

POLICE — CRIME RATES — INCREASE

1021. Mrs M.H. ROBERTS to the Minister for Police:

I refer to massive increases in crime in the metropolitan area during October compared with the same month last year—a 27 per cent spike in crimes against the person, which includes a 45 per cent spike in domestic assaults; a 38 per cent increase in threatening behaviour; a 16 per cent rise in non-domestic assaults; and a 23 per cent rise in sexual assault.

- (1) Why are the Minister for Police and the Commissioner of Police so focused on tap-and-go credit cards when nearly 30 per cent more people are being bashed and assaulted than was the case at the same time last year?
- (2) Given that this is now the fourth consecutive month of double-digit crime increases, and that the best explanation that the minister and the commissioner can provide for that is a technology that has been in wide circulation for several years, how can we have any confidence in the two of them keeping the community safe?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Midland for the question.

- (1)–(2) We are concerned about the rising crime figures, as are other people in the community, but the member for Midland is trying to trivialise the efforts of WA Police in understanding what is behind the crime spike.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: What police do best is evidence-based policing, and what they did about this unprecedented rise in crime was to have a look at what the drivers were. The obvious driver, as everybody in this house and everybody in the community —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Would the member like an answer or does she want to answer it herself?

With regard to the obvious driver of crime, the police have been interviewing all the people coming into their custody, and 62 per cent of those offenders said that they were resorting to crime to fund their methamphetamine habit. We are doing everything we can to address that. We are taking thousands of kilograms of this stuff, thousands of kilograms of this evil —

Mr J.R. Quigley interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Butler!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We are taking methamphetamine off the streets in record kilos, and it is not affecting the price. We are working with our federal counterparts to try to stop the inflow of the drug —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I call you to order for the first time. We are starting to bog down.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We are working with our federal intelligence agencies, our federal counterparts, to try to interrupt the supply of methamphetamine into Australia. If we reduce the amount of meth coming into the community, obviously we would expect to see a reduction in crime. That is the cause of the crime spree—people trying to fund their habit. In addition, what is making it easier for these criminals to actually get access to cash —

Mr J.R. Quigley interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Butler, I call you to order for the second time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: In looking at the figures for the months of July and August, 14.5 per cent of recorded offences for theft were linked to offenders targeting people's PayPass credit cards, because they can use them and go on a spree and get a wide range of gift vouchers. They can flog those off —

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: My question referred to crimes against the person and those increases, not to theft, so I ask the minister to answer the question she was asked.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Speaker, every single person in this house heard the member for Midland ask about our fascination with PayPass credit card facilities. I am answering her question.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The figures show that 14.5 per cent of theft and robbery offences for the months of July and August were linked to offenders targeting PayPass credit cards to get easy access to cash. The commissioner, quite rightly, has issued a warning to the community —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, I call you to order for the second time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The commissioner quite correctly has issued a warning to the community that people need to be aware that if they leave their valuables in clear view in a vehicle, offenders out there know that most of the credit cards and debit cards that people receive these days have automatically enabled PayPass capability. The crooks know that, too. They target vehicles and they target those cards, and 14.5 per cent of theft is driven by offenders trying to access those cards. We do not fully understand the entire reasons —

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I have been pretty lenient on you today. I call you to order for the first time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: While we do not fully understand every reason for the rise in crime, what we do know is that with the record resourcing we have given to police, with the additional police officers they have at their disposal, and with the implementation of the new model, they have been able to galvanise an unprecedented workforce to target volume crime. We expect that to improve over the next few months, but in summer we generally see a rise in crime. What I expect from every member in this house, including the member for Midland, is to back up those 6 000 officers who are working their butts off trying to drive down crime. All they hear is criticism of their efforts. I support them and so should the member for Midland!