

POLICE — HOME INVASION LAWS

108. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Police:

Today the minister introduced the toughest home invasion laws in the nation. Could the minister please explain the importance of this legislation and what the bill does to protect people in their own homes?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield for his continued interest in protecting community safety in Western Australia. Before I start answering this, I acknowledge —

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, we are not dealing with Serco now. I call you to order for the first time.

Mr F.M. Logan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cockburn, I call you to order for the first time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Before I answer the question from the member for Forrestfield, I acknowledge members of the Northern Suburbs Stroke Support Group, in the member for Wanneroo's electorate, who are in the Speaker's gallery. Thank you for joining us today.

Today the toughest home invasion legislation in Australia was introduced into this Parliament. I am very pleased that the legislation will improve the safety of Western Australians in the community by ensuring that those people who commit three or more home burglaries in Western Australia will go to jail.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, I call you to order for the second time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: For those offenders who choose to breach the sanctity of our homes to perpetrate a home burglary and then in the course of —

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany, I call you to order for the first time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Those people who in the course of a home burglary commit serious offences, such as violent sexual assault or grievous bodily harm, against residents of that dwelling will now be subject to a mandatory minimum term in prison of 75 per cent of the maximum penalty for those offences. For instance, those offenders who break into a home and then sexually assault the occupant in the course of a burglary will be given a mandatory minimum term in jail of 15 years as a result of this legislation. We brought that commitment to the March 2013 state election because when we listened to what the community was saying; we learned that it was fed up with houses being broken into and the consequences being inconsistent with expectations of penalties for repeat home burglars. Community members said that they were fed up with the sentences that were being handed out.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, I call you to order for the third time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: They were also fed up with the sentences that were being meted out to those people who were committing violent acts in the sanctity of our homes, where we have a right to feel safe and secure at night. The sentences were just not consistent with community expectations, so this legislation will go some way towards bringing that sentencing regime to where the community had been telling us they expected it to be. Indeed, they endorsed that policy document in droves at the March 2013 election. Part of the reason for this is that in Western Australia we have the second highest estimated rate of victims of break-ins, at 4 472 per 100 000 households, against a national average of 2 873 per 100 000 households. We also have the second highest estimated rate of victims of attempted break-ins, at 3 442 per 100 000 households, against a national average of 2 261. Despite that —

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I think it is really interesting that I am being interjected upon in respect of this legislation, because those opposite failed to articulate a policy in this space during the last election campaign. They failed to articulate a policy; when they were questioned on whether they supported our mandatory sentencing and our tough home invasion laws during the election campaign of 2013, what did we get? The member for Midland said, "I don't know if we support it or not; I'm not sure if we're going to support this. It probably won't work anyway." We ended up running a two-week campaign in the media to try to flush the opposition out and work

out whether it was going to support our home invasion laws. Then, finally, under the pressure of a public debate, the Leader of the Opposition made the statement, under sufferance, that, yes, the opposition would support it, but he still said it would not work. We are prepared —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I call you to order for the first time. Minister, bring this to a conclusion, please.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Absolutely, Mr Speaker.

The Liberal–National government is prepared to make the tough decisions and to bring legislation forward to this place that has the legislative and penalty frameworks for these crimes against our householders that are in step with community expectations, and that is why I am very pleased, just a year out from the election of March 2013, to be bringing that legislation forward to this place so that we can debate it, bring it through the houses of Parliament, and start to try to have the penalties and consequences for these crimes against our citizens go some way towards meeting what the community expects.