

MAGISTRATES COURT — LEGAL AID FUNDING

836. Hon ADELE FARINA to the Attorney General:

- (1) In 2012–13 did Legal Aid WA provide funding for matters heard in the Magistrates Court?
- (2) How many applications for funding for matters before the Magistrates Court were received by Legal Aid in 2012–13?
- (3) Do Legal Aid funding guidelines prohibit applications for funding for matters in the Magistrates Court?
- (4) Given that some matters heard in the Magistrates Court carry penalties of imprisonment and therefore are serious matters, does the Attorney General agree that legal aid should be available for those people needing such aid when appearing on charges before the Magistrates Court?
- (5) When did Legal Aid stop providing funding for matters before the Magistrates Court?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question and reply on behalf of the Attorney General.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) A figure of 3 276.
- (3) No.
- (4) Persons facing serious matters in the Magistrate's Court receive legal assistance through Legal Aid WA, to the extent made possible by Legal Aid WA's funding guidelines. It is a reality of all legal aid commissions nationally and in many, if not all, international schemes of legal aid that constraints in funding limit the number of people who can receive publicly funded representation.
- (5) The member is mistaken. Legal Aid WA has not stopped providing such funding.