

POLICE — RECRUITMENT

659. Mrs M.H. ROBERTS to the Minister for Police:

I have a supplementary question. Noting that 25 out of the 29 police officers who graduated last Friday were from the United Kingdom, why has the minister snubbed Western Australian workers?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for that supplementary question.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is enough, member for Cockburn.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This is actually a really interesting question, Mr Speaker.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: It is something that I think members of the house would like to be informed of. WA Police has a strategy to ensure that we cross-pollinate with other jurisdictions to keep our policing structure, policies and methods contemporary.

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: As such, Mr Speaker, although we are not —

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This is the attitude of members opposite to police and policing. Every single measure put in place by WA Police to improve the way it delivers services is criticised by members opposite.

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: They deride it whenever I try to stand up in this place and talk about the work —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland, I call you to order for the first time. Through the Chair, a quick answer.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Speaker, a couple of things —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Through the Chair.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: First of all —

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: When we get applications from police officers from other jurisdictions, such as Ireland and the UK, we vet those quite closely.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cockburn, you just do not stop. I call you to order for the second time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We vet them quite closely because we know that if officers have been employed in other jurisdictions for between three and five years, they bring with them a suite of experiences that can value-add to the way that we conduct our policing service in Western Australia. At present, we are not actively recruiting from the UK and Ireland, but officers from those jurisdictions apply to join WA Police through the web portal.

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: If they are qualified and have the experience that we feel we need, and if they bring with them the right skill set —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: — we would be mad to send them away and tell them that we would not consider them for employment. I am really proud to say that, out of the initiatives and some of the changes that we made to our recruitment processes, over the last couple of police graduation ceremonies, Aboriginal police officers, our first Sikh police officer and representatives from the African community have graduated through the academy. There is also a proportionate representation of female applicants; 30 per cent of our applicants are women and 30 per cent of our graduates are now women. We are doing a good job to diversify our police force and make sure that it is starting to be more reflective of the community.

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Speaker, we recently announced an Aboriginal cadetship program. This is a specific program aimed at Aboriginal youth —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: — to try to bring them up to the required skill level to enter the academy. There were 70 applicants for 25 positions, so we are now filling two recruitment squads of cadets to bring them up to standard so Aboriginal people who want to join WA Police can progress through to the academy. Lots of initiatives are in place.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am proud of the work they are doing.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The diversification of our workforce to include people from overseas, the Defence Force, or New Zealand—wherever it may be—value-adds to our contemporary police force.

The SPEAKER: That concludes question time.