

POLICE OFFICERS — NUMBERS

**383. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Minister for Police:**

I refer to a media statement by the opposition spokesperson for police stating that police numbers have been reduced under this government. It goes so far as to claim that the number of police officers has been reduced by 90. As I understand it, we have been steadily increasing police numbers since we came to government. I would appreciate the minister updating the house on the status of the issue.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:**

I thank the member for the question. She is absolutely right. I see so many press releases from the member for Girrawheen that I do not normally pay much attention to them these days because they are either irrelevant or misleading in the extreme. The press release from the member for Girrawheen that I show members today is headed “Police numbers down as crime goes up”. The first paragraph states —

A reduction of 90 WA Police officers in the past year was a major contributing factor in the significant increase in a range of offences, Shadow Police Minister Margaret Quirk said today.

That is what she said last week. I did not think that could be true because I have attended so many graduations. We certainly are not down by 90 police officers by any stretch of the imagination.

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** If you see the document, will you retract that statement?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I have the documents that the opposition has, I am sure, but it is a matter of how they are interpreted and whether the opposition misinterprets them, which is what the member for Girrawheen does. As at 31 May 2010 we had 5 596 officers and as at 31 May 2011 we had 5 850 officers. Anyone who can do elementary maths can see that if the one figure is subtracted from the other, we end up with a total of 254 more police officers in that one-year period. Obviously the member for Girrawheen has trouble with her maths, just as she has trouble with being completely truthful in her press releases. To make it simple for the member for Girrawheen, I got out my coloured crayons because that is the only way she seems to understand. I will show the member for Girrawheen and other members a graph. The red years are the Labor years. Members can see that the only time police numbers went up under Labor was in the year leading up to an election. True, true, true. It is absolutely true, I assure members. Members opposite can have this and study it to their heart’s content.

**Mr M. McGowan:** Give us a copy.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I will give members a copy. I will even sign it, with pleasure. Once again, the blue years—under the Liberal–National government—are the good years. In our first year, we increased the number of police officers from the pre-election year in which the Labor Party had increased police numbers, which was a big jump from the previous three years. We did go up a little bit, but not a great deal, in the second year, but the number of police officers we have in the present year —

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Are they all sworn officers?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** They are all sworn officers. Members will see that the number of officers here —

**Mr E.S. Ripper:** Are there no auxiliaries in that number?

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** They are—even —

Opposition members interjected.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** They are all police officers. We know that the opposition has contempt for our police auxiliary officers. The number includes police auxiliary officers. The red years versus the blue years are important. We are really doing well. This shows that what the member for Girrawheen said in her press release is absolutely untrue.

*Tabling of Paper*

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The minister indicated that he would table the document that he read from, and I would appreciate it if he would table that document.

**The SPEAKER:** Before you table it, Minister for Police, I did not hear you use the word “table”. I know you said that you would provide it, but if you are happy to table it, I would like you to do that.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** You are quite right; I did say that I would provide it, and I am more than happy to table it.

[See paper 3494.]