

ATTORNEY GENERAL — SENTENCING

48. Hon Charles Smith to the Leader of the House representing the Attorney General:

There is concern among the public in Western Australia that the current sentencing by judges and magistrates in Western Australia are the lightest sentences in Australia, and I ask:

- (a) can the Minister provide to the House the current comparative trends of sentencing in Australia;
- (b) if yes to (a), how does Western Australia compare to other states;
- (c) if sentences in Western Australia are the lightest in Australia, does the Government find this of concern; and
- (d) what does the Government propose to do about light sentences for illicit drug offences which are becoming increasingly common?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

- (a) See (b).
- (b) Median imprisonment sentences handed down by Western Australian courts between 1 July 2015 and 30 June 2016 were similar to the national sentences for most offence types (ABS Criminal Courts, Australia 2015–2016).
- (c) Not applicable.
- (d) The median imprisonment sentence handed down by Western Australian courts for illicit drug offences was longer than the national median, and the second longest when compared to all other states and territories types (ABS Criminal Courts, Australia 2015–2016).

Further, the Government has introduced the Misuse of Drugs Amendment (Methylamphetamine Offences) Bill 2017 which will increase the maximum penalty for traffickers of methylamphetamine to life imprisonment.