

POLICE — SANCTION RATES

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

The Minister for Police said yesterday that she did not have to hand the figures on police sanction rates. Therefore, I ask whether she yet has them to hand and whether she can answer the following —

- (1) Will the minister now admit that the sanction rate for home burglaries in the metropolitan area is currently running at just 8.4 per cent?
- (2) What is the current sanction rate for crimes against the person—that is, all crimes against the person in the metro area—and how does that compare with the rate in 2008–09?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

- (1)–(2) As incredible as this might seem, I have not memorised the entire graph of the sanction rates over the past five years. However, I can say that the sanction rate for home burglary for the 2013 financial year was at 10.3 per cent. In 2010–11, police changed the way they calculated the sanction rate. For members in the house who may not be aware, the sanction rate is the number of verified offences for which an investigation outcome has been recorded of an offender being apprehended or processed. That is for things such as an arrest, a summons, a caution or a referral to a juvenile justice team or where, for some reason, police investigations cannot be continued—for example, the withdrawal of a complaint. The number of these sanctioned offences is expressed as a percentage of the total number of verified offences reported during the same period. The clearance rate is the number of reported offences when an investigation outcome was recorded, which also included insufficient evidence. With the changes in 2010–11, we have removed some of the ability for police officers, for instance, to write-off files with insufficient evidence recorded against them to beef-up the sanction rate result. That is no longer an appropriate outcome to be recorded on a file to feed into the sanction rate figures. Also, changes have been made to the Evidence Act 2006, the Criminal Investigation Act 2006, the Criminal Procedure Act 2004 —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: No, that is not correct—and other legislation enhancing transparency and accountability.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland, I call you to order for the second time. If you want to ask a supplementary question, I will give you a supplementary question.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The changes to those legislative instruments that I just referred to mean that the time taken to resolve offences and complete investigations has increased. In addition, changes have been made to our domestic violence reporting requirements, which has increased the number of offences being recorded against a selection of verified offences—and they have affected the sanction rate as well.

Since the move to a different sanction rate model, we believe it has achieved a more effective measure. The quality of the evidence that has been provided to the courts has improved, which has resulted in an increase in the percentage of guilty pleas and convictions. We believe that the quality of the work that we are presenting is better and police officers are doing a better job. The changes to the way we are measuring the sanction rate is a better measurement of the effectiveness of police officers' work.