

**SENTENCING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2013**

*Statement by Minister for Police*

**MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Police)** [2.04 pm]: I rise to inform the house that the state government will tomorrow introduce in the Legislative Council the Sentencing Legislation Amendment Bill 2013, which will ensure further protection of public officers and deter offenders from assaulting police. Currently, criminals serving a sentence of less than four years' imprisonment are eligible for parole halfway through their sentence. The Criminal Code Amendment Act 2009, which imposed mandatory terms of imprisonment, did not alter or purport to alter the existing law surrounding parole. The government has moved swiftly to amend the legislation, following a case earlier this year in which an offender convicted of assaulting a police officer was granted parole after four and a half months in jail. It is the expectation of the government, the community and the WA Police Union of Workers that, for these kinds of offences, mandatory means mandatory; if someone is sentenced under the laws for assaulting a public officer, for example, they should spend a minimum of six months in jail, and not be out on parole.

I would also like to give the house a brief history of how we delivered mandatory sentencing for assaults on police officers. When in opposition, on 27 February 2008, the Liberal Party introduced a bill into Parliament requiring jail terms for serious assaults on police officers. Despite overwhelming support from the community and from police for reform in this area, the then Labor government flatly refused to support this bill. In the 2008 state election, the Liberal Party made a commitment to protect police officers. The Liberal–National government introduced a series of minimum mandatory jail terms for assaults on both police officers and public officers, sending a simple message to offenders: if an officer is assaulted and sustains bodily harm, the offender will go to jail. Through our actions, reported assaults against police officers dropped by 28 per cent in the first twelve months after we introduced mandatory sentencing legislation. This state government will continue to do everything it can to protect police officers.