

CLARKSON POLICE STATION

Grievance

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Mindarie) [9.12 am]: I rise to grieve about the manning levels at the Clarkson Police Station. Clarkson is situated 33.5 kilometres north of Perth and has what is called a 24-hour police station, although the counter is open only between 8.00 am and 4.00 pm and thereafter some vans patrol the area. Some time ago I raised in this chamber the dire circumstances that we have in Clarkson, highlighted by the case of Mrs Denice Donners' son, a university student working at the Whale and Ale tavern. One night he heard a commotion in the car park and went out to investigate. He saw a youth being set upon by a gang of dark-skinned youths so went over to intercede. He was hit in the head with a large limestone boulder by this gang and suffered a very bad injury to his eye—they thought he was going to lose his eye—while the victim, whom he was helping, suffered a haematoma to the brain. The tavern called the police and the boy's mother. His mother came from Quinns Rocks. The police took over an hour to arrive. When questioned as to where they had been, they said, "We were doing a job in Hillarys." That just happens to be the electorate, of course, of the Minister for Police. Just on that note, we note that whilst we are being denied sufficient police resources out in Clarkson, that nice, safe, leafy suburb of Hillarys has got its own police station. I note an article on page 6 of the paper this morning headed "Top cop wants fewer stations, more police". The Commissioner of Police is saying that he will be closing down police stations and having regional hubs. There is no talk of closing the Hillarys Police Station in the minister's own electorate. I noticed with concern this morning that when the member for Armadale brought a petition into this chamber signed by nearly 2 000 people praying for 24-hour policing in Armadale, supported by the Liberal member for Darling Range who brought in a petition of 10 000 signatures seeking 24-hour policing in Armadale, the Minister for Police deliberately got up and left the chamber. He did not even remain to hear the petitions being read. My constituent, Mrs Denice Donners, said, "We gathered 2 000 signatures about this inadequate policing in Clarkson. What is going to happen now?" I had to sadly report to her what I had witnessed this morning—that when some members got up to read their petitions about inadequate policing, the Minister for Police left the chamber; he was not interested.

The Minister for Police has no authority over the police commissioner at all. He holds no sway with him. When the Commissioner of Police was summoned to the Liberal Party room earlier in the week to explain the outrageous decision to withdraw all police from police and community youth centres, the Commissioner of Police said that he was not going to have them there. What did the Minister for Police do? He came out of the Liberal Party room completely endorsing this awful decision of the Commissioner of Police, just mouthing and echoing what the commissioner had to say. He was behaving no more than like the commissioner's poodle. It took the Premier to intercede and say, "This is not good enough, commissioner. It is not acceptable to the community that you withdraw all the police. Put them back!" The Premier exercised authority that the Minister for Police did not have and has restored police to the PCYCs, as noted on page 13 of this morning's *The West Australian*. We are now pleading in this Parliament for the Premier to go over the minister's head and exercise some authority and get some proper policing out in Clarkson. They say that if the station is open 24 hours a day, it will take two vans off the road, as four policemen would be needed to keep this place open 24 hours. What did we see? We saw a company of police, not a platoon—150 police—designated to go to Broome to keep a gravel road open.

It is accurately reported today in the local newspaper, the *North Coast Times*, that police crime statistics show that domestic violence has risen by 55 per cent in my area. This is a fly in, fly out dormitory. There are quite a few social problems with so many husbands going away for a week and then re-entering their homes. We have so much domestic violence there that it is a great big social problem. What is the advantage of having a 24-hour police station? The women would have somewhere to go. There would be a visible police presence all night, where people could go to a safe haven. I remind members that Joondalup, which has a 24-hour station, is 25 kilometres from the CBD of Perth, but in between Joondalup and Perth there is another 24-hour station at Warwick. Travel another 16.5 kilometres north of Joondalup to Clarkson and there is not a 24-hour police station. That police station after hours is responsible for policing all the way up to Two Rocks and through the boom suburbs of Butler, Jindalee and Alkimos—suburbs that members have seldom heard of in this chamber; they have sprung up overnight. It is 69 kilometres from the CBD to Two Rocks and 36 kilometres from Clarkson to Two Rocks. If the police make an arrest up in Two Rocks or Butler, that person has to be transported not back to the cells in Clarkson, because there is nobody there, but to Joondalup. These vans are off the road for an hour and a half. If we had four extra policemen to keep this station open 24 hours a day, there would be some comfort and some belief that the minister was at least half as good as his word when he promised the community 500 extra police when he was in opposition. He has failed to deliver that. If there was just a portion of the ones he has been short on to deliver to this community, there would be clearly adequate police to keep Clarkson station open.

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys — Minister for Police) [9.20 am]: I would love to say thank you to the member for Mindarie for the grievance, but that would be a little hypocritical of me as I was told the grievance would be purely about Butler, but the member has strayed into all sorts of areas, including police and community youth centres. That gives me a little bit of range to respond to the member. Let me say to the member that the Commissioner of Police and I have never said that we intend to take all police officers out of PCYCs. If members look at the various media outlets, including *The West Australian*—I have the stuff that was sent through to *The West Australian* and others, including Albany—they will see that I have stated quite clearly, and the commissioner has stated quite clearly, that that has never been the intention and that police will remain at PCYCs but they will not be doing administration work; they will not be running the centres, they will not be organising Gymboree or Zumba classes and they will not be going out fundraising. We want them to concentrate on interaction with youth at risk and prolific and priority offenders. That is what the commissioner wants, that is what I want, and that is what the Premier wants. We are not taking police officers out of PCYCs, but we do not want them sitting in those PCYCs —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, it is not your grievance and I do not expect to hear from you. I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Obviously, the grievance strayed into other police stations. The member was referring to what was said at the Rockingham forum that was organised by the Commissioner of Police, who went down there. There were one or two opposition members there and all they wanted to talk about was the Secret Harbour police station that was never built. I remind members that the commissioner never, ever instigated that conversation or that proposal. That was done by the Labor Party during a by-election to try to assist the Labor candidate in that area. I am informed that that is not the sort of police station that would actually do a great job down there. The commissioner is moving to more of a hub situation, but we are not closing down police stations —

Ms R. Saffioti: Yes, you are!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: — other than in the western suburbs. We are not closing down police stations —

Ms R. Saffioti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, you probably heard what I said to the member for Warnbro. It is not your grievance. I formally call you to order for the first time.

Point of Order

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am not sure whether you are paying close attention to the minister's response, but just prior to the interjection from the member for West Swan, in a response to the grievance regarding Clarkson, the minister made a direct attack on me in respect of the police station for Secret Harbour. It was provocation inviting an interjection. I restrained myself —

The SPEAKER: Take a seat, member.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I understand the member for West Swan not being able to —

The SPEAKER: Take a seat, member!

Grievance Resumed

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The simple fact is that the only police stations we are looking at closing at some stage will be in the western suburbs, and that is only once the new police hub is built in Claremont. We have some very dilapidated old police stations that our officers have to work out of at the moment. Until the new hub is built, we have to spend some funds to try to keep them in a reasonable condition in accordance with occupational health guidelines for the officers who work from those stations. They are the ones that we propose to close. Let me make it quite clear: there are no proposals to close any other police stations—none whatsoever—so we can put that to bed.

The opposition will always try to hype up a story. It makes things up. We had that with the member for Midland during the week in relation to the road trauma trust account fund, and I will come back to her on another occasion. Let me make it quite clear: there is no proposal to close any police station, other than those in the western suburbs, and that is once the new hub is built.

The member for Mindarie was going on about the Clarkson Police Station. He thinks it should be open 24 hours a day. Let me make it quite clear that that police station is operational 24 hours a day, but it is not open to members of the public to go and renew gun licences, report lost goods or whatever. They can do that during daylight hours, but we do not want to take police officers who are on patrol off the road to put them in a police station, behind desks, to do paperwork. We have the same situation in Armadale. There is no good purpose in

locking police officers away in a police station having to do that administrative work. In much the same situation as with PCYCs, we want police officers concentrating on the community. In the case of the PCYCs, although we want police officers dealing with youth at risk and prolific and priority offenders in all the programs in the PCYCs, and police officers will remain club-based to do that program, we also want them, when they are not doing that in the PCYCs, to go out into the community and to work with youth at risk and the prolific and priority offenders. That is what members of the public want. They want to see as many police officers as possible out there in the community on the streets patrolling. Quite frankly, we have never seen so many police officers patrolling as we do today. That is because we have more police. This government has increased the number of police officers, and they are out and about and they are patrolling. Every police vehicle is a mobile police station now. If anybody is in distress, they can call the police hotline. If there is a life and death situation they call 000, or they can call the others numbers, which are pretty well known, and they will get a response. The response times are pretty good.

Mr J.R. Quigley: It was over an hour, they said, down in Hillarys.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: That is the member's interpretation, and I do not always believe what the member for Mindarie says —

Mr J.R. Quigley: It is not me; it is Denice Donners.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: — because he has made up things in the past and we know of his disdain —

Mr J.R. Quigley interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Mr Speaker, I did not interrupt that member when he was speaking—not one word did I use when he spoke, and I ask for the same courtesy. I probably will not get it from him! We know that the member for Mindarie has on many occasions defamed our police officers, including our commissioner. He has been forced to get up in this Parliament and apologise for that.

Point of Order

Mr M.P. WHITELY: The minister has got up and accused the member for Mindarie of defamation. You have given strict instructions not to invite interjections, and the minister has gone ahead and said he wants protection from you and then in the next breath accuses the member for Mindarie of defamation. This is unacceptable behaviour. If he is going to do that he is inviting interjections.

The SPEAKER: A grievance is an opportunity for a member in this place to express a grievance to a minister and expect a response. It is my interpretation that I will give some leniency to the person making the grievance to interject if he or she feels that they are not getting an appropriate response. I acknowledge that the minister sat silent during the grievance by the member for Mindarie and that there is a reasonable expectation that he might get the same in return. That is why, members, that I have called the member for Warnbro and also the member for West Swan; it is not their grievance. I am prepared to take some interjections from the person making the grievance, but not continually interjecting. I am going to sit down and enable the minister to conclude his response to the grievance.

Grievance Resumed

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: It is a fact, and *Hansard* records it; the member for Mindarie did apologise in this house for the defamatory comments he made about the police commissioner and other officers.

I have some facts. The north west metropolitan police district is at the moment 19 FTEs over authorised strength, so there are adequate resources out there. I am assured by the commissioner that that is the case. We are increasing our police numbers all the time and we are maintaining our election promise.

I can also tell members that during the summer crime reduction strategy, there was a reduction in that area in burglaries and stolen motor vehicles. We have seen a reduction because of the summer crime reduction strategy at a time when traditionally in the summer months we always see an increase in crime because of more daylight hours, the heat, more alcohol being consumed and people staying out later at night and the sort of problems we have seen with antisocial behaviour. That is traditional and is not something new; that has been going on for years and years.