

LAW AND ORDER — HEATHRIDGE

Grievance

MR J. NORBERGER (Joondalup) [9.24 am]: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, thank you! Just wait. It is finished. If anybody wants to make a comment, they can go outside. Member for Joondalup.

Mr J. NORBERGER: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

My grievance this morning is to the Minister for Police. I thank her for hearing my grievance. I express some concern in relation to feedback I have received from Heathridge residents that indicates that crime, particularly drug-related crime, may be on the increase. However, before I provide some additional detail, I start by expressing my gratitude and respect for the Joondalup policing team. The Joondalup community is blessed to have such a professional and dedicated team of officers serving it. Although I do not assume that the commitment exhibited by my local policing teams is limited to just the Joondalup area, it is the local team members with whom I have the most direct contact, and it is not difficult to be their advocate in this place. I also believe that the WA Police move toward a local policing model is an outstanding move. Having had direct interaction with a number of the local policing teams in recent months, I believe this initiative is imminently sensible. I have had very positive feedback from members of the Joondalup community on their interaction with the local policing teams. So, well done on that move, minister!

In relation to Heathridge, however, some concerning feedback has come to me both directly from doorknocking in the area and phone canvassing of Heathridge residents, and indirectly through returned surveys from my newsletter. Heathridge is quite a large suburb that is undergoing rejuvenation. Many young families are moving to Heathridge and renovating older houses as opposed to buying new houses much further north. As a result, many more young children are coming to the area, which is great. I am delighted that this transformation is taking place. Heathridge offers many advantages for young families; indeed, there are plentiful parks, three wonderful primary schools, good public transport links and many sporting clubs. However, it would seem that no suburb is immune from the scourge of drugs, and community feedback indicates that Heathridge in particular may be experiencing increased localised crime as a result. Residents have raised concerns with me about suspected drug houses, increased burglaries and general antisocial behaviour. I know from previous experience that such activity can tend to gain momentum if it is not addressed. I particularly thank the minister and the Joondalup police for their assistance when we experienced an issue of hooliganism in Central Park in Joondalup. Certainly the response by Joondalup police in that instance was significant, and we have not had that problem since. I thank the minister for her help.

Naturally, I am not aware of specific operations that Joondalup police may have underway in Heathridge, but I hope that some thought will be put towards an increased local presence or targeted campaign. Any help that the minister can provide in this area would be greatly appreciated. I look forward to her feedback. I also understand that the minister and the Commissioner for Police will soon be holding a law and order forum in Joondalup. That being the case, I very much look forward to the opportunity for my constituents to interact directly with the minister and the commissioner to discuss local priorities and initiatives.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Police) [9.27 am]: I thank the member for Joondalup for his grievance and congratulate him for his efforts in not only bringing law and order issues and other matters on behalf of his constituents to this place, but also informing my office as issues arise.

Drugs and drug-related crime are having a significant impact right across the community. As we in this place know, drugs affect people's health and wellbeing and lead to increased criminality in communities. When I hold law and order forums around the place, it is the one issue of concern that is always raised. It is a difficult issue for police, notwithstanding that they are putting a significant effort into this area.

I know that the member for Joondalup is aware that a few weeks ago, I together with the Commissioner of Police announced the methamphetamine strategy. As I said earlier, in an effort to police methamphetamine, Western Australia Police is involved in a joint organised crime task force with its federal counterparts. The task force combines the efforts of Austrac, which tracks financial transactions, the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Crime Commission and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service with the efforts of WA Police. They all sit together in one office at the Australian Federal Police building near the airport, which results in the combined effect of all those databases being accessed by the whole team at any given time. The police have had some very successful operations as a result of that combined data and intelligence gathering.

We also have our own meth task force now. Thirty-five officers are working together to look at methamphetamine transit routes around the state. They are looking at how meth is getting into the state and how

it is being transported around the state, paying particular attention to the transit routes—the highways for example, and some of the transport companies. We are really hopeful that they will start to seize methamphetamine through that process, and also seize assets through dealers. We know that the best way to interrupt the efforts of drug dealers and drug traffickers is to seize their assets and take the profits from their trade. Those profits go back into the state and are distributed in crime prevention initiatives and also fund further operations to target methamphetamine and drug trafficking in the state.

I thank the member for Joondalup for his endorsement of the local policing team. Joondalup local policing team 3 look after Heathridge. They have come up with some strong initiatives in the Joondalup area, particularly targeting some of the issues in Heathridge that the member has raised with them. I understand that in trying to have a better impact on policing in the Heathridge area, LPT3 members are now attending regular meetings with the Heathridge Residents' Association. They are providing daily crime updates to the local Neighbourhood Watch manager, who is circulating those updates to members. They have organised a numberplate anti-theft screw event with the Heathridge Residents' Association at the Heathridge shopping centre. They have really good circulation through their ewatch mechanism, with a lot of Heathridge residents logging into that. They are also very active on Twitter and Facebook, ensuring that they can build up rapport with the community and get feedback from the community about emerging trends in crime.

The member for Joondalup may not be aware that police ran Operation Hotstorm in Heathridge. Hotstorm is targeting premises within the Heathridge area that have been identified, from community information and police intelligence, as being used for the sale of drugs. The operation began early this month and in a very short time it has yielded some outstanding results. So far, Operation Hotstorm has resulted in five search warrants being executed; 11 people have been charged with multiple drug-related offences; three vehicles have been seized; and two weapons-related charges have been laid. That is only in the first month of operation. Two weeks of late-night operations commenced last week, targeting houses and locations involved in the sale and supply of drugs. The police are also targeting stealing and night-time burglaries, which is how addicts are funding the purchase of drugs.

I am really confident that with the continued efforts of the local LPT3 and Operation Hotstorm, we will start getting the key drivers of drug distribution in the Heathridge area. This is one of those vexed areas: because there is such a lot of money to be made out of selling drugs, as soon as we find one person and put them behind bars, there is often a number of willing participants to take their place. That is why police have to maintain their vigilance in this area. It is through the efforts of the local policing team and, indeed, feedback from the community that we can quickly identify the replacement drug traffickers so that we can work on putting them behind bars as well, where they can meet their friends in prison.

I thank the member for Joondalup for bringing the grievance to this place. Local policing teams and the new Frontline 2020 model have been very successful. The success of the model lies in freeing up the local policing teams to do more of an intelligence-gathering effort and more of an evidence-based policing model in which the local policing teams are able to put together search warrants, execute the search warrants and gather all of the intelligence required to ensure that they are successful in obtaining search warrants from the judiciary. In putting that effort into local areas, we are managing to get some really good results. I thank the member for his efforts in this area. Please continue to liaise with my office and contact me and keep that communication up with the local policing team. They appreciate the feedback that they get from the member and all the other members of his community, particularly with respect to cleaning up Heathridge.