

POLICE BARRING NOTICES — ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

338. **Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Minister for Racing and Gaming:**

Alcohol-fuelled antisocial behaviour in our entertainment districts has been a problem that the state government has put considerable attention into resolving. The minister might recall that I mentioned this matter to him late last year when one of my husband's —

**Mr W.J. Johnston** interjected.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Excuse me!

One of my family business employees was the subject of an assault in Northbridge and I think that this is an issue that is of concern to all members. Could the minister therefore please update the house on the effect that our police barring notices have had on antisocial violence in Northbridge?

**Mr T.K. WALDRON replied:**

Before I answer the question, and as I mentioned to the Speaker, I want to briefly acknowledge the passing of Joe Pearce, who was a great Western Australian and the uncle of the member for Perth. I want to acknowledge that Joe was a World War II veteran and spent three years on the Burma railway, played league football for Swan Districts Football Club before and after the war, and was a great community person in Moulyinning down south. I want to acknowledge Joe's passing. His whole family are well involved in hockey in Australia and have some very famous family members. I give my sympathy to his family. Thank you for allowing me to do that, Mr Speaker.

I thank the member for Scarborough very much for the question. She has spoken to me about this matter. I think everyone in this place shares the concern about antisocial behaviour and violent behaviour et cetera, particularly in Northbridge and other entertainment areas. The member made it clear that when it comes home to us and happens to someone we know, we understand that this is very real and is, therefore, an issue.

In answer to how the government has approached this issue, I am on the record as saying that we prefer to target the troublemakers rather than penalise the vast majority who enjoy alcohol and a night out in a responsible manner. Three years ago, therefore, I welcomed the introduction of prohibition orders and encouraged the use of them as a tool to remove the very worst offenders from licensed premises. Since then, more than 130 prohibition orders have been issued for the worst offenders, including many charges laid against those involved in serious glassing assaults.

The drawback with prohibition orders is that they require show-cause proceedings and take a lot of time. Therefore, in 2010, I introduced legislation to the house to establish police barring notices—a less harsh but probably more efficient means of targeting the less serious incidents of antisocial behaviour—enabling us to give those who transgress some time “on the bench” and a bit of a warning, really, so that they would not get into further trouble, and to work with licensees on this matter. There were claims that these notices would be unenforceable and would not work, but they have. They became operational in January 2011 and by the end of April this year, 270 barring notices had been issued by the police. That is a solid number. The police have compared the crime statistics in Northbridge for the 12 months prior to the introduction of barring notices with the statistics for the 12 months after the introduction of barring notices, and there have been some very encouraging results. I will just share a few with the house. The following statistics are for offences that can be described as representing antisocial behaviour. Common assaults in the Northbridge region are down by nine per cent; threatening behaviour down by 37 per cent; disorderly conduct down by 44 per cent; and liquor licensing offences down by 82 per cent. I credit a lot of licensees who have worked closely with us and who have been very proactive—being proactive is the best way to go—and have actually also helped. Also, although we would not necessarily categorise the following offences as antisocial behaviour, it is worth noting that sexual assaults are down by 18 per cent; burglaries down by 18 per cent; and motor vehicle theft down by 20 per cent.

These are significant improvements. I am not as naive as to think that they are all as a result of barring notices; of course other aspects are involved, such as the work of licensees. However, when we compare those periods with the introduction period of barring notices, there is no doubt that they are having a very good effect. Having talked with the police and with licensees, I can say that they are very pleased with them. There were also claims that barring notices would be unenforceable. I let members know that since their introduction, police have laid 37 charges for persons entering licensed premises in contravention of a barring notice. So, for someone who is issued with a barring notice and who flouts it, the chances are that they will get caught.

This is a good result for everyone who wants to enjoy a night out without feeling threatened and without having their night messed up. It is only one tool in a suite of tools that we need to overcome these problems, but it is very encouraging for the government, and we will continue to explore policies such as this that contribute to a safer and healthier community.

