

ASSAULTS ON POLICE OFFICERS - SENTENCING

- 73. Hon KEN BASTON to the minister representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:**
- (1) Did Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan ask the minister to fast-track mandatory 12-month jail sentences for persons convicted of assaulting police officers?
 - (2) Is the minister aware that the Western Australian Police Union president, Michael Dean, was reported in *The West Australian* of 14 March 2006 as saying that if the state was genuine about mandatory sentencing for assaults on police officers, legislation could be prepared in three months?
 - (3) Is the minister aware that the person convicted yesterday of seriously assaulting a female police officer in Derby on 17 March 2006 has received a 12-month suspended jail sentence?
 - (4) Is the minister aware of media reports that officers from all over the Kimberley region have been contacting their union to express concern about the suspended sentence?
 - (5) What message does the minister believe the suspended sentence gives to -
 - (a) the injured policewoman and her colleagues;
 - (b) criminals in Western Australia; and
 - (c) the public of Western Australia?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

On behalf of the minister representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I thank Hon Ken Baston for some notice of the question.

- (1) Following a number of serious assaults on police officers, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Commissioner of Police discussed a number of propositions that included the introduction of mandatory sentencing, mandatory elevation to higher courts such as the District or Supreme Courts and amending legislation to include a circumstance of aggravation. The Western Australia Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions are working together to explore options and provide a recommendation to government, presumably from that list of options.
- (2)-(4) Yes.
- (5) I expect the courts to apply strong penalties to anybody who assaults a public officer, and the minister will await the advice from the Commissioner of Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions to see what further it is we can do.