

GRAFFITI VANDALISM

715. Mr C.D. HATTON to the Minister for Police:

Can the minister please inform the house what the Liberal–National government is doing to tackle the scourge of graffiti in our communities?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Balcatta for his question and his continued commitment to fighting the scourge of graffiti in our community.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Balcatta and member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for the first time, and member for Willagee for the first time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Since this government was elected in September 2008, we have been focusing on tackling graffiti vandalism. We are doing this with a whole-of-government response, targeted police operations, and also with tough legislation. In 2009, we re-established the Graffiti Taskforce. Members will be aware that the Graffiti Taskforce brings together the combined representation of WA Police, the Department of Corrective Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Housing, the Public Transport Authority and the Department of Local Government and Communities.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

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

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The task force is responsible for managing and implementing the government's tough-on-graffiti initiatives. In January 2010, we introduced new legislation into this place —

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Well may the opposition laugh at this. I laugh at their contribution to the debate on graffiti. They call graffiti vandalism art. We do not.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! We do not want the wall of noise.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: In 2010 we made it an offence in Western Australia to sell graffiti implements such as marker pens, spray paint cans et cetera to children. We increased the penalty for graffiti vandalism to two years' imprisonment or a fine of \$24 000. Our tough-on-graffiti strategy has been a success. We have seen a decrease in the number of graffiti vandalism reports—a significant decrease. We care about our communities. We want our neighbourhoods to be free of graffiti. People living in our neighbourhoods want their neighbourhoods to be free of graffiti. Graffiti drags down the tone of a neighbourhood, it drags down the value of people's properties and it concerns our local communities, and that is why we care about it.

Since we have implemented our graffiti strategies, in 2007–08 there were 16 025 verified graffiti vandalism offences, and in 2014–15 there were 1 933. That is from 16 000 to under 2 000. I would call that a success. That is because we are committed to achieving our results. We had nine phases of Operation Eraser through WA Police, and 1 110 offenders were charged with nearly 4 000 offences.

Our job is not finished. We are now implementing, and I will be reading in later today, legislation to bring all of our graffiti offences into one legislative implement. This will create a stand-alone offence for graffiti vandalism. It will require the courts to impose a graffiti clean-up order on offenders who are convicted of a graffiti offence. It will give the Public Transport Authority powers to apprehend and detain people who are suspected of or involved in graffiti vandalism, and it will allow us to confiscate any item, such as a mobile phone, a notebook computer, or anything that has been used to transmit or record graffiti vandalism offences. This is the next tranche of our strategy to drive down graffiti vandalism in the community. I expect the support of the opposition, not the nonsense that we heard when we brought our last raft of graffiti legislation through this place.

Several members interjected.

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

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The government will remain committed. We have demonstrated our commitment to this with the re-establishment of the task force. We will continue to support police in our operations, and this new

stand-alone graffiti offence will give police, local government and the PTA the tools they need to combat graffiti vandalism offences in our community.