

POLICE — METHAMPHETAMINE

3. Mr J. NORBERGER to the Minister for Police:

Before I ask my question, may I on behalf of the member for Southern River welcome to the public gallery the years 5 and 6 students from St Emilie's Catholic Primary School.

Congratulations, Deputy Premier. Methamphetamine is having a devastating impact right across Australia, which is contributing to a rise in crime. Can the minister please advise the house of the successes of WA Police in countering the scourge of meth in our suburbs?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Joondalup for his question and, indeed, his continuous engagement in law and order issues and, particularly and specifically, the impact that methamphetamine has had in his community. I am sure the member for Joondalup and most other members in this house will agree that there has never been a gutter drug quite as debasing of the human condition as methamphetamine. That is why in the middle of last year I announced the combined effort of the WA Joint Organised Crime Taskforce with our counterparts from the federal government, which includes the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Crime Commission, the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service and the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre, to work together to combat organised crime and to try to break the back of the distribution of methamphetamine in our community.

That Joint Organised Crime Taskforce also forms an integral part of our methamphetamine enforcement plan and I would like to inform the house of some of the successes of that Joint Organised Crime Taskforce. Since July last year that task force has taken 48 kilograms of methylamphetamine off the streets; 44 offenders have been charged and 20 drug-related offences have been preferred against those offenders. In addition, WA meth teams have seized 9.2 kilograms of methylamphetamine and 126 offenders have been charged with offences as a result of their efforts. Just last week the Joint Organised Crime Taskforce took 26 kilograms of methylamphetamine off our streets. To give members an indication of what that means, that is a quarter of a million hits of methamphetamine taken out of the system, with a street value of \$66 million. That is significant work being done by our Joint Organised Crime Taskforce and also the WA organised crime unit. The serious and organised crime unit of WA Police last week took five kilograms of methamphetamine off the streets and also took 14 litres of gamma hydroxybutyrate—precursor chemicals. They are working very hard. The combined effort of all those agencies sitting together in the same room, sharing intelligence and putting their efforts together has, since July 2015, resulted in the seizure of more than 320 kilograms of methamphetamine, the seizure of \$4.7 million in cash under the proceeds of crime legislation, and the charging of 52 offenders with 230 drug-related offences.

The government is taking action on this; it is a big problem. Obviously, this deals only with the supply end of the methamphetamine problem. We need to do more work at the demand end, and Hon Helen Morton in the other place is working on that.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We remain committed as a government to breaking the back of methamphetamine use in our community. It is a big job and we are doing that by putting our funding resources into police and joining with our federal counterparts. We have a meth enforcement action plan that our police officers are working with, in contrast with the opposition. The opposition's policy is to have a holistic approach to methamphetamine and law and order. I do not know what that means. Maybe it means supplying crystals to methamphetamine addicts. I am not sure what a "holistic approach" means, but we will stay in action and we will continue to fund police.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you! We have had 10 minutes of question time; you have 30 seconds to wind up, thank you.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We will continue to keep the pressure on, we will continue to fund police, we will continue to work with the federal government and we will work on breaking the scourge of methamphetamine in our community.