

POLICE — LOCAL INITIATIVES

281. Mrs G.J. GODFREY to the Minister for Police:

My constituents of Belmont have always valued high-profile policing initiatives.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Too bad; they're all in Armadale.

Dr A.D. Buti: Where they should be.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Armadale, I call you to order for the first time.

Mrs G.J. GODFREY: With this in mind, can the minister please update the house on the Liberal–National government's plans for local policing in my area?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Belmont for her question and also for her continuing interest in law and order issues in her electorate. Around the last election the Liberal–National government made various commitments. Those commitments were based around providing a more visible, responsive and effective police force. Members in this house may be aware that at present police are undergoing substantial reform and also a substantial growth program. The reform process is all designed around freeing up police time and getting police officers from behind desks and out into the community where their work counts. It is also about looking at legislative reform for police to free up the processes that tie police to their desks and making the changes and red tape improvements to improve a day in the life of a police officer.

I am glad that mention was made of the operation in Armadale. We have also been working with police on delivering a different and more effective policing model. Part of that model was Operation Carambola, which has been talked about much in this place. The results of Operation Carambola are incredibly impressive. After only five weeks, 540 charges have been laid, 130 arrests have been effected, 253 summonses have been issued and 53 motor vehicles have been seized. The police in Armadale are now taking back the streets on behalf of the community. Operation Carambola has been incredibly effective and we are looking at working on ways to roll that out into other precincts as those hotspots become apparent. Part of our strategy is around a more proactive and targeted policing model. There has been much talk about a back-to-basics policing model. The feedback I have had from the community is that it wants more proactive policing and more engagement with police. In response to that, we are putting together local policing teams. The local policing teams will be doing beat work policing in local communities. We will be trialling this in two of our hotspots, being Armadale and Mandurah. I am sure that other members in this place will be lining up to see this kind of proactive policing response targeted in their precincts. I have the member for Belmont's electorate in mind as well.

These local policing teams will look at nuisance offending. They will go to the skate parks during the day and round up the kids when they should be at school and try to circumvent this antisocial behaviour that often escalates into criminal activity. They will be doing the things that it is difficult for police to do when they are caught in that tasking framework and going from job to job in response to tasking from the operations centre. This is all based around police strengthening their ties with the community, engaging more proactively with local government agencies that are doing other important work within those communities and ensuring that the police officers are out there where it counts working with victims of crime, working with small business owners who are victims of crime and reducing the level of victimisation in those circumstances, working with the prolific priority offenders and trying to prevent those particular offenders from reoffending. I will watch this with interest as it unfolds. Over the past 12 months or so the police involved in this reform process have been proactively trying to engage better with the community and be more responsive with the community. At the end of our eight years in government, we will have expanded our police force by 1 050 police and police auxiliary officers. We want to ensure that those officers are out there dealing with the community where it counts.