

Division 26: Western Australia Police Force — Services 1 to 3, Police —

Ms M.M. Quirk, Chair.

Mr P. Papalia, Minister for Police.

Mr C. Blanch, Commissioner of Police.

Ms K. Whiteley, Deputy Commissioner.

Mr A. Adams, Deputy Commissioner.

Mr F. Pasquale, Executive Director.

Mr V. Ianni, Director Finance and Business Services.

Mr P. Zappelli, Principal Policy Adviser.

Mr J. Gangell, Senior Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard and the daily proof will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. I will allow as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point. Consideration is restricted to items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must relate to a page number, item or amount related to the current division, and members should preface their questions with those details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall be examined only in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by noon on Friday, 31 May 2024. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system to submit their questions.

I give the call to the member for Vasse.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the reference to family violence found under the first of the significant issues impacting the agency, “Demand for Police Services”, in budget paper No 2, volume 2 on page 406. In line with the notion that there is a higher demand for police services, especially in reference to family violence and sexual assault, how much funding is dedicated towards family and domestic violence training for police officers?

The CHAIR: That is one question. Let us proceed with that, minister.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It would be hard to isolate that element and the associated costs within the training at the academy, but I might ask the commissioner whether he can perhaps give some response.

Mr C. Blanch: I do not have a funding figure, but the Western Australia Police Force is responding to a significant demand in family and domestic violence. We receive approximately 100 000 call-outs to family and domestic violence a year. That converts to around 60 000 family and domestic violence offences. The training has increased not only at the recruitment level, but also across the entire agency. We are often asked about our investment in family and domestic violence response. It is a multi-tiered response. It is probably the largest component of the training for the recruits, but the retraining of our officers across the entire state is what we have been focused on. Although each officer who works on the front line is responsible for responding to and prosecuting perpetrators of domestic violence, we also have a centralised family and domestic violence team, our family and domestic violence response teams and our serious crime family and domestic violence teams working in the crime department. It is multi-layered and is probably our greatest response capability in the Western Australia Police Force.

Ms L. METTAM: I understand the funding for the training is captured within the budget. Do Western Australian police benefit from any free training for family and domestic violence that is not paid for, by any particular groups or agencies?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed and I am pretty aware that police do all their own training, but in developing those training packages and their content, police seek advice from experts and various sources within the community. For instance, we have an Aboriginal advisory group that contributes and provides advice to police about Aboriginal-related policing matters. There is a contribution from the culturally and linguistically diverse community leadership, and beyond that there is also specialist advice, but the police would seek that. They do not have anyone come in and do the training.

Ms L. METTAM: In a similar way, how much funding is dedicated towards sexual assault sensitivity training for police officers; and how many police officers have undertaken this training in the year to date?

The CHAIR: That is two questions, but I will let you get away with it this time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think it is the same answer with respect to isolating that individual component or element of training. It would be a difficult thing to do. It is not done as normal practice because all the training packages are funded collectively. Perhaps somebody could provide some further insight.

Mr C. Blanch: We do not have that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We cannot give the Leader of the Liberal Party a monetary figure or isolate that part of the training.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to officer safety as referred to in paragraph 5 under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 407, budget paper No 2, volume 2. How many police officers have been assaulted in 2023–24 to date?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I might get Deputy Commissioner Adams to respond to that.

Mr A. Adams: The data does not detail the specific individuals assaulted, but 1 344 assaults on police officers have occurred so far this financial year. Police officers can get assaulted multiple times in an incident, but, generally, it is largely one offence per individual over the broader dataset.

Ms L. METTAM: How does that compare with previous years?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Before I get the deputy commissioner to answer that, I will make an observation with respect to a charge of assault on a police officer. It covers a fairly broad spectrum in terms of the degree or nature of the assaults from things like spitting all the way up to serious assaults. That aside, the other thing to remember is that we now have the benefit of all our officers wearing body-worn cameras, which I suggest enables a better response to those sorts of assaults than has been possible in the past because it provides a degree of evidence. The likelihood of people being charged is higher now than it has been in the past. In our protected entertainment precincts, we have more police working during the times of the day and week when they may be more likely to encounter a situation in which they may be assaulted. For instance, in Northbridge, in the past we have seen a police officer respond to an incident report but get there after the incident is over. However, we now regularly see officers arriving at a scuffle, a fight or an assault whilst it is still underway, and they are more likely to get involved in that situation as a consequence. There is no doubt that there has been an increase in the number of assaults on police officers as a consequence of our faster response time, particularly in Northbridge and other PEPs. I will hand over to Deputy Commissioner Adams.

[9.10 am]

Mr A. Adams: As the minister said, we put in a lot of effort over the last three years around improving our responsiveness to calls for help from the community and have been very successful in that regard. Obviously, the quicker police officers get to those dynamic jobs, the more likely they are to get there at the time of the highest level of potential harm. We have seen the assault numbers increase around that response. But the way that I would put it is that it is the heroism of police—being there quickly, standing between the good guy and the bad guy and taking the brunt whilst they deal with the bad person. We have seen those numbers increase. Similarly, we have put a lot of effort into our entertainment precincts by increasing the number of police officers in those areas, which we know probably have higher levels of frequency of disorder, and the immediate manner in which the police in those areas respond to those incidents, again, increases the level of aggression towards them.

Ms L. METTAM: Can we have a breakdown of the data from previous years?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes. The Commissioner of Police provided me with something a little while ago, which is a breakdown over the last 18 years of assaults on police officers. Essentially, I can provide that to the member. It is a graph. Eighteen years ago, the number was higher. It is higher now than it was in recent years, and I think a fair amount of that can be attributed to the factors that Deputy Commissioner Adams referred to. I have the graph. It is not really supplementary information. May I provide it as additional information? It is this graph here, and I can give the member the data points of the peaks and troughs over the 18-year period if she would like it.

Ms L. METTAM: Okay.

The CHAIR: I think that probably needs to be provided by way of supplementary information.

Mr P. PAPALIA: By way of supplementary information, I will undertake to provide a graph of the Western Australian offence rate for assaults on police officers over the period from 2006 to 2023, which will give the member the data up until the latest complete year, with detailed data points of the graph.

[*Supplementary Information No B1.*]

Ms L. METTAM: Can I get the figures for 2021–22?

Mr P. PAPALIA: We will be able to get it for the member. I will hand over to the commissioner.

Mr C. Blanch: We provide the rate per capita of population. Given we have had such a significant increase in the WA population, we can provide the rates for each 100 000 measure of population. When there were only 20 people in WA, it would have been a very low number. Now there are nearly 2.9 million people, so the rate will give the member the best indication. I think that would help.

Mr P. PAPALIA: For what year, member?

Ms L. METTAM: For the year 2021–22.

Mr C. Blanch: We can give every year.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That graph will have every year that the member is talking about.

Ms L. METTAM: Can we have the figures for last year, 2022–23?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Again, I do not think the commissioner has that off the top of his head, but we will give the member that as part of that document.

Ms L. METTAM: Can I get a breakdown of these assaults, such as physical assaults, spitting et cetera? I appreciate the comment before that there is a broad range of severity of assaults.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can I do that for just the recent years, rather than the whole 18-year period? Otherwise, it will take a long time.

Ms L. METTAM: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: As part of the same document —

The CHAIR: That is B1.

Mr P. PAPALIA: — would the last three years be adequate?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will provide, specifically, the breakdown of the types of assaults. As an explanation, member, the commissioner has informed me that it is recorded only when there is use of force in assaulting police officers. Therefore, the data may not correlate with the number of assaults. The member may get a smaller number in the actual breakdown of the types of incidents because that is why that information is retained.

Ms L. METTAM: What services are provided for officer health and welfare?

The CHAIR: Is this in the context of officer safety or is it broader than that, member?

Ms L. METTAM: It is in the context of officer safety.

Mr P. PAPALIA: As an observation, the effort dedicated to the health, welfare and safety of our officers has massively increased in recent years, including the number of personnel who are assigned to that task. We have more than doubled the number of chaplains employed, including a couple of female chaplains now. There is a 24/7 chaplaincy response to traumatic incidents. The personnel allocated to the health, welfare and safety division has more than doubled in both uniformed officers and employed counsellors and psychologists. The peer-support program has been reinvigorated. It was withering a little on the vine about five years ago, but the number of participants has now more than doubled. They regularly have their training reinforced, have an annual training allocation and are recruiting additional peer-support program participants.

As the member will recall, we have included compensation for police now. Police compensation exists. It did not used to. That means that medically retired officers are now eligible for police compensation whilst retaining all their entitlements. This is something that they never had access to prior to that, and it was delivered at the end of 2021. I also make the observation that the leadership—both the previous and current commissioners—has made a concerted effort to tackle the stigma that used to be associated with talking about mental health and the consequences of exposure to trauma and to empower people to seek assistance. Apart from all the in-house services, there is a much-enhanced list of external authorised providers from whom officers can seek assistance without revealing to the police force the nature of their concern or illness. It is funded by police. All those services have been increased significantly. I might ask Deputy Commissioner Whitely to perhaps talk a little more about it.

[9.20 am]

Ms K. Whiteley: In relation to that last comment, the employee assistance program has been really successful. We have had a significant uptake of officers reaching out early when they needed some support.

In terms of our workforce, the health, safety and welfare of our officers is a primary focus. The number one thing is our people. Wherever we can, we are making sure that all the right information is getting out to all the officers on the ground. As the minister said, we have programs in place. The dedicated health and welfare division makes officers feel supported when they are home after being injured, when they come back to work or when they need other support. The employee assistance program provides that support. Then, of course, we have seen officers attend

critical incidents recently, so we immediately roll out our chaplaincy services. That also has an extended network across regional WA. That has been really successful. We are getting good feedback from the officers on the ground about that.

The peer support program has doubled. At present, work is continuing on that program to ensure that it continues to be out on the ground in the stations. The vocational rehab unit has been really successful in getting people back to work.

Of course, it is an ongoing effort. It is something that we are looking at on a daily basis—our retention task force, and ensuring that all those mechanisms are functioning and being delivered on the ground. It is quite an extensive program of work.

Ms L. METTAM: I have a further question.

The CHAIR: I just note that you have had 95 per cent of the questions. We almost might need to give one to a government member.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Chair, we are okay. Noting that there are a smaller number of opposition members —

The CHAIR: I am going to play it straight down the line. I think one question in 15 should go to the government if it feels inclined. If it does not feel inclined, that is fine.

Mr T.J. HEALY: We are happy to give it to the opposition.

The CHAIR: You may ask a further question, member. You are doing well, so keep it up.

Ms L. METTAM: How many officers are currently on extended medical leave?

Mr P. PAPALIA: We might have to get that answer to the member, if that is okay. I will undertake to provide that information. Is the member talking about officers who are on leave right now?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes, and the next part is: how many were medically discharged over the last 12 months?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think we answered a similar question in the upper house, but we will get the answer to the member.

The CHAIR: Member, just repeat what you want because there are actually two elements there.

Ms L. METTAM: The question was in two parts: how many officers are currently on extended medical leave; and how many officers were medically discharged over the past 12 months?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am absolutely certain I answered this last week in the upper house, but I will undertake to provide how many officers were on extended medical leave and how many officers were retired medically during the last calendar year.

[Supplementary Information No B2.]

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to paragraph 9 under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 407 of budget paper No 2, volume 2. With regard to streamlining communications and response times to a call for help, what was the average response time for police 000 calls for the past 12 months?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am advised that it is not an average response time. There is a grade of service. I can get Deputy Commissioner Adams to respond to that. That is the KPI that the police need to meet. I will let the deputy commissioner answer and if that is not adequate, the member can ask me something else.

Mr A. Adams: We keep figures for the average response time but it is not part of our regular information. Can I please ask what number we are looking at because I have a briefing note with the precise numbers.

Ms L. METTAM: It is paragraph 9 under “Technology and Facilities”, relating to streamlining communications.

Mr A. Adams: Is that page 404 ?

Ms L. METTAM: It is page 407.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Member, that note refers to the benefits that have accrued as a consequence of the establishment of the State Operations Command Centre and co-locating other agencies, which has resulted in a lot more collaboration, sharing of data and specialist advice to responders, not only benefiting policing generally, but also other agency responses.

With respect to the numbers that the member is asking about, while Deputy Commissioner Adams is seeking that information, I go back to the member’s question about medical retirement. The commissioner may be able to answer.

Mr C. Blanch: For priority 1 and 2 jobs, in response, within 12 minutes, our key performance indicator must meet 80 per cent. This year it is 86 per cent, so we are six per cent above our target. For priority 3 incidents, which we are required to respond to within 60 minutes, we also have an 80 per cent target, and we are at 84.7 per cent. We are nearly five per cent over, so our performance is better.

Ms L. METTAM: How does this compare with the response times for 2017–18?

Mr A. Adams: We would probably have to take that on notice. The five-year data generally is sitting in front of us. We have had 30 consecutive months of achieving greater service for priority 1s and 2s and 29 out of 30 for priority 3s. It is the longest stretch of continued achievement over the last five years. I would have to take it on notice to go back to 2016–17.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think it would be better for the member if we provide that as supplementary information.

I will undertake to provide as supplementary information the key performance indicator achievements for the 2017–18 financial year.

[*Supplementary Information No B3.*]

Mr P. PAPALIA: I was going to respond by giving a bit of information now rather than waiting. We will give the specific numbers that the member asked for. Regarding medically retired personnel, as of 30 April this year, 71 members have medically retired from the WA police for work-related injuries since the commencement of the scheme. A further 60 members are at varying stages within the medical retirement process, with a further 25 members being referred to police separation transition for medical retirement.

In the year prior to establishing the scheme, we encouraged officers who might be eligible to access the scheme to delay their retirement process so they could become beneficiaries. There is a degree of catch-up related to the number of officers who are medically retiring. We have potentially captured a number of years before that. From memory, we originally anticipated around 20 a year. I think it was 22 last year. The numbers appear to reflect the predicted modelling of the likely number who retire annually.

[9.30 am]

The CHAIR: Technically speaking, we are on paragraph 9.

Ms L. METTAM: Yes. Is the minister able to provide a breakdown by priority category and by region of the average response times to 000 calls?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As an observation, the key performance indicators are for metro response. There is not one for regional. Does the member want average response times as a number for different districts?

Ms L. METTAM: Is there a breakdown for regional areas?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is not what the Western Australia Police Force report on. It is not a measure of performance. Western Australia is one-third of the continent, and a lot of our regional districts are very large and sparsely populated. Responses in the regions can reflect that challenge. It is not an actual measure that, historically, is applied.

The CHAIR: It might be more appropriate to put that question on notice. The member already has the indication that it will not be easy for the WA police to distil that out of its current records, and, bearing in mind that these responses are required by 31 May, the member might want to put that on notice instead.

Ms L. METTAM: I appreciate that following the tragic death of Lynn Cannon there was a review into how 000 calls are responded to. Can the minister provide any update on that?

Mr C. Blanch: Lynn Cannon's death will be subject to a coronial inquest and a report for the coroner. We have done a significant amount of internal work looking at that specific situation in preparation for our response to the coroner.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am on budget paper No 2, volume 2, page 408. There is a service summary at the bottom of that page and a list outlining the division of funding between metropolitan policing services, regional specialists and the Road Safety Commission. I think my question will be covered by the allocation in one of these. I am looking for information on the canine unit. I assume it comes under specialist policing services. What funding allocation is made to the canine unit in terms of FTE resources for dogs and their training?

Mr P. PAPALIA: My advisers will not be able to provide that right now. That is fine. We can get that information for the member. I will undertake to provide the member with the funding allocation for operations of the canine unit in its entirety including training.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Yes, please, including FTE for dogs and their training.

The CHAIR: Is that dogs or just persons?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Both. I am assuming they are FTE!

[*Supplementary Information No B4.*]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Further to that information on the canine unit, last year the Corruption and Crime Commission released a report into the deployment of police dogs. There was a recommendation, which the minister would be aware of, to develop and implement a WA Police canine unit policy, procedure and guidelines. From memory, I think

there was an undertaking from WA police to have this completed by March this year. Could the minister advise whether this has been completed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, I can. I can confirm that it was. It was an interesting report; I disagreed with one element of the observations in it. With respect to the training procedures and practices, yes, that has been delivered.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Could the minister outline some of the changes? From my recollection, the report dealt with the over-representation of Aboriginal people in relation to the use and deployment of canines. Is there a reflection from the Western Australia Police Force or the minister on that matter?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The particular element of the report that I disagreed with was the suggestion, as a consequence of data around the number of encounters, that the dogs themselves were targeting Aboriginal people and that was somehow part of their training. I totally disagree with that. If that is the component of the report the member is referring to, I disagree with the suggestion that there is any racial element to the training or the practice of operations of the canine unit. Regarding training, it was more about the documentation of the training that had to be addressed, and that has been addressed. I will ask Deputy Commissioner Whiteley to respond specifically to the documentation because that was an element that was identified as an omission, or there was or a lack of detail, and that has been addressed.

Ms K. Whiteley: On the CCC finding, we have worked very closely with the CCC. We have actually had them attend out at Maylands and observe the changes in the training. There has been a lot of changes in deployment methods and the circumstances in which canines are actually released in terms of deployment. We track all of our deployments now. I can say dog bites in relation to our deployments have significantly reduced. We keep statistics on what the circumstances were and whether they met a certain threshold for the deployment of a canine. We are tracking that very closely. We are also working with the university to make sure that all our training application and the consequences of the deployments are fully considered. There is a fully reviewed training program in place. We are still working through some of the guidelines to make sure we are not missing any elements as we learn from the university's research. The team has certainly progressed that, and we have received positive feedback from the CCC.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I might get the commissioner to add a further response to that particular part of the question. Noting there was a change in practice with the canine units being located in the city and then deployed as required around the state, the objective, in part, was to ensure uniformity and consistency in training of both handlers and dogs.

Mr C. Blanch: We have had canines deployed throughout the state during our history, so there was an inconsistent training approach if those dogs were unable to come back for training at a certain period, albeit they were not very different. But with a centralised approach, a trainer who has come in, who in my view has been quite excellent, it is good to get the CCC in to have a look at how we are training dogs. Despite the Corruption and Crime Commission's report, we still deploy canines. Canines work one-up with their partner—the police officer. Most of the deployments occur in the middle of the night—for example, for burglaries. The determination of gender, race or anything else is not part of the deployment of a canine; it is about the threat and risk to the police officer and/or other people. Any suggestion that there was a racist approach to the deployment of the dogs is wrong, and we strongly disputed that. Our canines are deployed in appropriate circumstances to protect the officers and the community, and we will continue to do that when an officer makes that determination. I support them in that because canines are an extremely useful tool. They are very well trained and we are now able to recall the dogs even after a deployment before it may latch onto a person. That is something the training brought about as a result of a better training environment.

[9.40 am]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: On the advice provided that the minister was still working through the guidelines, when will those guidelines be completed? I understand that the CCC has undertaken to review them again at the end of this year.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will ask Deputy Commissioner Whiteley to respond.

Ms K. Whiteley: The guidelines already exist and they are reviewed regularly. They are available as they currently stand, but they are under constant review to make sure that our deployment modelling is right.

Mr P. PAPALIA: With respect to the CCC requirement, as part of its report, that obligation was met. The documentation was provided.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Okay. I think I know the answer to this question. Those guidelines are obviously internal guidelines and policy. Are they not likely to be made available publicly?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, they are. The member is correct.

Ms M. BEARD: I refer to regional and remote policing services on page 411 of budget paper No 2, volume 2. The number of FTEs is anticipated to increase from 2 240 to 2 407. How confident is the minister that that increase will occur?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am very confident. My observation on personnel attraction, training and retention is that we undertook in 2020 to grow the police force by 15 per cent over four years. That was an ambitious target, but we were on track to deliver that. Prior to 2022, there were two years of recession. Coupled with the two years of COVID, essentially, over a four-year period there was a very low attrition rate. We have suffered a higher attrition rate post-COVID. We were on track to meet that target—in fact, we were ahead of it—but then we suffered a significant departure, I think, as a consequence of the accumulated number of people who had not departed at the normal rate prior to that. The attrition rate is across the police force. It is not specifically related to the regions. How many officers go to the regions is a consequence of recruitment, training and retention. The attrition rate has now plateaued at a much lower level than the 2022 level, but it is higher than what was experienced prior to COVID. That may be the new normal.

I have asked the police to develop and provide a model that can more accurately predict our training and recruiting requirements, noting all the factors that they are able to predict like the current demographics, ageing out, the likely career path of different generations of people and our ability to attract people. More than 2 600 Western Australians have applied to join the police since the Let's Join Forces campaign commenced; more than 1 550 experienced overseas officers from the United Kingdom, Ireland and New Zealand have applied to join; and the Western Australia Police Force academy is training 1 000 recruits in a 12-month period, which is pretty much at capacity. Police will then be able to model that when we hit the additional growth target. We are growing the police force, despite some of the narrative around that. We will achieve the objective of getting to 950 above the attrition rate, but I cannot give the member an exact time because the work on the modelling is still being done.

In answer to hitting the extra FTE for the regions, I might hand over to Deputy Commissioner Adams. The Commissioner of Police dictates where police officers go and Deputy Commissioner Adams is the one who works the magic by putting them in different locations in different districts.

Mr A. Adams: So far, we have allocated 189 extra positions into regional WA as part of the 950 growth program and another 52 are to be allocated. There are some challenges around housing availability from a growth perspective in regional WA, but we have made some inroads on that by working with the Department of Communities recently, plus the districts have been doing a lot of hard work on the ground looking for housing opportunities. Operation Regional Shield funding has been extremely beneficial to regional WA over the last few years that it has been available, but this year we decided that although flying police officers in and out of regional WA for two-week periods is beneficial to the guys and girls who work in the districts, from a community policing perspective it is not the ideal model. I am not for one second saying that it has not been well received; it has been very well received. To try to attract police officers into some of those hard-to-fill locations such as Halls Creek, Laverton, Meekatharra and Newman, we have used some of the Operation Regional Shield money to significantly increase the attraction allowance for those locations. Back on 1 July 2023, we had 63 vacancies in those locations and today we have nine. The significantly increased attraction allowance using the Operation Regional Shield funding has enabled us to fill a significant proportion of the vacancies in those towns. They are not easy towns to attract people to, so the \$30 000 attraction allowance has worked very well and we are keen to pursue it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: As a further explanation, Deputy Commissioner Adams is talking about internal budgeting. Operation Regional Shield is an operation. It is not about specific numbers of police in any one location or another; it is about applying an effect. If police confront an acute crime issue in any of the regions, through the funding that is afforded them, they are able to respond with additional police officers or assets like analysts, aircraft, drone operators or anything of that nature. Deputy Commissioner Adams sits around trying to figure out how he will put police into different locations with the budget he has received for that financial year. We are still growing and have already funded the targeted 950 extra police above the attrition rate. If we are still growing those numbers but still have not met that number, the police can use that money in the financial year for other purposes. That is what he is talking about. I will get the commissioner to give more of an insight into Operation Regional Shield because it is an operation; it is not about staffing regional police stations.

[9.50 am]

Mr C. Blanch: There has been a 671 net increase of officers over the last five years. Regional WA has benefited from a lot of those officers living in regional WA. Operation Regional Shield gives us the flexibility to surge into those areas, particularly when we see high-harm juvenile offenders released from a period of custody into a town and we know that there may be increased crime. There is a surge capacity for funerals or other matters in any of the regional WA towns; we utilise Operation Regional Shield for surge capacity. That has worked extremely well and, as Deputy Commissioner Adams said, we find that the local police find a lot of respite in having Operation Regional Shield personnel come to their area. As the minister said, it is not just blue-shirt frontline police. We send specialist units. We might send the regional operations group. We might send drones. We have sent the helicopter to regional WA; it was most recently in Geraldton. We send our capabilities that we have here in Perth around the state because we police the state, not just Perth.

Ms M. BEARD: When Operation Regional Shield personnel are deployed, does it take police officers out of regional stations? Does that leave regional stations short?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member needs to ask me.

Ms M. BEARD: Sorry. Does that take officers out of other regional locations, which then leaves them short, or is it a specialist unit that stays together all the time?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As the Commissioner of Police indicated, it sources personnel and capability from the metro area, but it might be from the regional operations group, from metropolitan police stations or from specialist units like the liquor enforcement unit. For instance, the member may have heard about the response to Kalgoorlie over summer, where there was street-present antisocial behaviour. The response to that instance involved the regional operations group, liquor enforcement unit and the Aboriginal policing division as well as additional general duty police. Those three sources of personnel were not from the regions. It is not taking from one regional area to put to another. Again, I emphasise this. It is an operation that responds to an acute challenge. It may or may not involve additional police officers. It is not intended to be the means by which we staff regional policing. We are always going to staff regional police stations and districts. From memory, overall, there are more police in every regional district than there was seven years ago. Our intention, as the member heard from Deputy Commissioner Adams, is to grow that further. Operation Regional Shield is above that. For instance, in the Kimberley at the moment, there is a police district, an allocation of FTE within that district, and then Operation Regional Shield deployments are in addition to those people.

Ms M. BEARD: Can the minister give an indication of the number of times the Operation Regional Shield group has been deployed by location?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Again, it is not a group of people. It is not a unit. Operation Regional Shield is an operation funded to enable the commissioner to deploy whatever assets he requires at any time to any specific location in the regions. What is the member after? Is she after the number of operational deployments under Operation Regional Shield?

Ms M. BEARD: Yes. When we hear that Operation Regional Shield has been deployed to a location —

Mr P. PAPALIA: Operational Regional Shield is enacted in a district, and then police or resources and assets are deployed.

Ms M. BEARD: How many times and to what locations have they been deployed?

Mr P. PAPALIA: We would not have that information here. The member is talking about something that has been going for two years. I think the member will have to put that on notice as she is talking about a significant amount of work to identify the data she is talking about.

Ms M. BEARD: That is fine. Can the minister provide a breakdown of the authorised strength versus the current FTE by regional station? Should that be on notice?

The CHAIR: I think that is traditionally out of convention. That type of question is always out of order, for obvious reasons.

Ms M. BEARD: That is fine.

Mr P. PAPALIA: For operational purposes, police do not give you a subdistrict breakdown. You do not want to tell the bad guys how many cops there are in a particular town at any time. That is not me; that is normal practice. As I think I have done many times, I can provide the member with the district FTE.

Ms M. BEARD: This question is based around the previous question but may be a new question. My question is about Aboriginal liaison officers in each region and location. What is the number of positions vacant at the moment versus how many there should be?

Mr P. PAPALIA: To clarify, until recently, there were some legacy Aboriginal policing liaison officers out there, but not many, because that was a program from a long time ago. There were some officers employed under that scheme. But the member probably refers to the commissioner's more recent creation of the community liaison officer program. He can tell the member about who he has establishing and delivering that program.

Mr C. Blanch: The community liaison officer function of the Western Australia Police Force was traditionally managed in each station by the officer in charge. Depending on the OIC of the day, they may have different roles and differing functions. We wanted to grow that capability. We found that local employment, particularly of Indigenous people, in towns created a much better environment of connecting police with local communities. There were 11 community liaison officers in the most recent budget. We got funding for another 10. The Western Australia Police Force hired Mechelle Turvey as its community liaison officer coordinator. She centralises and coordinates that capability to deploy across the state. There will be 21 officers. We are in the process of recruiting 10 at the moment. Are there vacancies? Yes—the 10 we were allocated in the budget a couple of weeks ago. Of the original 11, there are no vacancies.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will add to that. Mechelle is Cassius's mother. The member knows her history. She is a Western Australian of the Year. She is a very capable and powerful trainer. She does a lot of training with intakes at the Western Australia Police Academy as well. Having Mechelle deliver this element of the program is a new initiative. There are vacancies because we created an expanded number of funded positions and it is my ambition, subject to confirmation of success, that we look to grow it further in the future. It has already almost doubled the number of positions, and we will fill them. That is Mechelle's job.

Ms M. BEARD: I have one last question about workforce. With the shortages in the workforce, how does that equate to overtime per police officer? Are they doing a larger number of overtime hours?

The CHAIR: Is the member still on page 411, "Regional and Remote Policing Services"?

Ms M. BEARD: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We are not short of police officers. Understanding that our commitment in 2020 was to grow the police force, it has grown. In the last five years, it has grown by 671. There are 671 more police officers than there were when we started in 2017. The intent in accordance with that commitment was to grow the police force by 15 per cent, so we need to go even further. Therefore, in advance of recruiting, training and deploying people, we fund the police force for that number. There is an actual number and an authorised number. It is kind of confusing. If we look at the authorised number, it is bigger than the actual number. It does not mean that we are short; it means that we have an ambition to grow to that number.

[10.00 am]

Ms M. BEARD: Further question. Is there information on the average number of overtime hours that police officers are doing in the regions?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is an on-notice one, I think. We can find it, but there is not a simple answer I can give you today.

Ms M. BEARD: Can you provide it by supplementary?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Not by supplementary. That is a big task. We are talking about a lot of work.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to recruiting, on page 407 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, under "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency". How many prospective applicants have applied to become a police officer over the past 12 months?

The CHAIR: When you say "recruiting", which paragraph number is that?

Ms L. METTAM: As I have said, "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency", paragraph 6.

The CHAIR: Paragraph 6? You did not mention paragraph 6 before.

Mr P. PAPALIA: As I indicated earlier, my understanding is that since we started the Let's Join Forces campaign, there have been more than 2 600 local applicants and more than 1 550 international applicants. As to how many actually applied in the last 12 months, I do not know; I might have to ask the member to put it on notice, to break it down. The other thing is that they only do in financial years, so it does not align with the calendar year.

Ms L. METTAM: Can that be provided by calendar year?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Well, yes, if I do it on notice, because we are talking about a bit of work. I am not sure what the member's objective is. There is an extraordinary amount of interest in joining the Western Australia Police Force. I do not know for sure, but I would suggest that we have had far more success in attracting applicants than like jurisdictions on the east coast, noting that a lot of them are competing with each other. I think our police force enjoys an excellent reputation, which is part of what enables us to attract people so effectively, and that is not just in comparison with other police forces. I know the Australian Defence Force would envy the number of applicants we are managing to attract. Our challenge at the moment is not attracting people; it is getting them through the Western Australia Police Academy. There is no more capacity at the academy. We are training 1 000 a year, so short of building an entirely new facility and staffing it, we would not be able to train more people in 12 months than what we are doing at the moment. The pipeline of applicants is not the issue.

Ms L. METTAM: The purpose of the question is just to see how successful the recruitment program is. I am just seeking to find out, whether by supplementary information or otherwise, the number of police officer applicants over the financial year and how many of them were not successful.

The CHAIR: There are two questions there, member, and I think the minister has already indicated he would maybe prefer to take the questions on notice.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The observation I would make is that the campaign began in early 2021; that is when we launched the campaign, and it has attracted more than 2 600 locals and more than 1 550 internationals. By way of response to the member's question around the success of the campaign, the predicted rate of recruitment is 786 FTE to commence

in the current financial year. We are training 1 000 at the academy; they do not all pass through instantly. They have to undertake their training at different levels and there are different durations of training. The transitional officers from overseas take half as long. But collectively, we will be seeing 786 FTE graduate in this financial year, which is the highest number of any financial year since at least 2008–09. To train people at the academy, we have to recruit them. We are recruiting and training at the highest level since at least 2008–09. It is probably difficult to get comparative data prior to that time.

Ms L. METTAM: How many of those applicants were not successful?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The 786 that I referred to are successful, so how many of the 2 600 and the 1 550? I do not think we can really give the member that information, because a lot of them are still in the process. Some are not accepted on their first application but they remain in the pool. People go and train themselves to improve their performance in different elements of the recruitment criteria. We are also constantly attracting more people, so all I can say is that it has not been a challenge to attract people and it is obviously not a challenge to have quality people graduating. I invite the member to come along to a graduation and witness the quality of the people who are graduating. As I said, in comparison with other jurisdictions and certainly in comparison with other like organisations, such as the ADF, we are doing exceptionally well at attracting quality recruits, and that is a good thing. I do not really think that questioning is a worthwhile thing to pursue. Not everyone succeeds, obviously. I am informed that the historical average success rate for the pool of applicants is one in five, but the pool that we have is constantly being added to. Some are moving out and others are joining.

Ms L. METTAM: How many officers have left or retired over the last 12 months? That is probably a financial year period.

The CHAIR: Strictly speaking, member, that is not covered by that paragraph, but the minister might give you some latitude.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What did the member want? Was it the last 12 months?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member wants to know how many had —

Ms L. METTAM: Have left or retired.

Mr P. PAPALIA: In 2023?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes.

[10.10 am]

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member asked about total separations. In 2023, there were 511. If the member is asking about the year to date, to 30 April, there were 164 total separations.

Ms L. METTAM: How does that number compare with the number of separations four and eight years ago?

The CHAIR: That is better put on notice. We are dealing with this year's budget and the out years, so it might be better put on notice, I think.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes; if the member puts the question on notice, I will provide the answer. As I observed earlier when I talked about the attraction, retention and attrition rates, we committed to grow the police force by 15 per cent and we will do that. It will not be within the timeframe we had hoped, because we were confronted with the extraordinary situation of two years of, essentially, very poor economic performance in Western Australia, which discouraged people from leaving, followed by an extraordinary event in the form of the pandemic, so very few people left a secure job in the public sector in that time. On completion of that period, we had an accrued or aggregated departure of people who might have been contemplating leaving earlier. But also, in my view—this is hard to quantify or specify—we have had a shift in demographics in the police force. I think it has been recognised in all sectors that we have new generations of people who do not expect the same career duration that their predecessors did as a matter of course, so that will have an impact. But, as I said, I have asked the police to compile a model, with the benefit of as much data or input as we are able to identify, to enable us to predict future demand and requirements for training and obviously recruitment, because we have to recruit people to train them. That work is being done. Undeniably, the younger people who are joining now have a different career duration expectation from that of the people who joined 20 years ago.

Ms L. METTAM: Is attrition currently positive or negative?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the member asking whether there are more people leaving than joining?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No; there are more people joining than leaving, by a significant number. If we were trying to model and predict where we are going to be, there are 110 more officers now than there were in January, taking

attrition into account, so we are growing. As I said, I have asked Mr Pasquale to prepare a model that will give us a longer view, obviously particularly for the commissioner and his team, but also so that government and the people who have to try to accommodate growth and delivery of service can determine how many officers we have to recruit and train, see what that represents into the future and be able to accommodate the likelihood of people having different career paths from those that people had in the past. That may be a new normal in terms of attrition, and it has plateaued; it is roughly around 28 a month, but I do not know for certain that that will be static. That may alter, but the model that I have asked to be compiled will address that as much as possible and predict what we need to do. We will grow. We are growing at the moment. As I indicated earlier, we already have 670 more officers than when we came to office, but we set ourselves the ambition of growing even further, so we have to achieve that.

Ms L. METTAM: Of those 511 separations, what is the average years of service?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is the work I have asked to be done. We need to know the demographic of the current police force, who has departed and the tenure that they had—the duration of their career path—and if that is shifting, that should inform the model. We know the age of the people we have. Generally, we know the gender demographic, and that has an impact on career duration as well. A range of factors will contribute to the model. We will know more about what we anticipate will happen once that model has been developed. I have asked the police to work on that.

Ms L. METTAM: Just to confirm, is the minister unable to provide that information?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Which specific information is the member talking about?

Ms L. METTAM: The average years of service for those separations.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We can get that. We can probably get a breakdown of the different durations of service of different cohorts that have departed.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister provide that as supplementary information?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes. I think this may have already been done in answer to questions in the upper house, but I undertake to provide the member with a demographic breakdown of the officers who have retired and resigned in the last 12 months. Is that what the member wants?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes, including the number of years of service.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, okay.

[Supplementary Information No B5.]

Ms M. BEARD: I refer again to page 411 of volume 2 of budget paper No 2 and the general heading “Regional and Remote Policing Services”. I want to ask about the traffic enforcement team across the regions. How often is the road traffic enforcement group deployed off the roads into other regional areas if there is an issue that needs attending to?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will ask the commissioner to answer that.

Ms M. BEARD: Did the minister want me to clarify what I am asking?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No; it is all right.

Mr C. Blanch: We have three tiers of traffic officers. Obviously, we have traffic officers who perform duties in the metropolitan area. Some of those may be tasked to go to Operation Regional Shield, so I put that out there as well; sometimes, traffic officers will have a surge capacity through Regional Shield. As part of our road policing, we also have our highway patrol officers, who cover the highways up to 400 kilometres out of Perth’s metropolitan area, but each district also has a traffic unit that is dedicated to the regional WA district it is in.

Ms M. BEARD: How often are officers in the regional traffic groups within regions such as the Pilbara and the midwest taken out of those regions and used in other instances, such as being taken off road traffic duties to attend an issue in a town or somewhere else?

[10.20 am]

Mr P. PAPALIA: The regional traffic officers are also police officers, so the police respond to police tasks, but they are specialists in traffic enforcement. We do not have a dedicated highway patrol that does nothing else, other than the regional enforcement guys. The police in the districts are also regular police. I might get the commissioner to answer it.

Mr C. Blanch: The traffic officers in regional WA can be operationally deployed, subject to the demands and the resource requirements of the districts. If there is a major crash, if we want to run an operation or if we want to do additional breath testing in any of the towns in any of the districts, we will deploy those regional traffic officers anywhere within that district to support whatever the operational requirement is. They may assist with a special operation by doing roadblocks or vehicle control points. They are, I suppose, specialists in trafficking in the districts, but they can also respond to normal police tasks if there is a surge capacity requirement.

Ms M. BEARD: Are any statistics available on how often or how many times they are redeployed from traffic duties to normal policing?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The thing to remember is that other police officers do traffic as well. Not just those officers do breath tests or speed enforcement; other police officers do that. Both the dedicated personnel and the other personnel cross over on that activity. I do not think I will —

The CHAIR: Minister, Deputy Commissioner Adams looked as though he knew the answer to that question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Maybe not because how often they are dedicated to other tasks, which I think the member is talking about, is really detailed information that I do not think is worth —

The CHAIR: The answer he indicated was no.

Ms M. BEARD: Okay. We have not got anything.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I think that trying to extract that information would be almost impossible but also not worth diverting effort from policing to do.

Ms M. BEARD: This is about the same regional and remote policing; I am staying on the traffic group. My question refers to page 534, which refers to the banned drinkers register.

The CHAIR: Sorry; are you making another reference?

Ms M. BEARD: I am referencing it to this. It is about regional and remote policing, but it is about road traffic, the areas of carriage limits and how often traffic enforcement in the regions has actually done carriage limit checks.

The CHAIR: Did you refer to page 534, member?

Ms M. BEARD: I am talking about the banned drinkers register. It is under the context of regional or remote policing.

The CHAIR: It might be in a different division. Yes; it is.

Ms M. BEARD: I am just making the comparison.

The CHAIR: It does not matter.

Ms M. BEARD: That is my question about regional policing: how many times would the road traffic people have done enforcement for inspecting cars for alcohol?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the member referring to the enforcement of carriage limits? That is not a responsibility solely of traffic police or police in dedicated traffic units or with that skill set. The enforcement of carriage limits is generally part of an operation that, based on intelligence, targets specific activity in a region where they are vulnerable to sly grogging. It is not really their role. They might be participants, but they are not dedicated people for effecting that outcome.

Ms M. BEARD: Can we get information on how many times they have done checks by region and what alcohol has been seized?

The CHAIR: Member, I think that is way too broad.

Ms M. BEARD: Sorry?

The CHAIR: It is very broad. I suspect that the minister will be able to say no. Minister, fire away.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am with you on that, chair. I am not sure specifically what the member is after. I would not encourage police to reveal how frequently they are doing that anyway, for starters. Putting that aside, they might be able to do the confiscation of alcohol as part of the carriage limit enforcement, but I would think that the member would need to narrow it down to a specific region at a specific time so that we are not wasting their time trying to trawl through things.

Ms M. BEARD: That is what I was asking: can we get information by region as to how many of those checks have resulted in —

The CHAIR: That is not what you asked last time.

Ms M. BEARD: Sorry?

Mr P. PAPALIA: They could not provide how many checks, but if the member is talking about how many —

Ms M. BEARD: How many seizures have there been as a result of their checks?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that they seize alcohol not just from vehicles but also from individuals. I think that diverting effort and resources from policing to trying to find the data on that is not really justifiable.

Ms M. BEARD: Just to clarify, what I was actually asking is: how many vehicles have they stopped and searched for alcohol, and have people had alcohol confiscated and/or been charged?

The CHAIR: Is that universal or by region?

Ms M. BEARD: It is by region.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the member focused on a specific region? Is it her own in the midwest?

Ms M. BEARD: I am focused on my region but also other regions as well.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am trying to narrow it down to accommodate the member's request in a reasonable way without diverting too many resources to the task. I will undertake to provide the number of charges for breach of carriage limit in the midwest over the last 12 months.

[Supplementary Information No B6.]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I refer to page 408 of budget paper No 2, under the service summary of "Regional and Remote Policing Services". I assume that, from a regional perspective, customer service officers fall under that funding allocation. I am looking for some details on how many customer service officers are allocated in regional communities.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The member understands that they are not community liaison; she is talking about customer service officers. She knows who they are: the front desk guys.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: They are the front desk and administrative support.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can I provide that for the member?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That would be good as a supplementary.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Where is the member talking about?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am interested in regional Western Australia, but I am happy to do it in the wheatbelt district.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I undertake to provide the member with the number of CSOs in the wheatbelt district by station.

[Supplementary Information No B7.]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Can the minister provide some guidance on how CSOs are allocated to stations?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I might ask Deputy Commissioner Adams to give an answer as to how CSOs are allocated.

Mr A. Adams: Largely, it is based on demand. Obviously, there are a number of very small police stations in the wheatbelt where the demand probably does not support the provision of a full-time CSO, but they are very important in the Northam and Merredin locations. I think taking it on notice and getting the precise detail to the member will obviously help.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We have already undertaken to do that.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Following on from the advice that it is demand driven, I make the point to the minister that for a two-person station, having a CSO—if one is available, and I have a community where there is, but they are not actually being employed in that role—would support police officers to be out and on the beat. I understand that the superintendent and the commissioner's preference is for police officers to be visible and out and not doing paperwork. Although I appreciate demand and resourcing, what if a warm body is available? I am trying to get an understanding of what demand level is needed to allocate a CSO.

[10.30 am]

Mr P. PAPALIA: Essentially, the deputy commissioner's response in that respect is based on demand and requirement. The allocation of a community service officer is operationally driven and demand is based on the activity and extent of work at that particular location. Although it is a two-person police station and they would appreciate an extra CSO, the demand may not justify it. Is it a station that used to have one and now it does not?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It has in the past.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the member know how long ago?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: No, I do not.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Under successive governments, some resources have been rationalised, as the member would know, and Northam is much bigger in terms of police district and policing numbers than it used to be. That is partly because police services were consolidated in that location, and similar things have been done in other locations. It may be that so many years ago, the ability to get around and support each other might not be as easy as it is now, and that may have been the result.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Just so I am clear, is it the demand in relation to the activity at the station that will drive the decision to allocate a CSO?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Minister, let me know when you need a comfort break.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It will not be too long, chair; I am getting old!

The CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Corrective Services is next, so maybe we can do it then.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is up to opposition members how long they want to go on this division.

Ms M. BEARD: I refer to the line item “Government Regional Officer Housing” in the table under spending changes on page 406. The allocated amount goes from \$1.387 million to \$6.076 million and into the out years. Can the minister let me know what that is about? Is that for new housing? How does it translate to housing potentially across the regions?

Mr P. PAPALIA: As an observation, the state government has approved an additional \$26.779 million to support increase in demand for Government Regional Officers’ Housing and the annual updates for increases in rental rates. The figures in the table will accommodate the second part—the annual increase in rental rates.

Ms M. BEARD: I refer to the police and community youth centres’ safeSPACE program also found in the table on page 406. I see an allocation for 2023–24 and 2024–25. Are there plans to secure additional funding for other spaces beyond that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That program was originally funded by the federal government and that funding ended. This is our allocation to ensure continued delivery. The Western Australia Police Force will be working on what happens next.

Ms M. BEARD: Is there a breakdown by location of what exists now?

Mr P. PAPALIA: We have allocated \$4.6 million to continue the delivery of the safeSPACE programs, of which \$3.87 million through the royalties for regions program will be provided for the safeSPACE program in Broome, Bunbury, Carnarvon and Geraldton; and \$0.73 million through an additional appropriation will be provided for the program in Gosnells.

Ms M. BEARD: I refer to the firearms reform budget on page 406 and the amount of \$745 000 for 2023–24 and subsequent allocations until 2026–27. Is that funding allocation for the digital firearms licensing registry?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The allocation of funding is not for what the member has called “digital licensing”, but actually an information technology upgrade for the entire administration of firearms licensing. A component of the funding will deliver the ability to have a digital licence, but it is mainly for our register and administrative process. It will enable a huge leap in capability in terms of being able to access and interrogate data and deliver a better policing response to anything to do with firearms. It will also enhance the licensing element and ensure that we are compliant with and able to meet our obligations to deliver information to the National Firearms Register. It is all those things; it is not just one element, but a complete system.

Ms M. BEARD: I refer to the third item of the asset investment program “Firearms Reform Program—Firearms Licensing and Registry System” on page 413. I understand that ammunition is not included in the legislation. Is there funding in the budget for more stringent requirements around ammunition or for more scrutiny around the sale of and possession around ammunition?

[10.40 am]

Mr P. PAPALIA: The funding is to build a new IT system that delivers on management, administration, enforcement and the capacity for police to interrogate data better. Part of that will be to enable real-time reporting of ammunition sales. The whole system will be upgraded. Currently, people who sell ammunition mostly record that data in a book or in their own digital format. But the IT system will enable that information to be easily submitted to the system and then become accessible for police to monitor.

Ms M. BEARD: Can I assume that this section in the budget will allow for more scrutiny on the sale of the actual ammunition?

Mr P. PAPALIA: What it will do is fund the build of a more modern licensing system to enable police to accrue and interrogate data, which we currently cannot achieve.

The appropriation was recommended.

Meeting suspended from 10.42 to 10.48 am