

POLICE — SOCIAL MEDIA USE

81. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Police:

I have noticed that our police have started using social media as a way of engaging with the Western Australian community. With this in mind, can the minister please outline the details of this approach being taken by Western Australia Police?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Forrestfield for the question, and indeed his high interest in law and order issues in his electorate.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I thank the member for Kwinana for his input, but I would like to answer the member for Forrestfield's question at this time.

The SPEAKER: Minister, answer the question.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Kwinana!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have been on the record a number of times in this place talking about how community engagement is an area of very high priority for this government. So, consistent with that approach to improving the opportunities for community engagement with our WA police service, we have started a three-month trial on social media. Members in this house will probably already be aware that WA Police already has a presence on social media; it is on Facebook and it is tweeting, and that is being centrally managed. Effectively, that is being used at the moment as more of an intelligence-gathering tool, whereby police will monitor social media for the purposes of determining where out-of-control parties are, and they monitor hoon sites—all those sorts of activities. With this project—it is a three-month trial—we are devolving the use of social media in two districts, the north west metropolitan district and the south west district. This will give those local districts an opportunity to start tweeting information—indeed, they have already started—to the community that is of interest to those local communities with interests around the local districts. There will also be a Facebook page set up by the north west metropolitan district on a trial basis for the next three months to see what sort of community response there will be, and whether this can improve opportunities for community engagement with police. We envisage that the local districts will be able to get information out to their communities—it can be used as an emergency management tool—by tweeting, and updating their Facebook pages about areas that may be of interest to the local groups that will subscribe to their local districts to get local information about crime, law and order issues and emergency information.