in control, and 374 per 100 000 last financial year, down 40 per cent, consistently trending down since the Liberal–National government came to power; theft down 11 per cent; and property damage down 36 per cent when we correct for population growth in Western Australia. But, on the other side of the picture, let us have a look at those measures of crime that are a direct result of police activity. From when they were in control to last year, there had been a 41 per cent increase in drug possession charges levied against offenders, an 18 per cent increase in drug trafficking charges, and a 40 per cent increase in receiving drugs—illegal use of drugs. That is a measure of police activity—actually rounding up offenders and charging them with offences, taking them through the court system —

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale, you should have been called three times already.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Operation Sweep has been a tremendous success. I did speak to the figures with respect to what police have been doing: 2 226 arrests as a result of this response to the spike in crime in July, 2 268 summons issued, and 7 076 charges; and, for burglary, 169 arrests, 17 charges, 17 summons, and 240 charges.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** The member for Girrawheen can say it is meaningless. That is 169 people arrested for burglary who will now go before the courts. Some of those will likely be eligible for a “three strikes, you’re in” sentencing result as a result of our legislation. Stolen motor vehicle: 97 arrests—97 offenders who will now go before the courts. Police are responding. Police have the resources to respond. Our growth program is in train.

We will respond to this spike in crime, as police have been doing, and we will see an overall downward trend consistent with what has occurred since the Liberal–National government came to power.