

MENTAL HEALTH ACT 1996 — ASSISTANCE REQUESTS TO POLICE

4973. Mr P. Papalia to the Minister for Police

I refer to police receiving requests for help under sections 34, 41, 58(1)(c), 71 or 84 of the *Mental Health Act 1996* to apprehend a person and take them to a place for examination, to an authorised hospital in Perth, anywhere else in Western Australia or outside the jurisdiction, in the 12 months to 1 April 2011, and I ask:

- (a) how many police are dispatched to comply with such a request;
- (b) what special training do those police who are carrying out these requests have; and
- (c) what trained professionals accompany the police when such a request is made?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:

- (a) In normal circumstances one vehicle (two officers) is tasked to attend.
- (b) Training for police personnel who are required to apprehend people under the provisions of the Mental Health Act 1996 and convey them to a place for examination is provided by the Police Academy, as follows:
  - Foundation Training (Recruits) Instruction is given in transport orders (Form 3) and the procedures attached to those orders including timeframes and mode of transportation, especially where aircraft transportation is required. Personnel from the Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL) also deliver training to recruits in communication, recognition of symptoms and strategies for dealing with people suffering from mental illness.
  - In Service Training. Instruction is delivered as part of the Officer Enhancement Course for a constable progressing to first class constable. Instruction includes powers to apprehend, transports orders and effective communication.
  - Operational Safety and Tactics Training Unit (OSTTU) OSTTU are developing a package specifically dealing with Mental Health issues. The package includes instruction in recognising different types of mental illness. OSTTU deliver training in tactical communications (including body language) and empty hand control. Whilst not specifically targeted at mental health issues it encompasses procedures about how to deal safely with any person in custody.
- (c) Depending upon the circumstances:
  - Health professionals from the Department of Health.
  - St John's Ambulance officers.
  - Royal Flying Doctor Service health professionals.