

CRIME STATISTICS — PUBLICATION

Motion

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [4.01 pm]: I move —

That this house calls on the government to reinstate the timely publishing of crime statistics, including the publication of sanction or clearance rates for crimes.

It is quite timely that I put this motion on notice yesterday with respect to the timely publishing of crime statistics, and also highlighting the government's failure to no longer put clearance rates or sanction rates into the public domain. It has certainly been a long practice in this state for sanction rates, previously known as clearance rates, to be published as part of the crime statistics.

Today, we learned some even more interesting things. Firstly, the Minister for Police misled the house in question time by suggesting that the July police statistics were already up on the police website. I looked for those statistics yesterday and again today, but the July police statistics were not up on the WA Police website. In fact, the latest statistics on the website yesterday and today are until 30 June this year. The 2014–15 financial year statistics have been uploaded on the website. We have a Minister for Police in this state who does not actually know what is going and who misled the house when she suggested that those two items were available.

Yes, Deputy Commissioner Stephen Brown this morning gave out some statistics with respect to July. I might take a little moment to highlight what has been reported out of that. WA today reported that a crack team of police officers under Operation Sweep would deal with the 20 per cent rise in crime July this year compared with the figure in July last year. This is massive. We are not talking about a one or two per cent increase in crime over that time or a 20 per cent increase in one category of crime; we are talking about an increase of overall 20 per cent in crime this July compared with the situation last July. This is massive. Dare I say it, this is criminal. This shows just how badly this minister and this government are doing when it comes to dealing with the issue of crime in our community. They promised they would make Western Australia safer and they have had seven years to do it, but in seven years we have seen more and more failure. If one looks at the last two or three years, they have, frankly, been going to hell in a handbasket. It is not the first time I have said this. Certainly, I have been saying this for over a year. I will get to the comments I made and the statistics I referred to in February when the minister was in denial.

It is interesting to note that the minister did not front up and take responsibility for this massive increase in crime. Instead, Deputy Commissioner Brown was sent out. This minister likes to go out for the good news, but she should also go out in front for this bad news because it is the minister and her government that are responsible for it.

The WA today article states —

In July 2015, the total number of crimes reported in the metropolitan area rose 19.6 per cent on what was reported in July 2014. This meant 300 more offences than at this time last year.

That is really significant. Those people who have had their house broken into, had their child assaulted or had their car stolen know just what bad news this is and how much it affects people and their families. This is very, very serious. The article goes on to state that there have been dramatic increases in crime, particularly in areas such as robberies of businesses, which is up 36 per cent—a huge increase. Again, this government has a lot of rhetoric about supporting business and small business, but all it has done is put up taxes. The government has done nothing to assist businesspeople when it comes to preventing or investigating crime at businesses or driving crime down. It is an increase of 36 per cent.

I refer next to domestic assaults, which, again, the minister has plenty of platitudes about: “We’re gonna do this and we’re gonna do that. We are gonna tweak this and we’re gonna be in that space.” Those are some of her favourite phrases. Being in the spaces, tweaking things—whatever; it counts for nothing. These figures speak for themselves; the results do not lie. There has been a 34 per cent increase in domestic assaults this July compared with July last year. The pretence has surely gone. Up until now government members have been saying they are on track and things are going well. They say they have the right policies and things and they are wheeling out new ideas and a few new buzzy names, and somehow it will work. It has not worked, because this year compared with last year there has been a 34 per cent increase in the number of domestic assaults. That statistic can fall off our tongues quite easily, but if you are one of the women—it is mainly but not exclusively women—who have been or are continuing to be assaulted, which is on the increase, you would not be thanking this government.

There has been a 26 per cent increase in threatening behaviour. People in the community must be very concerned about that. I have had constituents come to me to report instances of threatening behaviour. On one particular

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occasion, a woman in Viveash reported to me a threatening behaviour incident at her house. She said that an hour after the incident, the police had still failed to attend. Viveash is probably only about three or four kilometres at most from the police communication centre she was phoning and probably only two kays from Midland Police Station, yet she was waiting for well over an hour. There was no call during that time to say, “Look, there is high demand. Are you okay?” There was nothing. I have taken that matter up separately. Some people who are big and tough might not think much of threatening behaviour, but threatening behaviour can be really intimidating and it can absolutely destroy the confidence of people who are subjected to it, especially when there is not much of a police response on many occasions.

In response to these statistics, more figures were presented on the PerthNow website—I will mention them both. It states that domestic assault is up by more than one-third, theft is up 21.1 per cent and property damage is up 20.8 per cent. This is absolutely chronic. I think it is probably the worst month-to-month from one year to another on record. I would be surprised if the minister could find any other year when any month was 20 per cent up on the same month in the previous year. It shows us that the police statistics are absolutely damning. This is not a new issue. Today, Deputy Commissioner Brown said he was getting on top of this really quickly because he had only known about these figures for some number of hours. I forget what he said. It might have been 72 hours; it might have been less.

The fact that crime is on the increase in Western Australia is not new news. I want to just refer to a story that appeared in WAtoday on 26 February this year that was headed “WA shamed by new crime statistics”. People may recall that I took up the issue of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which it compared state with state. At that time, the Minister for Police tried to suggest that the ABS statistics were a bit misleading; there were better statistics at Western Australia Police that would tell a different story. Let us just go back to that context. February was only six months ago, and the article on 26 February stated —

Damning new statistics have shamed WA as the worst state nationally in seven of 10 major crime categories.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics report, released last week, shows the state has the worst record when it comes to containing burglaries, assaults and car thefts—and highlights crime in many areas is actually getting worse.

According to the report 4.8 per cent of West Australian’s reported break-ins within the last financial year—nearly double the overall rate for Australia (2.6 per cent).

That is an embarrassing fact. It is a sad but embarrassing fact that reported break-ins in WA are nearly double the national average. The article goes on to state —

The face-to-face assault rate of 4 per cent was significantly higher than the national average of 2.7 per cent, while car thefts in the state were also almost twice as high as the overall rates nationwide.

Then there is my quote —

Shadow Police Minister Michelle Roberts said that the ABS figures were “a shameful indictment of the Liberal failure to confront crime”.

That is a comment that I stand by today. Further, I said —

“They like to talk tough, but the fact is they have comprehensively failed when it comes to crime,” ...

“We’ve got the worst record of all states and, it’s getting worse.

“The Liberals and this Police Minister need to stop the gimmicks, stop the spin and stop the hollow rhetoric and actually start to seriously confront crime in Western Australia,” she said.

That is quoting myself. I say that because we would think today that this was a new revelation; that suddenly, just in this month of July compared with last July, things had got dramatically worse. Deputy Commissioner Brown does not really know what to attribute this massive increase in crime to, but the signs were there. The ABS was reporting and picking up on this back in February. How did the minister respond back in February? The article goes on to state —

The Police Minister Liza Harvey took exception to her counterpart’s ABS interpretation.

“Michelle Roberts, as she is fully aware, is being mischievous by using isolated statistical data from the ABS,” Mrs Harvey said.

Isolated statistical data—I was being mischievous, apparently! I do not think so. What I was doing was quoting from an independent source. The Australian Bureau of Statistics is an independent source. It is not, “I have got my figures and you have got yours. We have got different figures so we have got a difference of opinion here.”

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This is what the ABS is there for. It is to give us that objective evidence so that we can compare state with state, year to year, and see how we are tracking in areas such as crime rates. Mrs Harvey went on to say —

“Reported crime statistics from WA Police show an overall downward trend in most crimes in WA including significant reductions in assault, burglary and property damage.”

“We have the lowest rate of offenders in the country apart from the ACT; we know we have a small number of offenders committing high volume crime and that is exactly why we are strengthening the home burglary legislation to make it some of the toughest in the country.”

The government has been talking tough about legislation and introducing new laws year after year, a bit of smoke and mirrors here and there, but what is the end result? Absolutely squat! In fact, it is worse than squat. I think we could have all been pleased and breathed a sigh of relief if it had just kept crime rates the same as they were this time last year, but it has not. Nearly 20 per cent worse? That is an absolutely shameful record, and no other police minister in the history of this state has ever achieved it. There was a 20 per cent increase in crime, comparing one month from one year with one month of the previous year. What the minister will say is, “Well, we can have these glitches in statistics”, a bit like the kind of response she gave back in February. This is more than just a little glitch, because I will get to the financial year to financial year statistics in a moment and we will see that it is not just a little glitch that the statistics for the 2014–15 financial year are in fact worse than the 2012–13 financial year.

I want to head to the second part of my motion. The second part of my motion referred to the failure of this government to continue to publish sanction rates. When I was police minister we used to publish clearance rates. At some stage some years ago, police decided they would rather call them sanction rates, and they changed the definition slightly. I appreciate that “sanction rate” may be a more appropriate term and may, more effectively, reflect what is being reported, but I intend, for the purposes of today’s discussion, to refer to them as “clearance rates”. I do that, very simply, because I want it to be a word that the community understands. I want them to be able to understand what I am really on about here. This is a key performance measure for the Western Australian police force. It is certainly fair to say that police, per se—the number of police and the job the police do—cannot be held entirely responsible for all rising crime rates. There is an assortment of other factors that can come into play, and I fully appreciate that. For example, the prevalence of drugs in the community would be one of those social or outside factors that the police have limited control over. Yes, they have a role to play in enforcement, but in terms of education and some of the drivers as to why people choose to use drugs, they are related to other portfolios and agencies. I appreciate that we need to have a holistic across-government response to an issue like that, and that kind of response can certainly improve things when it comes to crime statistics. It can also do the reverse. Police cannot be held wholly and solely responsible for all increases in crime rates, because there could be a variety of other factors involved, and there are certainly things that other agencies and departments and individuals could do to help drive down crime rates.

What I believe should be a key performance indicator for police is clearance rates—effectively, the “solve” rates on crime. What do I want to know when my house is broken into, when my handbag is stolen, when my daughter is assaulted, when my brother’s car is stolen, when there is a one-punch assault or some crime happens to me or a member of my family? I want the person responsible to be caught. That is what I want. I want them to be caught and punished for the crime they have committed. It is all very well for this minister to stand and say, “Well, we are increasing the penalties. We are going to put people in jail and throw away the key for even longer”, but if we do not catch them in the first place, that is nothing but hollow rhetoric. What I expect to judge the police force on is how many crooks they catch. What percentage of home burglaries in this state are being solved? What percentage of thefts are being solved? What percentage of offenders who break into businesses—there has been a massive increase in those offences—are being caught?

I am hearing some very, very disturbing stories from victims of crime. I am hearing stories in which police will not come out and take forensic evidence. They are not interested in some lower level areas of crime. If a person had something stolen that is not valued at very much and they have not been assaulted it is like, “Oh well, too hard. We are not dealing with that; we have got other priorities.” I can understand why the police are saying that. They do have some serious other priorities. However, we need to know as a community what the police are doing and what their solve rates are. I want to be able to compare the solve rates of the Western Australian police force with the solve rates in comparable places in Australia. I want to know whether our police force in Western Australia is performing as well as the police force in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the other states of Australia. I think that is a fair comparison. The solve rate or clearance rate for home burglaries in the metropolitan area, when last published, was less than nine per cent. I think it might have got to as low as 8.6 per cent before the government stopped publishing those rates. Should we just accept that over 90 per cent of home burglaries will never be solved? We need to be able to look at how the police force is going in New South Wales and Victoria. Is

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the police force in those states solving 10 per cent, 15 per cent or 20 per cent of crime? Let us have a comparison. If the police force in those states can solve 18 per cent of home burglaries but the police force in Western Australia can solve only nine per cent of home burglaries, why is that the case, and what can we do in Western Australia so that the police will solve more home burglaries and catch the offenders and put them in jail?

The minister knows, by her own admission, that there are a lot of repeat offenders in Western Australia. The minister says that what we have in Western Australia is a smaller number of offenders committing an awful lot of crimes, rather than a bigger number of offenders committing fewer crimes. That should actually make the minister's job easier, because the police should be able to solve those crimes and catch those offenders and put them in jail and out of commission so that they will not commit multiple crimes. It is a fairly simple equation. However, what is the response from this minister? Does the minister hold her department to account? No, she does not. The minister says, "That's okay. That's all right. Don't bother publishing the clearance rates any more." The minister says that we are going to have other key performance indicators and she will announce them at some time in the future when somebody shoves a bit of paper under her nose or sends her a little text on her phone, and she will then read out that the police force now has new KPIs in this space. That is not good enough. It is the minister's job to hold the police force in this state to account. We need to know the clearance rates for crimes. The minister has not reported on that this year. In not one month of this year have we been told what the clearance rates are for home burglary, assault and car theft. These are key performance indicators for any police force in the world. We need to know whether the police are catching one per cent of car thieves, two per cent, five per cent, 20 per cent or 50 per cent. We do not know.

What I do know is that there have been a couple of very negative stories for this government on sanction rates. One of those stories came out in *The Sunday Times* soon after the member for Scarborough became the Minister for Police. It was pointed out to the minister that there had been a massive decline in the clearance rate for crimes against the person, and the minister's response to *The Sunday Times* was along the lines of, "That doesn't seem good enough. I'm going to ask WA Police what is going on and give you a response at some point." Guess what? Things are continuing to get worse. The minister's answer now is that sanction rates are not a good indicator for the police force; we would rather do a survey or something and see whether people in the community "feel" safer or not. That is not good enough. We want to see the empirical evidence. We want to see the objective evidence. We want to hold the police to account, and by doing so hold the government to account, for what they are able to achieve. I suspect that the police force is under significant pressure. It is a bit like I say black and the minister says white. This minister just tries to deny everything.

I refer also to an article in February this year in which I said that the Australian Bureau of Statistics had said that the crime statistics are getting worse, and the minister said, "No, no, no; the opposition spokesperson is just being mischievous and is using statistics to try to confuse things." She went on to say that the WAPOL statistics are actually better, and we will wait for those. We have waited for those statistics, and, when we have checked, the statistics have not got better; they have actually got worse. However, the minister denies that.

We also know, based on the Productivity Commission report, that the government has not increased police staff numbers by anywhere close to what it promised. We also know, according to the Productivity Commission report, that between 2008–09 and 2013–14 there has been a decline in the number of police officers per head of population in Western Australia. In 2013–14 there were 30 fewer police staff in the state of Western Australia than there were in 2008–09. The police staff-to-population ratio has been going backwards. We also know that the government's so-called commitment to 700 extra staff—that is, 500 police and 200 other officers—was not delivered over the five years in which it was promised to be delivered. The government likes to pretend that it was delivered. The government said, "We had our fingers crossed behind our back and we did not want to start the five years until our first year in government was virtually over", and the government then delivered the last 80 or 100 police staff in the final month—in June 2014—and put them into the academy and said it had delivered them.

The fact of the matter is that government has not recruited to cover attrition. Although some recruit schools are going through the academy to cater for the so-called new numbers, the government has let go of a phenomenal number of officers, many through the government's own redundancy scheme. Nearly 200 police officers went out the door in one lot, and there was then a subsequent lot. The most recent lot was about 30 senior police officers. Of course the government has not been able to replace that experience. So we know that the minister is loose with the truth.

The most appalling thing that this minister is allowing the police service to do is not be accountable on clearance rates by hiding them and not making them public. In living memory I cannot remember a police minister ever saying that the government is not going to provide the public with the clearance or sanction rates. These are key performance indicators that people have been able to look at on the police website for the last 10 or 20 years, or

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for however long the police have had a website. I raised this issue back in January, and it was reported on PerthNow on 10 January in an article that states, in part —

WA Police have been accused of trying to bury a statistic used to monitor their performance—as data show they’re solving fewer cases than ever.

Sanction rates, used to measure the number of criminals brought to justice each year, have dropped 27 per cent over the past six years.

But the measurement, one of the “key effectiveness indicators” of the force, has been scrapped.

The move has prompted claims of a cover-up, with Opposition police spokeswoman Michelle Roberts saying the Barnett Government is trying to hide its failures.

The latest data shows the sanction rate dropped to 46.7 per cent in 2013–14, from 64.3 per cent in 2009–10 when it was introduced.

The Sunday Times put some questions to the minister to try to find out why this is the case, and this is what the minister said —

“I intend to get to the bottom of why the sanction rate has dropped by discussing this issue with WA Police,” she said.

The problem is that the minister has still not explained why the sanction rate has dropped so significantly. Effectively, the minister is saying it is okay. She is not holding them to account; it is okay. She will have a little chat with them to find out what is going on and basically it is none of our business. I think it is everybody’s business. The article continues —

A spokeswoman for Mr O’Callaghan said the sanction rate had been replaced with a “new method”, which tracked performance within a “particular time frame”—one month for crimes against people and two months for property offences.

When asked if the new measurement would be released publicly each month, as the sanction rate had been, she said: “How best to reflect this change on our website is still being determined”.

Perhaps when the minister gets up to speak she could tell us whether it has been determined yet how best to reflect the new KPIs on the website. I tell the minister this for nothing: it is not on the website at all. What we need to know from the minister is whether she will be accountable to this Parliament or whether she will be secretive and say that it is okay, the police force does not have to be held to account and that clearance rates do not have to be made publicly available. I simply find this incredible. I can look up the sanction rates for the state of New South Wales today and I can look them up really easily for the state of Victoria too, but in Western Australia there is this secrecy. What is it really about? It is about covering up failure. This government was more than happy to publish the sanction rates while there was no particular problem, but the moment we started pointing out that the sanction rates were getting worse and worse and that police were solving a lesser and lesser percentage of crimes, suddenly, what is the response? It is not, “We’ve got to lift our game; we’ve got to catch more crooks”, it is, “We’re not going to talk about that anymore. In fact, we’re just going to remove the stats from the website; we’re not going to publish them anymore.” It is an absolute disgrace.

I have had a look at what other states do and they manage to put up their police stats very promptly—those stats are almost immediately available in Victoria, for example—and they continue to publish their sanction or clearance rates so that we can have some empirical, independent measure of police performance. This government cannot think that it can just get away with rhetoric—that it can just say it is tough on crime and hope that people cross their fingers and believe it or that it will increase penalties for this crime or that crime. Who knows? Perhaps the minister can tell us what the current sanction rate is for home burglary. That is one thing she could account to the Parliament on. Tell us what the sanction rate is for home burglary. Every other police minister has done that. They have stood here, faced the music, fronted and said —

Ms M.M. Quirk: She’s texting.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Yes, the minister is texting. Hopefully she will get a text soon that will tell her what the sanction rate is for home burglary and she will be able to share it with the house, because I suspect it is less than 10 per cent in the metropolitan area and that over 90 per cent of home burglaries are not solved. I suspect that we have the worst sanction rate for home burglary of any state in the country, but I cannot say that 100 per cent unequivocally because the minister is keeping it a secret.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Maybe the police are keeping it from the minister.

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Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: We have to ask: is this the Minister for Police or is this the rubber stamp for police? This is the minister's job. The rest of us, and people in the community, are not privy to police information. We largely have to take police on trust, but it is the minister's role to hold them to account. It is her role to look at those sanction rates, to know how they are performing, to know how many home burglaries get solved, to know how many car thefts get solved or to know how many assaults result in people actually being prosecuted through the courts. They are key figures. I do not know of very many countries in the world that would keep these figures secret, but the minister seems to think it is okay. She has withdrawn that KPI before the mystery KPI has even been put out there. I have seen different reports in the media. One article, like the article I read out, suggested that there would be some new KPIs on the website. I believe that is what Sue Short was saying earlier in the year and I hear the Commissioner of Police is now saying something else. What does the minister say? Today will be the minister's opportunity to say whether she will hold the police to account and what the KPIs are. The minister should explain to this house, to us and the people of Western Australia, why she is not insisting on clearance rates in this state being made public. What is the minister hiding and why is she hiding it? Why is she being so secretive? Why is she the least accountable Minister for Police in the history of this state presiding over the worst increase in crime in the history of this state?

MR M. McGOWAN (Rockingham — Leader of the Opposition) [4.36 pm]: I intend to say a few words on this very important motion moved by the member for Midland. As part of my speech on this matter I want to relay a few things I have learned recently from my own personal experience. Before I do, I want to say that the motion moved by the member for Midland is entirely reasonable. It is entirely reasonable to ask the government to publish the clearance rate for crimes. The public should know. If every other state is publishing the conviction or clearance rate for crimes committed against its citizens, why is Western Australia not? If the figures are embarrassing for the government, that is just life and the government has to live with that. It is terribly secretive and unaccountable. It is worthy of a dictatorship to hide the sanction figures or the clearance figures on the number of crimes committed. It is worthy of North Korea.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: It is like the old days in Russia, really, or East Germany.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is like the old Soviet Union to hide the figures. The government is elected on a platform of accountability. This is an important matter of accountability and these figures are available to the government, but it will not publish them. The government should publish them. I read an article in 2012, when the current police minister was in her position and when figures were being published and were not particularly good, in which the minister was quoted as saying —

“I intend to get to the bottom of why the sanction rate has dropped by discussing this issue with WA Police,” ...

I assume she discussed it and I assume she found out, and maybe in her response she can advise us, because I am sure she had an important discussion with WA Police three years ago. Instead of advising us, it appears the minister has just not released the figures. That approach is worthy of North Korea. What the minister is doing there is worthy of North Korea.

Today figures came out comparing the rate of crime from July last year to July this year, as opposed to the clearance rates, which the minister is not releasing. It would be fair to say that those figures are devastating—burglary, car theft, theft and drug possession offences are increasing, and domestic violence is going through the roof and increasing enormously year on year. They are devastating figures across the board. I will not read out all the statistics, but they are devastating figures for the Western Australian public. When asked about this in question time today, the minister proclaimed that in response to these figures the police force would launch a new attack by targeting hotspots in what it calls Operation Sweep. When asked what initial resources were being put into that, there was no answer; in other words, there are no additional resources. What the police are doing, I assume under the direction of the minister, is using existing resources and doing a job in hotspot areas. I would ask the simple question: why did that not happen before? If it is now about reallocating resources to new tasks, what tasks are they being taken away from? That is a pretty straightforward question. Are they being taken from drink-driving testing or drug testing on our roads? Are detectives being removed from what they would normally do? Where are the resources coming from? If there are no new resources, what were those police officers doing before they were put into this new campaign? It is clear from the Minister for Police's answer during question time that there are no new resources. Just be honest. She should not try to spin herself out of a situation, because it will not be believable. The minister should be honest. If the police are being taken from somewhere, explain where they are coming from.

I want to talk about my recent experience of these issues and some of the things I have learnt as a consequence of that. I did not release it to the press, but it has been well documented that my house was burgled last week. The press suddenly arrived at my home and I answered some questions about it. My experience of that incident

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was this: during the day, last Monday, a brick was thrown through my son's bedroom window, at the back of the house. People entered the house and turned over rooms, cupboards, beds and the like, looking for things. They stole money, credit cards and basically all of my wife's gold jewellery that she had accumulated over a long time; in fact, some of it included her now deceased grandmothers' hand-me-downs, such as wedding rings and the like. It was fairly confronting.

I arrived home and discovered the family was upset. Glass was everywhere and it took a while to clean that up. Then there are a lot of other things that need to be done. The police who attended were terrific. They were very nice, very genuine people, and I enjoyed their company. They made a genuine effort to inspect the place and then forensics arrived and fingerprinted the property. I learnt this out of that experience: when I was questioned about it on radio the next day, people called in and asked, basically, "Why was it that the police went to your house, because when I was broken into they did not come to our house?" I want to make it plain that I do not claim to be special about our home being broken into. As we know, it is extremely common. It is just that I hold this role and that means that the press show an interest in relation to that. People were calling the radio station asking why the police had attended my house, so I made inquiries about that. I discovered that the police do not always attend burglaries. Certain criteria are adopted—age, how recently the offence occurred and the like, and the resources available to the police at any one time. I find that very disappointing. It is confronting to arrive home and find the place has been smashed up and things have been stolen. It is also disappointing that the police do not always attend to investigate burglaries. I was told that on many occasions forensics attend, but often do not find anything of great value, but sometimes they do. They check for fingerprints, do DNA testing if it is available and the like, and the fingerprinting sometimes turns up a lead and sometimes it does not. In our case it did not turn up a lead; that was our particular experience.

I also learnt from talking to the police—this has reinforced my views on these matters and what a lot of people believe, and I think that there is truth in this—that the ice epidemic in Western Australia is driving the commission of a lot of these crimes. As one police officer said to me, people will do something desperate just to get another hit. If that means smashing a child's window, stealing all a family's money and a wife's jewellery, that is what they will do to get another hit. That proves to me that the amphetamine scourge in Western Australia has been allowed to run unfettered for way too long and very little has been done about it. There has been very little urgency in dealing with this scourge in our state, when we know ice use in Western Australia is double the national average, and the statistics prove it. The police will tell us if we ask them. As I have said once before, it is rife in country towns more than in the city. The other day I made my comments advisedly when the minister announced the testing of sewage as part of the solution. I thought that was preposterous, and I still believe that. We know ice is out there; we do not need to spend what I expect will be hundreds of thousands of dollars on a sewage-testing program to determine that it is out there. We know it is there. I think that was a bizarre response to a serious problem.

What I have learnt from my experience is that iPads, computers, TVs and the like are not necessarily targeted in robberies; it is items that are easily converted or monetised. Clearly, money is one such thing and gold is another. I also note that there are now all these stores around the place where people can take gold and very quickly convert it into money, and it struck me that there might be a connection between the two. When a person gets a heap of gold from somewhere, they can take it to one of these shops and convert it to money—bingo! That is an easy way of getting cash as a consequence of a burglary.

I have also learnt that pawn shops are very much where things that are stolen end up—perhaps gold and those sorts of things as well. Although there are identification or proof-of-purchase requirements and the like, I have learnt from my dealings with the police that there is not a great deal of faith in those checks and balances at pawnbroker shops. Basically, victims of burglaries are required to check pawnbroker shops for their stolen items. Of course, it is difficult for people to prove that a bit of gold, whether it is a 50-year-old or 100-year-old heirloom, belongs to them. Therefore, the ways that people can monetise items that they steal is pretty easy with very few checks and balances. Those gold conversion shops, to me, look very much like an easy way for thieves, burglars and robbers to convert what they steal into cash. I had not thought about this before, but I have thought about it now that my wife and I have experienced that particular angle of it. We are not unusual; it happens everywhere. It happens not only in Rockingham—everyone wanted to try to make out that it is just in Rockingham, but it is not—but everywhere throughout regional and metropolitan Western Australia.

I still think a lot of the root cause is the ice scourge, about which very little has been done over the last few years. I think there has been a lack of leadership on that issue. It is only when we meet people like the one I came across the other day—that is a bloke who bashed his 14-year-old son outside my electorate office, in front of my electorate staff, who was high on ice, as was his partner or wife, the child's mother—that we realise that this problem is rife. They get their money by doing things such as going to houses and just smashing a window and stealing whatever they can find. Perhaps they avoid the sanction clearance rate. As one police officer told

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 12 August 2015]

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me, as burglars go through a house they will put socks on their hands to avoid leaving fingerprints. Maybe the people who do these things are smartening up. Maybe that is affecting the clearance rate and maybe the minister learnt that three years ago in her discussions with the police force. But I would be interested to know why clearance rates went down so much and I would also be interested to know—I think we deserve an explanation—why the minister has hidden those figures from the public. She should reveal the figures because they are important.

I am a bit different. The member for Midland was correct: many people just want the person caught and prosecuted. In my case, I learnt that I would just rather it had never happened. I think a lot of people out there are like me: they just wish these people were not on ice, and if they were not on ice or on other forms of drugs, it would not have happened. Preventing crime in the first place is better than trying to solve it at the end of the day. That was the way that I certainly approached it. But, as I say, it is not unusual—a lot of people go through it. To be fair, the other crime statistics contained in these figures for things such as domestic violence and offences against the person—so robbery, domestic violence, offences against the person and drug offences—are far more serious than burglaries, although I think burglaries probably afflict more of our citizens than some of those other offences.

That is my contribution. I would love to hear an explanation for the government not releasing those figures.

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro) [4.50 pm]: I rise to support the motion, and I thoroughly endorse the contributions from the members for Midland and Rockingham made prior to mine. I agree particularly with the member for Midland that it is essential that the sanction or clearance rates, whichever terminology we want to use, are published. It should be a matter of public record whether or not the police are clearing up crimes and at what rate. That should just be common knowledge, accessible to anyone. In particular, I would hope that it would be accessible to people who want to do research. Moving beyond the normal response of calling for additional resources for the police and more police on the beat and perhaps using them in a different fashion, I would like to say that the data released today for crime rates, as highlighted by the member for Midland, and the government's inability or unwillingness to publish the crime statistics, indicates that what the government has been doing and is doing has failed. What the government is doing and what it has done for years now has failed. If the government published the statistics, there would be evidence; it would be clear and everyone would be able to identify and confirm that fact. If we look at the crime rate statistics that have been released, we can see they suggest that what the government is doing has failed, and if we delve a little more deeply into what else is going on in the state, we can confirm categorically that it has failed.

We see these incredible leaps over a 12-month period—they are a month-to-month comparison over a 12-month period. We have seen a 30 per cent increase in robberies on businesses, home burglary is up 18 per cent, theft is up 21 per cent, property damage is up 20.8 per cent, and domestic assault is up an incredible 34 per cent. Those statistics from July last year to July this year are striking. Consider those statistics in light of what else is going on in the state. The state has had a massive slowdown in growth and the population growth has stalled. The Australian Bureau of Statistics confirms that the population grew by 1.6 per cent over the past year. We did not have 20 per cent or 34 per cent growth in the population last year; we had a 1.6 per cent growth in the population. I have heard a number of ministers excuse their poor performance in a whole raft of portfolios in the last 12 months or so by claiming they are dealing with incredible growth rates in the population. That was true for a few years, but at the same time as we had extraordinary increases in revenue as a consequence of massive revenue from royalties and other sources of income. There was an unprecedented revenue increase at the same time, but that has now ended. What we have now is an inability to blame it on the population growth. The government cannot use that excuse anymore.

So what is it? There is a population that is growing and has continued to grow, and this might give further confirmation that what the government is doing has failed. The prison population is at record levels. The Minister for Police has already indicated that the government's response to a massive spike in the burglary rates will be to say it is about to introduce this tougher burglary law. We have had a whole string of tougher laws, tougher penalties and increased penalties for a whole lot of offences in the past seven years. The result has been a massive growth in the prison muster, but not a reduction in crime. If what the Barnett government has done and continues to do was working, the prison population would have plateaued and diminished. Instead, we have a record level of the number of people in prison. According to the Auditor General, 53 per cent of them are in there for less than a year, so they are not serious offences. The huge number of people in the prison system is costing us billions of dollars because when we include the capital expense requirements, it costs billions of dollars over the course of this government, yet the government has lost control of crime in the state.

What the government is doing is not working. This should be viewed as an opportunity to reappraise the government's approach. If its advisers are advising nothing other than bringing in another law that will increase the prison population or impose greater penalties for the same offences, and if that is all they have to offer, the evidence suggests it does not work. That is why the government needs to be transparent and why all the statistics

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on crime and punishment should be published. Corrective Services is just as recalcitrant as the police about publishing its statistics nowadays.

However, we cannot determine the way ahead. Firstly, the government cannot confirm that it has failed unless it looks at the data, and then when it does, it cannot determine a better way of approaching the problem unless it makes the data open and transparent and draws upon expertise beyond the people who are currently advising it. The ones who are advising the government now are part of the problem. If the government has someone who has been in a position for more than a decade, they have overseen the growth in the methamphetamine trade in Western Australia and they have failed to combat it. The government should consider whether they are the people to be advising it. If we are talking about any other senior advisers around the state who are telling the government the same thing they were telling it in 2008 when the government first took office and started implementing its law and order agenda, they have failed. They do not have any new ideas and they have failed the state. They have failed the government and the state, because what is happening with respect to crime and punishment in Western Australia is an abject failure. The government's approach does not work.

In Western Australia not only does the Minister for Police not publish the crime statistics, but also Corrective Services has taken to not publishing most of its statistics. In addition, the University of Western Australia has shut down the Crime Research Centre, which was created by Joe Berinson, I think, way back in the 1990s in an effort to bring a little science to the approach to combating crime. Unfortunately, the use of that resource diminished over time, and under this government it has been completely neglected. There has been no scientific approach to determining why crime is happening, where it is happening and how the government could best combat it. If it did that, it would, by necessity, publish statistics because the government would want them for itself. It would want as many people as possible to see them, and it would want as many different advisers, experts or academics to analyse them and provide the government with alternatives to what it is doing now. Unfortunately, the response under this government has been to close the shutters, conceal the evidence and prevent other people from analysing the outcomes of what the government's policies have been. That is bad for the state. The only way we can determine a better way ahead is to be open and have more people look at the data and analyse what has been implemented as a way of combating crime and determine whether or not it has worked.

If the government does that, it can stop spending money and resources on things that are just a waste of money and do not work. We can start targeting some real threats—the things that are the drivers of the crime statistics—in the most specific areas where we will achieve the greatest return for effort. An evidence-based approach is needed, because such an approach puts the victims front and centre. At the moment, as we have heard from the member for Rockingham, it is not unusual at all for victims of many of the crimes listed in the release from the member for Midland to not even get a response from the police. I know that in my electorate I have spoken to constituents who had identical break and enters committed on their homes and had to wait four days for forensics to show up. Obviously, they were not the Leader of the Opposition. I will concede that police did show up within a day; it was not immediate, but I think they showed up within 24 hours to look at the glass. Then the forensics guys did not come for almost a week. I do not think that is unusual at all for that sort of a crime. The police have priorities, and their resources are allocated in accordance with whatever processes they are operating under, but the point I want to make is that what we are doing now is clearly not the most effective use of the resources we have. I concur with the member for Midland that there should be better resourcing, but we should know a lot more.

We should use evidence to determine and drive our policy. The next policy the government intends to implement is the law about aggravated burglary, most of which focuses not on assaults and grievous bodily harm committed during burglaries, but on people who commit multiple offences in aggravated circumstances. The question should be: is there evidence that that will work, or will it just incur a massive cost without deterring people from continuing to commit crimes? I heard the member for Midland and the member for Rockingham refer to the minister's comments about volume offenders—individuals who commit large numbers of these crimes. We should be able to use that data. Those statistics should be valuable. As the member for Midland suggested, we should be looking elsewhere in the world to see what other people are doing and what works. There is a great opportunity in Western Australia to establish an independent authority for collating and publishing all our crime statistics, including those from the Department of the Attorney General, WA Police and the Department of Corrective Services. We need something like the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr P. PAPALIA: You do not agree?

Ms M.M. Quirk: No, I agree entirely.

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Mr P. PAPALIA: I think we need something like that. The beauty would be that it would be an independent authority that could not be subject to accusations of manipulation. It would be open and transparent, and hopefully it would then drive our policy development. That is why it would be a good thing. I am not necessarily saying that the New South Wales model is ideal, but I think we need something like that. Beyond that, using statistics to target policing effort is being done around the world, and concepts like predictive policing are not that new anymore. I wonder whether we are employing advances made elsewhere in the world in policing to ensure that we are getting value for our spend. The statistics released today suggest that we are not doing that well. If we have had that much of an increase in those crime rates in those key areas in a 12-month period, that is concerning.

As I said before, this concealment of data and statistics, and covering up is essentially a missed opportunity.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: The Premier is asleep.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I know; I do that to him.

That is the point I wanted to make in this debate. In supporting this motion I say to the minister that I see this as an opportunity. We should be throwing open the shutters and letting people see the statistics and employing as many different sources of expertise as possible to ensure that we do not miss policy development opportunities, we do not miss something that we are doing wrong, and we do not miss something that we may be doing right, and we get better outcomes on behalf of the victims of crime in Western Australia. Evidence-based, victim-focused response to crime is what we need.

MR N.W. MORTON (Forrestfield) [5.05 pm]: I rise to make some brief comments on the motion before the house. I want to start by acknowledging the great work done by Western Australia Police. I say that from a personal point of view, given that a number of members of my family have been police officers at various times, whether they have been traffic police, mounted police or members of the highly skilled and trained Tactical Response Group. I have heard some of the stories of what they confront in their day-to-day business, both as first responders or in situations faced by units such as the TRG. I thank them for what they do for our community, in keeping it safe, and I want to take this opportunity to put that on record.

I want to clear up the argument around the publication of sanction rates in Western Australia. Following a comprehensive review of WA Police key performance indicators, from 1 July 2014 the sanction rates for offences against the person and offences against property were replaced by the percentage of investigations of offences against the person finalised within 60 days, and the percentage of investigations of offences against property finalised within 30 days. This change was part of a major reform of the agency's outcome-based management framework, including KPIs. Interestingly, we have heard a lot from the opposition in the past couple of days about the reports of the Auditor General. I note that this change was subsequently endorsed by the Office of the Auditor General. Importantly, although the opposition would have the people of Western Australia believe that WA Police is trying to sweep something under the carpet, the new KPI is actually a more transparent indicator of WA Police's effectiveness in its investigation outcomes, and aligns with national policing performance indicators as shown in the "Report on Government Services" produced by the Productivity Commission. This actually makes what WA Police do more transparent and aligns it with national practices. I have some graphs in front of me showing the statistics to December 2014 of investigations finalised. The data show improvements in investigations of both offences against the person and offences against property finalised within the respective 60 and 30-day time frames. I do not think it is all the doom and gloom that the opposition would have us believe.

I want to focus, from a local perspective, on the great work that can be done by engaging with the local police, be it the local policing team or the officer in charge at the local police station, as I have done at Forrestfield Police Station. We have definitely worked together. Obviously, law and order is an important issue in my community and I am sure that it is paramount in many members' communities. That is why it is important to develop a strong working relationship. We have been able to work together to target drug dealers and antisocial behaviour as it happens in the electorate and in the community. We have been able to bring to the attention of the local police drink-and-drug-driving and so on. We had an operation recently called Operation Octopus, which involved the main booze bus, but also had all the access roads manned by police cars, so that they could seal off the area, if you like, and catch everyone entering and exiting the suburb. This was great for the community and certainly sent a strong message to people engaging in that kind of very dangerous behaviour.

While the Minister for Police is in the chamber, I would like to thank her for her ongoing and strong support for my local community on law and order issues. I thank her for always being willing to support my community. In particular, I want to reference her recent visit with regard to the covert hoon cameras, which was very warmly received by my local community. Hooning is probably one of the main issues I get through my office, and to have a Minister for Police who is so willing to engage with and look for solutions to these issues is very

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comforting. I have subsequently had a lot of feedback from my local community about this initiative by the Liberal-National government, and it has been very, very warmly received. I do not want to undersell the importance of that initiative and I thank the minister for it. I have had some great engagement with my local policing teams, whether it is the Kenwick-Beckenham group or the ones in Forrestfield and High Wycombe, and when one engages with them, one really can work towards getting better outcomes for one's community.

The shadow Minister for Police has stood in this place and bleated about statistics and has said that the government is failing in all manner of ways. I would be surprised if police officers would actually let her into a police station, given the way she gets stuck into WA Police. She would have to be the most anti-WA Police shadow minister we have had in the history of this state. Given that she was so keen to mention statistics, I thought I might mention a few of hers. I was doing a bit of research and I refer to an article that appeared in *The West Australian* of 1 March 2006, headed "Driver drug tests in WA still a year off: Minister". I will just quote from some of the article. It states, in part —

Random roadside drug tests will not be introduced into WA for up to a year, despite yesterday's alarming results of a year-long Victorian trial in which one in 46 car drivers tested positive to cannabis or amphetamines.

Here we have the opposition banging on about the ice epidemic and amphetamines in our community, but it was not so quick to act when it had the opportunity.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr N.W. MORTON: Member for Girrawheen, my wife says to me, "Only open your mouth to improve the silence", so I suggest the member heeds her advice.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz): Members! I am on my feet!

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I need to call you because I am on my feet and you continue to speak. The member for Forrestfield has the floor. Please give him the respect he is due. Thank you.

Mr N.W. MORTON: I have had the opportunity to stand in this chamber on a number of occasions to talk about law and order, and when I hold the opposition to account on its poor record in this area, the number of interjections and squeals I get from members opposite is so predictable and transparent that it is like *Groundhog Day*.

The article continues —

However, anti-drug driving laws in WA have a history of delay. Then police minister Michelle Roberts first announced a new "drug impaired driving" offence in November 2003, saying it would be put to Parliament in 2004. But the Bill is still mired in parliamentary procedure.

I remind members that I am referencing an article from 2006, so that means it was at least a three-year delay. There is a statistic for the member for Girrawheen, but there is more. The next article is perhaps one of the most interesting ones. It is from the *Esperance Express*, which is a fantastic publication, of Thursday, 16 February 2006 titled, "Thin blue line remains stretched". I will quote a couple of sections from the article. It reads, in part —

THE State Government's —

The then state Labor government, that is —

pledge to put additional numbers of police on our streets has been hit hard by the departure of 292 Western Australian police officers ...

The article goes on to read —

"In November last year Michelle Roberts conceded during Question Time that Labor faced a tough task fulfilling its election promise.

"It is obvious that not enough has been done to recruit and retain police officers under this Labor Government.

What a shame! What a crying shame! The opposition could not do it when it had the opportunity, and now it comes in here and tries to criticise this government as we roll out record numbers of police officers and record spending on law and order; it is an absolute joke.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 12 August 2015]

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Here is one more statistic for members opposite, again from 2006. I am going to suggest that 2006 will not feature highly on the member for Midland's highlights reel. It is another article from *The West Australian* of 20 January 2006 titled "Roberts wants the job but won't say why". It reads —

Police Minister Michelle Roberts declared yesterday she wanted to be premier but refused to say why she was the best person for the job.

There is a statistic: the shortest tilt at being Premier in the history of WA. The member for Midland woke up, got a haircut, and by morning tea realised that she did not have the numbers and withdrew from the race.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members!

Mr N.W. MORTON: I have touched a nerve! At least I am not a cling-on like the member for Midland! When we unveil the truth of the Labor Party's very soft record on law and order and community safety in this state, over many, many years, we can see that a leopard does not change its spots. This government is committed to providing good law and order; we support our Western Australian police force and will continue to do so. I thank the Minister for Police for her continued support in my local electorate.

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [5.16 pm]: This motion is that this house calls on the government to reinstate the timely publishing of crime statistics, including the publication of sanction or clearance rates for crimes. By not doing so, the government is shooting itself in the foot. I say that because this government is not backward in criticising the courts for failing to sentence sufficiently robustly, in its view. One of the bases on which courts sentence offenders is the issue of prevalence. If a crime is particularly prevalent in the community, it tends to dictate to the courts, in the context of deterrence, that a larger sentence will be imposed. If the courts do not have accurate information about criminal offences and the prevalence thereof, it will be reflected in sentencing practices. For that reason alone it is irresponsible for the government not to be open and accountable on criminal statistics. I will talk a bit more about selective reporting shortly.

The second preliminary remark I want to make is that behind every statistic is a story. In the case of burglaries, it is the story of a family that has been violated and that perhaps has lost confidence in the system, and has not been given good information and timely follow-up by the police, with the consequence that that family really no longer feels safe and secure in their own home. In the past, in a previous residence, I had a series of burglaries. I have been around the law enforcement environment for some years and consider myself to have a reasonably robust personality, but I have to say that after a succession of burglaries I required some counselling because the cumulative effect of those burglaries disturbed me significantly. For families and individuals who have not had much exposure to criminal law and law enforcement, I suspect the personal impact of a burglary would be much greater. Often they lose items of great personal and sentimental value, and that will have a long and lasting impact. We need to be mindful that when we talk about statistics, we are actually talking about individual Western Australians and Western Australian families who have come into contact, as victims, with crimes such as burglary, assault and the like, and it has a significant impact on their place in the world and their feeling of safety and security. In many cases, of course, they are very much sensitised to the issue of crime after that.

There is nothing worse than to ring up police communications and be told that it is not a high priority, that one is not alone, that it is not a big deal and that the police have so many of these cases that they cannot call round and take a report in person. That is very, very disturbing. It is also disturbing to be advised that the only reason there is a police report number is so that the matter can be reported to insurance companies. I think that is just not acceptable, but it is fairly routine.

I am not alone in having this opinion—the member for Forrestfield would seem to think that we are crying wolf. This debate was brought on today because there are disturbing statistics that were released not through the WA Police website but through a *WAtoday* article. The article notes —

In July 2015, the total number of crimes reported in the metropolitan area rose 19.6 per cent on what was reported in July 2014.

That is even more disturbing when you think that in July 2014 the same total number of crimes reported had gone up 10 per cent that year as well. The article goes on to state —

The most dramatic increases were in robberies on businesses (up 36 per cent) domestic assaults (34 per cent) and threatening behaviour (26 per cent).

Of offences "against the person", the biggest increases were in thefts (up 21 per cent) car thefts and home burglaries (each up 18 per cent).

Further —

Extract from Hansard

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The deputy commissioner has approved three-month Operation Sweep, focusing on the people and places most responsible for the rise in statistics.

That is a matter that the minister also informed us about in question time. I have to say, and maybe I am naive, but I thought that was core business and what the police should be doing anyway. So I am a bit intrigued about why this is some innovative practice—it is core business for police to focus on the people and places most responsible for the rise in statistics. The article continues —

He said the formation of Frontline 2020, the new police operating model, had the flexibility to rapidly divert more than 1000 officers across Perth at any time to to apply pressure where necessary without impacting day-to-day services.

I have two things to say about that comment: firstly, the deputy commissioner has obviously not heard about the notion of displacement; and, secondly, this sounds to me like no more than moving the deckchairs on the *Titanic*. The article further goes on to state —

The deputy commissioner said analysts were examining the reasons for the spike but it was too early to fully understand what was driving the change.

In getting rid of some of the civilians at WA Police, the capacity to analyse some of these issues has been diminished. The deputy commissioner is then quoted as saying —

“We’ve talked in recent weeks about the impact of methamphetamine but there are many different factors at play and many are still unknown.”

...

there was no doubt ice was one of the drivers in the increased armed robberies but changes and increasing tensions in family life—including FIFO life and abuses of other substances such as alcohol—were all contributors to crime and arresting people did not address these.

That is a very strange comment to make. The ice problem is not novel or new; it is something that has been in existence for at least a decade. Some members will recall that the ice problem was so bad in 2005–06 that the previous government organised an ice summit, at which a number of plans and recommendations were put forward. To say that ice is a new driver for crime and that these other things such as FIFO life are suddenly drivers of crime is naive given that all these factors have existed for some time. The article notes —

Arrests were up 11 per cent and arrests of repeat priority offenders were up 41 per cent.

That is excellent. I am very pleased to hear that. But again that is low-hanging fruit. Should we be patting police on the back for doing what they should be doing in any event?

Some might say, and some have said, that the police are putting up the white flag on crime. In fact, those words were used in an opinion piece written by the very experienced journalist Liam Bartlett that was published in the *Sunday Times* on 2 August. I must admit that this is something that I have had an instinct about for quite some time and was intrigued to see articulated by someone of Mr Bartlett’s stature. Mindful that this was published before the latest statistics were out, he wrote —

THIEVES in WA are on the rise. According to the police’s own figures, theft increased almost 10 per cent last financial year. That’s disturbing, but what’s even worse is the prediction from the Police Commissioner that it will continue to climb.

In what can best be described as an admission of failure, Karl O’Callaghan blames it all on the methamphetamine crisis. He said: “Anything that is related to getting money to buy methamphetamine like stealing out of cars is going to rise until some of the national and state strategies start to kick in.”

As I said earlier, we have had strategies certainly articulated since 2007, and I do not know why they have not been acted on. Mr Bartlett goes on to say —

In other words, forget the responsibilities of the police to crack down on basic crime such as theft; we have to wait until the State and Federal Government launch their “strategies” to clean up the streets. This is coming from a Commissioner who has been at the helm for almost 11 years and who knows, intimately, that the crystal meth problem is not a new one. It certainly hasn’t sprung up in the past 12 months.

But ask somebody who has recently suffered the indignity of theft and you begin to get a better idea of the state of the ship that Mr O’Callaghan is piloting.

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Mr Bartlett then goes on to describe an incident, some would say a minor incident, of the theft out of a car and the inordinate steps the victim's husband took to track down the offenders, including tracking down CCTV from nearby businesses where the stolen credit cards were used by way of payWave. All the victims were told —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P. Abetz): Members, can you keep your voices down. Member for Butler!

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Mr Bartlett then recounts that all the victims were told to do was go to the police website to see how the investigation was going. Needless to say, no-one was ever apprehended. It is a simple story, but just goes to show that this is not a whinge by the opposition; it is a general community sentiment that I think Mr Bartlett is expressing extremely well in his article.

I want to raise the issue of crime statistics. The crime statistics that are collected and categorised has changed during the course of this government. I can remember when the Minister for Corrective Services would get up with a graph and say, "Look, crime has gone down." But when you looked closely at the graphs tabled in Parliament, there was an asterisk that stated "selected offences". In other words, some offences had been removed from the statistics, and one was drawn to the conclusion that perhaps some of the more unfavourable criminal activity was excluded from the selected statistics. I want to make specific note of fraud, which is increasingly being described as a civil matter. This would include, for example, theft. The last time I looked in the Criminal Code, theft was an offence. Theft of credit cards, use of money obtained through use of credit cards or goods, which is also theft, is increasingly seen as a civil matter—a matter between the victim and the banks—and the records relating to the prevalence of those crimes are not recorded or readily available.

I want to give one particular incident that occurred in my electorate that involved a series of money transfers that never got to the intended destination. Money transfer is a common practice in the Vietnamese community. A constituent came into my office and said, "I went to the police station and I reported that I had transferred money to Vietnam and it never arrived, and the police officer said that is not a matter for the police; that is a civil matter." This constituent was rightly concerned. I said, "Last time I looked, theft is theft and is a crime, and the police should have followed it up." I contacted the district superintendent, who concurred with my view and facilitated the police taking statements from what were in fact a number of victims. The total fraud committed was about \$110 000, and the perpetrator ended up being imprisoned for over two years. If that constituent had not been sufficiently assertive and questioned the police, who told her to go away, a number of the victims would never have got the matter to court and received compensation for their funds that had been misappropriated. That kind of case is, frankly, not isolated. I suspect that the statistics that we have for crime are understated. Another area of theft is petrol drive-offs. They are not even in the ballpark so far as the police are concerned. Many petrol station owners are small business people, and they work on very small margins. Frankly, it is not acceptable that the police do not regard that as theft.

We also heard today from the Minister for Police about a new program that the police want to introduce called Turning Point. Turning Point is apparently being run in England. Under that program, as I understand it, appropriate offenders are told that they will not be brought before the courts, but they will need to be of good behaviour for a certain time and if it turns out that they are not of good behaviour they might subsequently be charged for their original offence. I have to say if we brought in a program such as that, the first accusation that would be made of us is that we are being soft on crime. The other impression I have of this program is that it is a way for the police to avoid paperwork, because they do not have to go through the pesky problem of having to prepare a brief. If that is the case, it is very concerning. It is not uncommon for me to have constituents come into my office who have been told, usually by junior police officers, that it is not worthwhile charging people; it is not worth the paperwork, and the courts are going to let them off lightly anyway. Frankly, it is not the role of a junior police officer to make a judgement or prediction as to what the courts might do.

Finally, I want to talk about the domestic violence statistics. They are very alarming. In the last five years, the number of family and domestic violence incidents has gone up by 36 per cent in the metropolitan area, by over 63 per cent in the south west, by 64 per cent in the great southern, by 54 per cent in the wheatbelt, by 30.8 per cent in the south east, by 37.3 per cent in the central district, by 58.9 per cent in the Pilbara, and, most alarmingly, by 79.1 per cent in the Kimberley. Why are police being shifted from one area to the other to deal with this issue when it is occurring across the board? That is the first question I would ask. At the same time as we have this rise in offending, and these horrendous figures, there has been a significant drop in the sanction rates. That is a matter of great concern to me and should be to us all. The government cannot say that it takes these kinds of offences seriously when we have figures like this. On top of that, there has been a significant drop in the number of charges. For example, the number of prosecutions for assault is down 19 per cent, for sex assaults is down 29 per cent, for breach of restraining orders is up 45 per cent—so, well done—and for other offences associated with family and domestic violence is down 7.1 per cent. If we are to examine the resources given to the police, and look at the policy implications of various legislative proposals, we need to assess, as the member for Warnbro said, the evidence available. As part of our duty as members of Parliament, be it in

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government or in opposition, we need to look at that evidence and ask whether that is the best use of taxpayers' resources and whether that is the appropriate policy response to a particular problem. However, without that evidence, we cannot do so. We therefore have to be sceptical about why the government is not prepared to release these statistics in a way that is meaningful and that can encourage informed community debate.

MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler) [5.35 pm]: I will not take too much of the time of the chamber, because what I have to say I have largely said before. We are in a crime crisis in Western Australia. At the same time as we are in a crime crisis in Western Australia, we are blighted with the worst Minister for Police in the history of Western Australia. That is a confluence of events that is of the utmost concern. It has been said that the primary responsibility of a federal government is to secure the safety of the nation and secure its borders. The primary responsibility of a state government is to secure the safety of its citizens. This government has failed miserably to do that. The government has repeated over and over the cliché that it is tough on crime. However, like a boomerang, that cliché has now come back to hit it. If the measure of being tough on crime is that offenders are brought before the courts, this government has been a miserable failure, with crashing clearance rates. The government has solved the problem of crashing clearance rates by engaging in the cover-up of saying that it is not going to release the clearance rates anymore. However, the government is not big enough to silence all the voices in the community. In what remains of my speech, I want to go to the police voices. The government has not been able to silence all the police voices.

I want to take members back for a moment to what happened a little over 12 months ago when the minister attended my electorate of Butler—which she has betrayed, misled and let down—and said that the government has strategies and is on top of the home burglary epidemic. We know that since that time, the number of home burglaries has exploded. How do we know this? We know this from what the police themselves have revealed, not by way of clearance rates, but by the frank admissions of Deputy Commissioner Brown, who has talked about the 19.6 per cent increase in the number of reported crimes this year over last year. This means that the government is not on top of it. This means that there are more offenders and fewer of them are coming before the courts, as the Chief Justice has noted. This is an abject failure and a betrayal of the people in Butler.

What is an even greater betrayal is that the Minister for Police—the worst police minister in Western Australia's history—came before this Parliament and prattled how the government now has the Frontline 2020 policy, which has been warmly received by the community. As I said, she might be able to silence the voices in her party room and occasionally some of the voices in this Parliament, but she cannot silence all the police who are out there under stress.

I now refer to and quote from an article from 7 May this year. It states —

WA Police Union boss George Tilbury says “there just isn't enough officers,” after a police officer penned a letter saying he was “mortified and embarrassed” by response times to jobs.

A constable from the North West Metro response team —

That is the team that is policing the Butler area —

wrote to the union in regards to the recently introduced police operating model Frontline 2020.

The police minister deceptively and dishonestly says that model is warmly regarded by the community. It certainly is not warmly regarded by the community of Butler and certainly not by these officers in the north west metropolitan policing district. The article continues —

The 2020 model is part of a major overhaul of the police force. Under the model, metropolitan police stations will be split up among four over-arching districts, each closely matched in both officer numbers and demands.

The model was trialled in South East Metropolitan District from late 2013 and at the time Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan said its success had been a motivating factor to expand it.

We all know why it was a success. It is because police were pulled out of other districts. There was a surge down there in Armadale after police were pulled out of the Clarkson station. Police were pulled out of all the stations and surged into Armadale. The article continues —

But the officer who penned the letter to the WA Police Union said the area he covered now was “enormous”.

Tell us about it. Crime was so bad in Clarkson two years into the Barnett government that it was decided to ship 12 detectives into a detectives office at the Clarkson Police Station in response to demands by the mayor of the City of Wanneroo, the community and me leading community street protests. It took a year to do it and over \$1 million was spent in building the accommodation. The detectives were there for just over 12 months and were making inroads before this government signed up to this new Frontline 2020 model and pulled all the officers

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out and so wasted that \$1 million. How many officers could that have paid the wages of? The government wasted the \$1 million and took the officers out of there again. The major policing hub was relocated from Joondalup further south to Warwick, and now Two Rocks, which is still in the metropolitan area—I know you have not visited there lately, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr P. Abetz), because you are busy in your own electorate south side—is further from the district office than that district office is from Perth. The article continues and it quotes the police officer’s letter. This is a police officer speaking. It is not a Labor politician and it is not a journalist. The letter states —

“The amount of travel time from job to job has increased by so much, I’m mortified and embarrassed by our new response time to jobs,” ...

That is reflected in all the comments I get from my electorate in Butler. The officer goes on —

“VKI ... is stressed and overworked. This is little comfort to me, when I’m on the road and VKI is overwhelmed by the huge amount of radio calls.

“I went to a violent domestic priority two, and in the text of the job, the POI [person of interest] was the male was an aggressive male, and children were present, but the radio was so busy that VKI never checked on me, like VKI used to do.”

The letter is printed in the article as follows —

... **The area we cover is enormous no arguments there. It is ENORMOUS. The amount of travel time from job to job has increased so much. I am mortified and embarrassed by our new response times ... It is so slow now. No denying it, or fudging figures, as a response officer I am completely and fully aware that our response times are really poor. We are even forced to drive priority much more often, just to get to the Job within 20 minutes And let me point out, 20 minutes of lights and sirens through Perth traffic, is quite stressful and wearing on officers. I am sure petrol consumption and vehicle wear and tear is now an issue too.**

The article continues —

Union president George Tilbury said there had been a number of concerns from officers in response teams since the Frontline 220 model was trialled last year.

That is the model that the police minister misrepresents to this Parliament as being warmly received by the community. It is even trashed by working officers —

“These concerns have related to the increased pressure to go from job to job, no respite and a lack of officers in each of the teams,” ...

The Barnett government has let us down in its primary responsibility to keep our community safe. It is more interested in a \$1.5 billion football stadium than securing the safety of the families of Butler. The article goes on —

Mr Tilbury said more officers were needed in each of the response teams to reduce fatigue.

The loud tin drum from Forrestfield says, “We support the police.”

Mrs M.H. Roberts: Where is he now?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: He has run. He only comes here and goes “Hoot, hoot, hoot”, and out he goes. I continue with the article —

Mr Tilbury said more officers were needed in each of the response teams to reduce fatigue.

That is not being given to police; the police are not being supported. The member for Forrestfield has misled the chamber. The article continues —

“Having to constantly attend high-priority jobs with no respite is draining and may force some officers out of the job.

“The community has also shared their concerns with a number of people saying police patrols in the Perth CBD have decreased since the new model has been implemented.”

I will just go to the next article, because they cannot be kept all the time. A month later on 8 June 2015, the Commissioner of Police came out in an article on page 1 of the *The West Australian* and said —

Police are slower to get to some urgent calls because they spend so much time on methamphetamine-related crime and on Perth’s congested roads ...

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 12 August 2015]

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We all know the roads are congested. We have known that for years. But then the government decided to withdraw the police from Clarkson, to pull them out of the Butler area and take them further away in the full knowledge that the response times would go downhill and that the people of Butler would be exposed to more crime and more danger. The article continues —

In an interview to mark his two-year contract extension, Mr O’Callaghan said meth now fuelled burglaries and violent armed hold-ups in the same way alcohol caused domestic violence and “street” assaults.

Both were now “pretty serious issues”. “Our rhetoric —

This is the policeman; this is the commissioner saying it was rhetoric —

“Our rhetoric in the past —

Read for that “spin” —

was ... alcohol is bigger, it’s more accessible but in fact the two things cause different problems and both are relevant and both are things we have to focus on,” he said.

The commissioner goes on to talk about the inordinate delays —

He said seizing more drugs took police off the street because of the work involved wrapping them up.

Obviously that is wrapping up the case, not the drugs! The article continues —

“Someone dealing drugs from a house spawns a whole series of other petty crime going on—theft, burglary, vehicle theft. If we are kicking doors in and arresting dealers it’s going to have an impact.”

He then provides his explanation for the horrible slump in response times. We have the Western Australian Police Union of Workers’ account—the working officers’ account—that they are being starved of police resources. When there is the Commissioner of Police’s admission that police response times are an embarrassment, is it any wonder that the crime figures are going through the roof? It follows. Is it any wonder that the government, which has so badly let down the community on its primary responsibility to keep the community safe, wants to cover up this situation by hiding the sanction rates because it does not want to be exposed for what it is—and the Premier does not want to expose his minister as the worst police minister in Western Australia’s history?

I need to spend a moment on the observation of the Commissioner of Police that so much of this is being driven by the methamphetamine crisis in Western Australia. On Monday I heard the commissioner being interviewed on ABC 720 radio. His comments followed those of a parent who was talking about their child who was in rehabilitation and what a struggle it was. The commissioner was asked by Mr Geoff Hutchison when a person is in rehabilitation is it better to keep them in rehab or put them in prison. The commissioner, not wanting to go against government policy, obviously, said that the Fresh Start Recovery rehabilitation program is a good program. Mr Hutchison then asked the commissioner whether they should be left in Fresh Start or put in prison. The commissioner then replied that they can put them in prison and keep Fresh Start going, and that if they keep up the rehabilitation, it is better that they serve their time and be rehabilitated at the same time, but that if you put them into prison and you do not rehabilitate them while they are in prison, they will come out and reoffend, and these numbers will swell even further. What do we know? I would ask the shadow Minister for Corrective Services: Are there programs in the prisons? Is Fresh Start in prison? Are the other programs there? They are not available. So much for those sweet words.

Mr P. Papalia: They put out a press release saying they are thinking about it.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: They are thinking about it.

[Member’s time extended.]

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I said I would not be long but when I talk about the worst police minister in Western Australia’s history, I come back to that theme occasionally. The commissioner said that if they are on Fresh Start and we put them into prison and we keep that rehabilitation going, then we are getting somewhere; but it is no good just putting them into prison without the programs because when they come out they are going to reoffend and just swell the numbers again and reoffend. There are no programs in prison! That is the thing that the commissioner did not want to mention. I am being sensitive here; I think the commissioner well knows that those programs are not in the prisons.

Not only has the community been let down by a lack of police resources, as identified by the Police Union and by the working officers in the north metropolitan policing district—not by me, not by Labor, but by the union and the working officers—but also we know that a surge in amphetamine use has driven a lot of crime. How do we know that? The police commissioner is quoted on the front page of *The West Australian* on 8 June as saying

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that, and then the government fails to put in place the programs to try to stem that. The government is doing what conservative Liberal governments are wont to do, and it has failed over and over and over again. Seeing a problem such as the methamphetamine problem, the government foolishly believes that it is going to arrest its way out of the problem: if the police arrest enough people, it will stop the problem. We know from what the police commissioner said on radio this week that that is just not going to happen unless we have the programs to stop these people once they are captured. We know that those programs do not exist—the department is thinking about it all.

Take what the police minister said in this chamber about what the Minister for Mental Health said in the other place—that is, the government is going to spend \$1.1 million to try to stem this problem. This is not new money; it is budget money—it is what it was doing already. I heard the Minister for Mental Health being interviewed on radio as well, and she said that some of the hospitals will not detox people, so we are going to talk to the hospitals about detoxing. That will not solve the problem. Our hospitals are already overburdened. We know that from ambulance ramping at hospitals. What will they do? Will they take in all the methamphetamine addicts? The ambulance queue will stretch from South Perth to here and back if they have to detox all those people. We need a big detox facility. I do not agree with a lot of the utterances of Senator Lambie, but she struck resonance with me when she said that the law needs to be changed to allow parents to apply for their children to be taken into detoxification and held within a centre while they detoxify. She said that we cannot reason with these people. What did she say? She said, “I am not talking to my son; I am talking to a drug and I do not know what the reaction is going to be at any given moment.” I agree with her. I have heard the accounts of people who come into my electorate office and I have heard the despair of the parents and grandparents, because the other social problem with a lot of young people who get addicted to methamphetamine is that they do not care for their own kith and kin and the grandparents, aged and with limited resources, have to step in—I am sure you know what I mean, Mr Acting Speaker—to try to take up the slack. We need compulsory detoxification centres. They will not be cheap, but we are in a crisis, as identified by the Commissioner of Police. It needs to be done.

When we look at what the police officers are saying about crime statistics, we see the bits that seep out that the government cannot smother. They can smother the official reports—which is what this motion is seeking to address—so that the community does not learn about the real state of affairs, but they cannot smother forever individual officers who come out and tell the truth. I am interested to hear the police minister’s response. I want to know whether she agrees with Mr Tilbury, or is Mr Tilbury telling the community an untruth when he says there are just not enough officers? We know there are enough seats at the football stadium. It cost \$1.5 billion to get them there—\$2 billion, because we also have the public transport. Is what Mr Tilbury is saying true, or is Mr Tilbury setting out to mislead the public of Western Australia? Is what this police officer writes true? He writes that he is —

... mortified and embarrassed by our new response times to jobs. It is so slow ... No denying it, or fudging figures ...

Is he being true, or is this a dishonest policeman writing to his union in desperation? Tell us, minister. Is this a dishonest police officer, is this a dishonest union president, or is he telling us the truth? We know that this government does not support police. We know that it has stretched the police so far and thin that individual officers are now at cracking point. We know this from what they are writing and saying. I can understand why the Minister for Police does not want these figures released. I can well understand that, because they are the worst figures in Australia. We know that we are the car theft capital of Australia. We know that we are the home burglary capital of Australia and now the police minister comes along and says, “We know all those bad figures but I have got news for you. We have tested the sewage, and we are the worse state for amphetamines in Australia.” This has just gone to junk after six and a half years of this nonsense, has it not? The last three or four years has no doubt been the worst experience of policing, overseen by the worst police minister—beyond question—in Western Australia’s history. She does not want this Parliament to see the true figures because then the game is up. That is what they did in the federal Parliament. Mr Costello introduced legislation for the Charter of Budget Honesty, under which independent figures would be published biannually so that the public of Australia could see what was happening with the Australian finances and not have to depend on a politician’s spin. I fully support the member for Warnbro’s advocacy for an independent organisation to report to this community on a biannual basis on the true nature of crime, apprehension and clearance rates. It will not be pretty, but it will at least spur the administration into doing something real about helping the people of Butler, who have been abandoned by this government on law and order.

MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys) [6.03 pm]: I will be brief as I believe the Minister for Police probably wants to get up and respond. I will not take up too much time, particularly for members of the opposition, because this is their time. Can I just say from the outset, I could not believe how responsible this particular motion was, on the

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notice paper, by the member for Midland. It is not the usual one condemning the government, the Premier, the minister or anything like that. This is a very straightforward responsible motion that simply states —

That this house calls on the government to reinstate the timely publishing of crime statistics, including the publication of sanction or clearance rates for crimes.

I do not see anything wrong with that at all and I have to tell members that I would vote for it in a fit. The government has an obligation to ensure that the police publish those figures. The public have a right to know what is going on in Western Australia. I have tremendous confidence in our police officers, I really do. Although they are not supposed to come and talk to me, some of them do. They come and talk to me regularly and they have concerns; whether they have enough officers out on the streets to be able to combat the crime that is going on. It is a fact, quite frankly, that when we have high unemployment rates, which we are looking at now, we will see the crime rate go up. When they are not earning money, those people, particularly those who might perhaps need to spend some money on drugs, will break into people's houses, and steal things and steal cars—like they did with the Leader of the Opposition's house. They will steal jewellery, cash, credit cards and anything that they can get their hands on, simply to feed their drug addiction. Drugs are the biggest curse in Western Australia; in relation to crime they are probably the biggest curse in the world.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: I thought I was.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: No, the minister is not. I would just like the minister to do the right thing and ensure that those statistics are reinstated, because I think that is very important.

I believe in open and accountable government and I believe in our police officers. Our police service should also be open and accountable. I was staggered when the Commissioner of Police came out and declared, two or three weeks ago, that there had been a 10 per cent increase in crime in the last year. I could not believe that he was coming out and saying that. What really staggered me was when he said, "Get used to it; over the next three to five years you are going to see even bigger increases." To me, that is not acceptable from the Commissioner of Police, and I do not think the minister should allow that sort of commentary to take place because at the end of the day the minister has responsibility. If I had been the minister and he had come out and said that, I would have been absolutely lambasted by the people up in the press gallery, the new members opposite and everybody else. I think something needs to be done. Liam Bartlett wrote an extremely good article asking whether we are now putting up the white flag on crime and saying that we surrender. It is an extremely good article and I read it with great interest. It asked whether we are going to admit that we will not do anything about the crime rate and let it go unabated for the next three to five years—that is what the commissioner said. I have a great deal of respect for the commissioner; I worked with him for many years, not only as the Minister for Police, but also in opposition when I was opposition shadow spokesperson for police. He and I did a lot of work together. I cannot understand why on earth he would come out and make such a comment. I think that is wrong.

It worries me that if we are not going to be honest with people and let them know exactly what the crime rate is, we have to ask the question: why are we now bringing in new policies? The latest one is the four-month contract. I have to tell members, I am completely opposed to that. The minister says it has been successfully trialled in the United Kingdom. I have friends in the House of Commons, believe it or not. I have friends in London who work in top law firms. I asked them whether this is the case and they had not even heard about it. If the minister can supply some evidence, not from the commissioner—not his words—but empirical evidence of that from the UK, I would be very interested. I do know that the UK government has brought in a law whereby if a person is caught twice carrying a knife, they will automatically be sent to prison. It is an automatic sentence to prison. I am all in favour of that sort of thing because I think knives are a curse. They are worse in the UK than they are here at the moment, and if we do not do things, they will get worse here as well. We tend to follow the United Kingdom and the United States and other countries. We do not normally lead the world in these sorts of things, but we need to take great note of what is happening in the UK. The commissioner goes to the UK quite regularly and talks to the police officers over there. I talk to people in the UK almost on a weekly basis and I can tell members that they are unaware of any successful trials that have taken place. There may well be a trial taking place, but the minister said it was a successful trial. I would really like to see the empirical evidence to show that that is a successful trial, because to me what the government is doing by giving some people a four-month contract to be good boys and girls is admitting that it is going to go soft on crime. It is not the first offence, nine times out of 10; it is the first time they have been caught. If the government will let them get off with a four-month contract, most of them will behave themselves for four months. They may not, but we will not catch them within that four-month period, so we are letting them off.

We have a system in place already in which juveniles are sent to juvenile justice teams. I had a situation in which some young bloke who was drunk and off his head on drugs smashed all the windows in my disabled daughter's house, two or three years ago. He went to court; the police actually caught him. I went to court because I wanted to

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see what was going to happen and what happened was he was referred to the juvenile justice team. I was asked to go along as well, and when his mother saw me come into the court, she went, “Oh my God.” She knew I was going to talk to the presiding magistrate, because I wanted to make sure that justice would be done. My daughter was absolutely terrified that this little hooligan, who was off his face, was smashing her windows. She had three of her children staying at the house at that time, and it just was not good enough. The magistrate referred that particular young person to a justice team, and part of the deal was that he had to front up and apologise to me—he could not apologise to my daughter because she is too severely disabled. He apologised to me because he gave me a lot of distress as well. That was all well and good. I said, “The proof will be in the pudding. If you behave yourself—if you keep out of trouble—it has all been worthwhile, but if you get in trouble one more time, all this is a waste of time.” I do not necessarily agree that giving somebody a four-month contract is the way forward; I really do not. What worries me is whether this is just a ploy to try to keep the crime statistics down, because unless that person is charged I do not believe that that will necessarily go on the crime statistics.

Mr P. Papalia: Now you’re onto something!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: It is true. I do not believe they actually go onto the crime statistics, which will show a false reading of crimes being committed in our state because they are being let off with a caution, basically—a four-month contract. I really do hope that the minister is willing to supply this house with empirical evidence for what she claims is a successful trial in the United Kingdom. I will be very, very interested in that; I truly will.

I did say I would not be long. I know the minister wants to get up, and I am very keen to hear what she has to say. I do not think anybody should vote against this motion. It is a very harmless motion; it truly is. It is simply asking can we please put the statistics back on the website so that we can see what crime is taking place in Western Australia. There is nothing wrong with that at all. I repeat that we are not condemning the Premier, the minister, the government or anybody. Nobody is being condemned in this motion. It is a very responsible motion. It is probably one of the most responsible motions I have ever seen from an opposition. It is simply requesting some information, and it is not secret information; it is information that I think the public has a right to see. I will sit now and give the minister an opportunity to respond because I would like to hear what she has to say.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Police) [6.12 pm]: I thank members for their contributions to this debate. It is a really interesting area to try to measure police performance, and particularly statistical analysis. Statistics are always one of those things; they can often be moved around to suit what it is that is trying to be reported. However, the fact remains that we had a very disturbing statistic released by Police today on the figures on crime for July this year. A 19.6 per cent increase compared with last July is not a good figure. Indeed, it is incumbent upon the Commissioner of Police to make sure that his response to this, which is Operation Sweep, is indeed successful and has that crime trending down in the appropriate direction. I think it is important that we also look at the subject of the motion—the publication of sanction rates or clearance rates for crimes. Mr Acting Speaker, the member for Forrestfield, actually spoke about when the measurements changed. Measurements of crime, and indeed reporting on crime, change over time. If we go back in time, for example back to 1895 or 1904, we had —

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I just want to give members an idea. We had crimes of indolence, crimes of acquisition, offences against the currency, offences against good order and offences against public welfare being reported. When the member for Midland was minister, she changed the reporting mechanism for the effectiveness of police from clearance rates to sanction rates. Indeed, in consultation with the Auditor General, and in looking at the “Report on Government Services” —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: When I was the minister? Do you want to stick by that or not?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I did not interject on the member for Midland, and I would appreciate her affording me the same courtesy.

To go back to the history of sanction rates and what sanction rates represent, the sanction rate is based on the number of verified offences when an investigation outcome has been recorded of an offender being apprehended or processed—so that is arrest, summons, cautions or referrals to a juvenile justice team—or when, for some substantial reason, police investigations cannot be continued. It might be that a complaint was withdrawn, there is a statute bar to proceedings, an offender is under-age or claims diplomatic immunity, or other statute-of-limitation matters. There could be circumstances when the incident was found to be a matter of a civil action by the complainant or the offender has died, the offender is in another jurisdiction, extradition is not desired or available, or when the offender has been admitted to a psychiatric facility. The number of those offences within a relevant time is expressed as a percentage of the number of verified offences reported during the same period. Sanction rates are not indicative of a crime being solved; they are indicative of the number of offences that are finalised in a period of time, against the number of offences recorded in a period of time.

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The reason that we have moved to a different way of reporting is that sanction rates are not an accurate report of the effectiveness of police. We had a comprehensive review with WA Police of our key performance indicators in 2014. That was done in conjunction, as I said earlier, by looking at police benchmarks for national police performance indicators that are recorded in the “Report on Government Services”—or ROGS—which is a report put forward by the Productivity Commission. In doing that we worked very closely with the Office of the Auditor General to ensure that the KPIs we settled on would be meaningful KPIs, and that they would be an expression of police effectiveness in solving crime or otherwise. Following the review of the sanction rates—I have mentioned this in this house before—we are now measuring the percentage of offences against persons when investigations are finalised within 60 days. We have set a target for that KPI of 85 per cent. We expect of police that 85 per cent of investigations for offences against people will be finalised within 60 days. Our KPI for investigations for offences against property is that 90 per cent will be finalised within 30 days.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: What does “finalised” mean?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton): Member for Midland, you have had an opportunity.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have mentioned why the change came about. The new KPI reflects better processing, file management, investigation standards and is a better marker of the attention that police are paying to getting investigations done. There is a strong correlation between the offences resolved and the time taken to resolve them. Applying an appropriate response early on affects the investigation and the likelihood that it will be resolved. This new KPI measurement has been put in place because it reflects the correlation between the timeliness of an investigation of the offence being committed, and the opportunity for police to come up with a satisfactory resolution.

The KPI was endorsed by the Office of the Auditor General in November 2013. I approved it as minister in December 2013, and the Department of Treasury approved it in February 2014. Sanction rates ceased being reported on the monthly crime stats to avoid confusion when we changed to the new reporting mechanism.

To give members an idea of where sanction rates have been sitting, bearing in mind that it is not what I would call an accurate measure of police performance, sanction rates for offences in Western Australia have been hovering around the 10 to 14 per cent mark for around about the last five years. I am happy to put the sanction rates back up on the website and I can direct Police to do that, but, as I have said, it is not an accurate measure of police performance because we are not actually comparing the effectiveness of police resolving particular crimes, we are just measuring what the activity in resolving and closing off cases might have been in June 2014 against any crime that might have been committed in the previous 12 months. It is not a measure of effectiveness of police in resolving a particular crime, and that is why we have moved away from it.

The police website publishes crime statistics on a monthly basis. I said earlier today that it publishes in the third week of each month for the preceding month’s statistics. We verify crime. Verified offences are those reported to police within the relevant time period and have not been determined to be false or mistaken reports. We verify offences and publish those crime statistics at state, regional and district levels on the WA Police website. A publishing protocol provides for the statistics to be published in the third working week of each month. That protocol has been in place for approximately 10 years; it has not changed, and I do not intend to change it. There have been no delays in the publishing of crime statistics. For the interest of members, the offences against the person that are published include homicide, recent sexual assault, historical sexual assault, domestic assault, non-domestic assault, threatening behaviour, deprivation of liberty and robbery against businesses and non-businesses. Offences against property are those offences for which we have legislation in the other place to deal with. They include burglary in dwellings, burglary in non-dwellings, motor vehicle theft, theft, arson and property damage. Then there are detected offences, which include drug offences for trafficking, possession, receiving and illegal use. Fraud, graffiti and breaches of restraining orders are grouped under other offences.

We are very transparent in the way that we report overall crime. I am not walking away from the July figure, but we also need to have a look at the trends in crime over longer periods. The rate of offences against the person per 100 000 people is a measure of the crime rate in proportion to population. In 2006–07 there were 1 625 offences against the person per 100 000 people. In 2013–14, that figure was down to 1 442, which is an 11 per cent drop in the rate of offences against the person, corrected for population, between 2006–07 and 2013–14. The rate of offences against property per 100 000 people was 8 200 in 2006–07. That has now come down by 33 per cent to 6 170 offences per 100 000 people. The figure for crime in proportion to population is trending downward by 11 per cent for offences against the person and 33 per cent for offences against property over a seven-year average. It is not all doom and gloom.

Turning to specific offences that members have referred to, in non-domestic assault the offences per 100 000 people in 2007–08 stood at 653, and declined to 436 in 2013–14. From the change of government to the present, we are looking at a drop of one-third in non-domestic assault when corrected for population.

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Threatening behaviour, which members were referring to earlier, has declined by 14 per cent in occurrence per 100 000 people over that time. Non-business robbery is down by 37 per cent, and dwelling burglary is down by 16 per cent. Although the figures are trending in the right direction, we have had a terrible month, and police have developed a response to the month of July to ensure that the trend can be interrupted and the results improved.

The member for Midland spoke about the Australian Bureau of Statistics victimisation survey. We had a debate in this place about that survey at the time. This survey is useful for informing us about the opinions and views of the community on crime and victimisation. However, the survey is conducted through cold calls to people in the community, who are asked whether they have been a victim of crime over a period. They are then asked about such things as their satisfaction with the way the local policing jurisdiction dealt with their case, how it had been handled, and whether the time frame for resolving it was appropriate. The ABS does not then go to the policing jurisdiction being surveyed to determine whether the offence was actually reported to police, whether it is a verified offence, and whether it did in fact occur during the time frame specified by the victim of crime, or is a historical event. We often find that people find it very difficult to move on after being victims of crime. Even though they may have been victimised five years previously, they will report about it and speak of it as if it were very recent. That is the nature of being a victim of crime. Often the trauma does not leave people easily. Indeed, the fear and disturbing feelings that they have as a result of being victimised stay present for a long time. That is why we use the ABS victimisation survey as a tool to inform us about views of crime in the community, but we do not necessarily use it as a performance measure, because we cannot verify that the crime has actually been reported in the context that we use to benchmark between the jurisdictions.

A lot was said about police resourcing, which I find extraordinary. The police force has grown, notwithstanding that we have been running a voluntary severance scheme with police, under which a number of officers have taken up voluntary severance payments and moved on to bigger and better things. We have had a strategy in place around those voluntary severances, and we have been putting people through the academy at record rates. We are still maintaining our growth program while covering for attrition, and we will reach the target that we have set for ourselves—the growth program of 550 police and police auxiliary officers, and the training of an additional 200 detectives—in the time frame that we have set. We are on target, notwithstanding the offer of voluntary severance packages. I place on the record that we are currently sitting at the lowest rate of attrition in police numbers in years. The attrition rate is so low that we are actually finding now that we have an opportunity to wind back the training squads put in specifically to cover for attrition, which is a very pleasing thing.

I sympathise with the member for Rockingham. It is horrendous being a victim of crime, particularly coming home to find that family heirlooms have been stolen. They are irreplaceable items, and that is a really difficult thing for people to come to terms with and move on from. He mentioned that pawnbrokers were often the places where these stolen goods are peddled. He is correct in that, but a lot of these goods are now being peddled online as well, through forums such as Gumtree and eBay. It is a very difficult task for police to try to track stolen goods these days because of those online forums and the flexibility at the disposal of the sellers of these stolen goods. Notwithstanding that, police still use those online tools as a resource to try to link stolen property to offenders and victims.

There was some criticism of the plan we have for methamphetamine. I place on the record and clarify that testing wastewater treatment plants is not our only response to methamphetamine. The cost of this wastewater testing, I am advised, is around \$30 000 a year. All that that will provide us with is an additional tool to measure the level of methamphetamine uptake and usage in the community, which will then give us an idea of whether our response is at the right level, or if we need to ramp it up or indeed even ramp it down. It is only a tool as part of the methamphetamine strategy we have—that is, the enforcement strategy around methamphetamine. We also have a demand strategy that the Minister for Mental Health is working on to provide some resources and opportunities to divert people away from drug use. That is a really big job, but we are not shying away from taking it on.

I turn now to the member for Girrawheen's comments about the Turning Point program. I will speak in general about Turning Point because a number of members opposite had something to say about it.

We are not bringing in Turning Point as a way of trying to reduce the level of paperwork that police have to perform—not by any stretch. The briefs still have to be prepared for any offenders who go into the Turning Point program, and the offenders have a 72-hour opportunity to join Turning Point. It is a voluntary contractual arrangement for the offenders. They cannot be forced into it. If they do not want to change whatever it is that is driving them to criminal offending, we cannot force them to. Those are the cold, hard facts of it. The Chief Justice has endorsed the Turning Point program as an opportunity for Western Australia. The member for Hillarys suggested that it might be being put in place to try to drive down reported crime rates; that is not so. We report crime statistics on crimes that have been reported, not the outcomes for offenders, with regard to whether

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offenders go to Turning Point or to court to receive a conviction. Crime will still be recorded as reported verified offences, so it is not in any way, shape or form being put together to try to drive down the crime stats.

The member for Hillarys also suggested that there was some sort of restriction on who police officers can talk to. Police officers can talk to any member of Parliament if they so choose. There is certainly no restriction on police officers talking to any member of Parliament, and I encourage all members of Parliament to ensure that they have a good dialogue with their local police, as you do, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr N.W. Morton).

The Turning Point program has been trialled in the UK policing jurisdiction of Birmingham. In the areas in which it was trialled, there was a 75 per cent increase in the satisfaction rating for victims of crime. Historically, victims of crime report a very low satisfaction rating with the court process, so a 75 per cent satisfaction rating for victims of crime around the Turning Point program is one of the key reasons we have decided to try it here.

The definition of madness is to keep doing the same thing and expecting to get a different outcome. The reason we have taken on the Turning Point program is that it has never been trialled here. The member for Girrawheen asserted that if the former Labor government had brought that program in, it would have been criticised for being soft on crime, as indeed the member for Hillarys has criticised me for being soft on crime. The Labor government did not bring it in and it did not try it. We are trying it and we have put it together with the police because we want to try something different; we want to try to divert first-time offenders from a lifetime of recidivist offending, and we hope that Turning Point will achieve that. That is our intention. If it does not work, we will try something else. Turning Point and, indeed, the direction in which we are moving with policing are around the evidence-based policing model that the member for Warnbro referred to. We have a number of senior police officers engaged in a program with the University of Cambridge about evidence-based policing and making sure that our policing model is responsive to trends in crime and the ways in which offenders operate.

As for the member for Butler, where do I start? He referred to “clearance rates”; they have not been called clearance rates since the member for Midland was the Minister for Police, which was a long time ago. He talked a lot about the police voices, when a number of police officers complained to the Western Australian Police Union of Workers at the time that the local policing model and the response team model were being put in place. We have never asserted that we are on top of any epidemic of home burglaries or any such nonsense. We have said that we will have more police, and we are doing that. We have said that we will have better legislation that more accurately reflects the consequences of crime that the community expects, and we have implemented that. We are looking at a new policing model to be more effective in policing in Western Australia. These things will all help us to manage crime in the community and improve community safety, but I have never asserted that we are on top of home dwelling burglary in Western Australia or that one silver bullet will fix it. We know that harsher consequences and harsher penalties are not the only answer; we have to have a well-rounded approach, and that is what we have put in place.

With regard to the comments of those officers who have complained to the police union, a recent survey that police have conducted with respect to the new policing model has produced some really interesting results. WA Police surveyed more than 8 000 police officers and police public servants on how the new reform model was working, its satisfaction rating, and complaints or otherwise about the new model.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: In the survey carried out by WA Police, 8 000 police employees, both officers and public servants, were surveyed, and there was a 70 per cent response rate. That is a large number of people. A statistically significant number of people who were surveyed responded, and 45 per cent of them—3 600—were involved in the metropolitan model assessment process and, indeed, the outcomes have been very promising. Under the new policing model, we have seen an increase in the prosecution rate of 11.2 per cent. We have actually seen a 41 per cent increase in arrests of repeat and priority prolific offenders, including those who are out on bail in the community. We have had no verified occupational safety and health reports of fatigue-related incidents during the period of the trial—none—so the fatigue levels that the officer was referring to back in May appear to have been addressed. Indeed, I do not think that was a trend; I think a collection of officers did not like the new model and they complained to the union. I have more confidence in a survey of 8 000 police people, with a 70 per cent response rate, being a statistically significant group of people to talk to the success or otherwise of the model.

Since the new metropolitan policing model has been in place, we have found from the independent surveys conducted in all the police jurisdictions on the satisfaction rating of the community with policing effort that we are at an all-time high of 83 per cent community satisfaction with policing in Western Australia. That survey was not conducted by WA Police; it is managed independently and is conducted consistently with other jurisdictions.

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We are really pleased with our satisfaction rating of 83 per cent, especially given the upheaval in implementing a completely new policing model. Our growth program has allowed us to implement the new policing model because now each of those new districts will have 550 officers.

The member for Butler asserted that we put detectives into Clarkson and pulled them out. He seemed to be inferring that the detectives were somehow involved in some kind of response team and that the response times in Clarkson were linked to the effort of the detectives. That is not so; the detectives, while having their offices based in Joondalup now, are still looking after the Clarkson district and are still investigating offences in the Clarkson area, so the effort of those detectives has not been diminished in any way, shape or form; we have just moved the place where they sit at their desks.

The member for Butler also made an assertion about the community not being happy. Notwithstanding the community satisfaction rating that I have just referred to, I recently attended a community forum in Southern River, where we started the new local policing team model. The people at that community forum were like a changed community compared with the community forums that I had previously attended in the south east metropolitan area in the past few years. They were very happy with the liaison that they had with police, very happy with the new policing model, and very happy with the level of engagement they had with police as a result of the new model. I am cautiously optimistic that we are on the right track with this policing model and that, with the change in the way we have our local policing teams and our response teams set up, we will start to see a change in the statistics that have caused some alarm.

In response to this motion, I have no objection to putting the sanction rate on the website, but I would have to place the caveat that the sanction rate is no longer a key performance indicator for police for all the reasons that I have mentioned previously. It does not measure the effectiveness of police in dealing with any particular offence; it is just a rough measure of police performance and it certainly is not something that I think we should hold them accountable to as a KPI because it does not tell us about their effectiveness in any way, shape or form. But I will put it there, if it will keep members happy. It makes no difference to me, but I will not be using the sanction rate as a key performance indicator because it is not a way that we can benchmark against other jurisdictions. In response to the statistics for July that came out today that show a 20 per cent increase in the crime statistics this July compared to July last year, the police have put together Operation Sweep. I think it is important that we look at what Deputy Commissioner Stephen Brown said today. He said —

“The formation of the new operating model has the flexibility to rapidly divert in excess of 1000 officers across the metropolitan area at any time.

“The increase in available resources, coupled with greater direction and control through our restructure, allows actions like Operation Sweep to apply pressure where it is needed.”

That hardly sounds like a resource-hungry service.

Operation Sweep will demonstrate how agile WA Police has become under the new model, with the capacity to respond quickly and in numbers to changing circumstances without impacting on day-to-day police response.

The deputy commissioner also said —

“We know from solid data that we currently have 10 per cent more vehicles on average available for tasking at any given time compared to this time last year and a 22 per cent increase in resources on Saturdays, on average.” ...

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr N.W. Morton): Member for Midland, you have continued to interject.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Prosecutions are up 11 per cent and arrests of repeat priority offenders are up 41 per cent, so the trend in July is not easily understood, but we have our analysts in Police working on what the drivers behind that statistic for July might be, and indeed Operation Sweep will go some way to addressing what we hope is not trend in increased crime. Obviously, that interrogation by those experts in Police will inform us of any other actions that we need to take.

In closing, I would like to put on the record my appreciation of our frontline police officers. They have been through monumental change over the last 12 to 18 months and all police officers have taken it on with great enthusiasm. They have engaged in the process and are responding to the surveys. In the last survey, over 800 police officers said that they want to be directly involved in the reform model—they want to be part of the change process in Police. I think that is really exciting and I am really proud to be Minister for Police at a time when unprecedented reform is occurring and we have the community satisfaction level at 83 per cent.

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I have no objection to supporting this motion. I am happy, as I said, to publish the sanction rates in the statistics that go up every month. I can direct Police to do that, but, as I have said previously, I think the police annual reporting in which we report the new KPIs about police effectiveness in investigating offences against people and offences against property will give us a better measure of the effectiveness of our police officers. Unfortunately, those KPIs do not really lend themselves to monthly reporting, but they will be in the annual report. They are the way that we measure police performance and benchmark against other jurisdictions. In closing, member for Midland, as I said, I am happy to support the motion. I thank the member for Midland for bringing this motion to the house and giving us the opportunity to talk about police and policing in Western Australia.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Mirrabooka) [6.43 pm]: I rise to briefly raise a couple of things about statistics given the Minister for Police's agreement to look at the publication of sanction or clearance rates. I have calculated weekly statistics based on the published fortnightly statistics, and since 15 February 2015 we have had on average 25 crimes reported in the area: Alexander Heights had one; Balga, seven; Koondoola, three; Mirrabooka, four; and, Westminster two. That translates to 621 reported crimes since 15 February 2015, but only in the categories of home burglary, commercial non-dwelling burglary, motor vehicle theft and graffiti. It does not include assaults on a suburb-by-suburb basis. The minister would know that the issue of domestic assaults in particular—and non-domestic assaults—is an issue that people in the area take very seriously. The minister came to Balga to launch a video recently made by the community and police that looks at domestic assaults and violence in significant relationships and tries to explain to a diverse community how seriously we take domestic assault in our community. I request that when the minister looks at those statistics, that she includes domestic assaults and non-domestic assaults.

It is also concerning that data seems to disappear, so I have been able to go back only to the statistics for 15 February 2015. The statistics stay on the website for only a certain period of time and we do not know how to access the historical data. I have been tracking the data and there are some pretty serious trends. There is a visible trend across the month and crime seems to peak in four-week cycles; weeks 1 and 4 are typically high and often double the rates in weeks 2 and 3—so they are high at each end of the cycle. The unemployment rates are higher in Balga and in Mirrabooka and clearly the crime rates are higher in Balga and Mirrabooka. Of those 621 reported crimes, 176 were in Balga and 114 were in Mirrabooka. It is important to track those statistics for long-term analysis that can feed in to police. The minister would be aware that I work very closely with the officers in charge at Mirrabooka to resolve many issues around community safety in the community that I represent.

I would also like statistics about the sorts of calls that will now go to the neighbourhood policing teams, because that will give a context for what is happening. Petty crime is an issue in the area. In Balga, Mirrabooka and Koondoola begging is a serious issue and quite aggressive begging occurs. Begging from house to house has been a problem in some areas. We are not going to find that in those statistics. I get those statistics when I go and talk to people and of course I work with police on those sorts of things, but it is really important to track that so we can address particular community issues that are going on. As the minister would know, the Mirrabooka–Balga–Koondoola area has a great community that is keen to work on all levels to deliver a safe and sustainable community, despite some really big challenges and those statistics would be really worth providing.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland) [6.48 pm] — in reply: I thank the minister for her response to the motion and my colleagues for the very good points and arguments that they put forward today. I think it is timely that I gave notice of this motion yesterday when today we found out what I had suspected, which is that there have been significant increases in crime in our state. Deputy Commissioner Brown confirmed today that there had been a massive increase in crime of 20 per cent from July last year to July this year, which is unprecedented. That increase from any month one year to the previous year is massive and it has never occurred before. Robberies on business is up 30 per cent over that time, burglaries are up 18 per cent, theft is up 21.1 per cent, property damage is up 20.8 per cent, and domestic assault is up a staggering 34 per cent in July. They are very, very disturbing figures.

The minister quoted a few figures for isolated crimes from one year to another and said that they have improved in some areas. Sometimes she went back to figures from 2006–07 and in another instance to 2007–08. We can all play that game. In 2007–08 there were 8 451 domestic assaults and in 2014–15 there were 16 427. That is roughly a 100 per cent increase.

I do not think that helps. I am more focused on what has been happening in really recent times. This monthly figure is really disturbing and it reflects a lot of the feedback I have been getting from the community. But it is true that there can be some variations and spikes from month to month and I am pleased that the police will somehow make an increased effort from now on as part of their Operation Sweep, despite the fact that the government is not giving them any more resources, and we will wait to see what those results are. I want to make it quite clear that crime has been on the increase on a year-to-year basis, not just a month-to-month basis. I have had some quick calculations done comparing the full year 2013–14 with the full year 2014–15 and here are some

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of the highlights: there has been a 27 per cent increase in recent sexual assault, a 22 per cent rise in threatening behaviour, an 11.7 per cent rise in robbery of business, an 11.7 per cent rise in theft and a 109.5 per cent rise in drug possession offences. In terms of the overall figures there has been a 10.2 per cent rise in offences against the person—this is the single biggest increase over the course of the Barnett government; I do not think the minister can be proud of that—a 6.4 per cent rise in offences against property and a seven per cent rise in overall verified offences. That is year to year, so we are not just talking about a monthly spike here.

One thing I welcome from today is the minister's commitment to put the sanction rates back online, and I look forward to seeing them every month, as they previously were, when the monthly crime statistics are uploaded. At the beginning of the minister's remarks she suggested that I had changed the system from clearance rates to sanction rates—that that was a term I had changed in the reporting.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: That is what I was advised. I said I thought, but I was not sure.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Right, because I thought maybe one of my colleagues who became Minister for Police after me during the time of the Carpenter government might have made that change, but when I look on the minister's police website I see that for the financial year figures 2006–07, 2007–08 and 2009–10, there is still the heading "clearance rates". The first year I can see on the minister's website a change from "clearance rates" to "sanction rates" is 2009–10, which is fairly and squarely in the time of the minister's government and so it was not a change I made.

I will agree with the minister on this: sanction rates are not a complete reflection of police performance. However, I absolutely reject the minister saying that they do not reflect police performance in any shape or form. It is not an exact science, but they certainly are an indicator and one that needs to be there for people to see. Just quickly giving the example of home burglaries, if there is a 10 per cent home burglary sanction rate, does that mean the whole 10 per cent of those crimes has been solved? Does it mean that everyone has been charged, they have been processed and the case has gone to court? No, it does not. But what we can deduce is that in 90 per cent of cases there has been nothing, no result at all—no-one has gone to court and no-one has gone into a detention centre or a mental institution or gone somewhere else. It is not an exact science; it is not an exact guide. There are potentially better indicators for police performance, but I think it gives some kind of guide on how police are tracking.

The other thing I clearly disagree with is the comments the minister made about the Productivity Commission report and also comments by the minister about the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures. The minister pointed out some of the issues she saw with the way the ABS figures are collated and what they reflect, but we can say this about those figures: they uniformly compare state with state. Although the minister might think it is not fair to judge things in this way or that way, the figures compare apples with apples. They compare how people respond in Western Australia to South Australia to Victoria to New South Wales, and we are comparing apples with apples. If we are performing according to those measures as the worst state in Australia, it is not something to be proud of. We are all being judged; all the states are judged in the same way.

If we are "the worst" state in seven out of 10 categories, based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' survey, that is really bad news and it is a really bad indicator. I said that back in February and I think I have been vindicated in those remarks, given the figures that Deputy Commissioner Brown has come out with today. The Minister for Police said that does not represent what is going on here. She said that WA Police statistics showed that we were not that bad and that things were on the improve. That is clearly not true. Deputy Commissioner Brown said today that the minister got some disturbing results from July to July. As I have just highlighted, year to year some very negative figures have shown an upward trend and increasing crime rates in the state of Western Australia.

I thank the Minister for Police for her indication of support for the motion and the fact that she will instruct WA Police to publish its sanction rates on its website on a monthly basis. I think that has made today very worthwhile.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 6.56 pm
