

POLICE — CRIME RATES

Grievance

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.10 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Police. Minister, my office has received numerous concerns from community members about the ongoing issue of crime in the suburbs of Doubleview, Innaloo and Scarborough. I have written several letters to the minister about these issues since she was appointed Minister for Police in March 2017. Specifically in Scarborough, there have been a couple of very violent incidents of late that have really unsettled my community. There was recently a stabbing and what appears to have been an assault on a musician outside one of the local venues. There was also recently a very violent dine-and-dash episode at Ben Randall's The Sandbar in which one of his employees was injured. In the areas of Doubleview and Innaloo there has been a spate of mail theft over the past number of months, home dwelling burglaries, particularly break-ins to vehicles and stealing from vehicles.

I know overall that crime across the Scarborough district is down but the figures for Innaloo and Doubleview are quite disturbing when we see the detail. In Scarborough, there has been a seven per cent increase in the incidence of stealing. There were 504 reports of stealing in 2017–18. The figure in the suburb of Innaloo has gone from 628 stealing offences in 2016–17 to 797 last year, which is a 27 per cent increase. If we correlate that with the figures for fraud and related offences—because, obviously, if people steal a credit card they use PayPass and go on a rampage—fraud has more than doubled. There were 129 fraud offences in 2016–17, up to 373 in 2017–18, and already this year there have been 243. There is no doubt that is linked in with the 433 stealing offences we have experienced so far this year in Innaloo. The rate of dwelling burglaries is up 10 per cent. There were 127 home break-ins last year, up from 115 the year before. In Doubleview, dwelling burglaries are up 9.5 per cent. There were 92 reports of homes broken into in Doubleview. Stealing has gone from 165 offences in 2015–16, up 21 per cent to 199 in 2016–17, and in 2017–18 the rate was up another 13 per cent, comprising 225 stealing offences and 97 fraud-related offences.

This is leading my communities to the establishment of a community Neighbourhood Watch group, ably run by a very passionate and very responsible local, Michael Dastlik and his partner, Janelle, and Claire, his partner in the Neighbourhood Watch group. Michael convened a meeting last night at which 50 people attended, which is pretty good on a night when I am told there was good TV on, although I am not an avid watcher of reality TV shows. It was attended also by Councillor Stephanie Proud; Senior Sergeant Craig Wanstall, the officer in charge at Scarborough Police Station, who is doing a terrific job with the resources he has; Inspector Matt Ray; Jennifer Hughes, Neighbourhood Watch WA; and John Pyne from the Department of Communities, who is responsible for housing in my area. Some of the issues raised were really disturbing. With the success of the foreshore, we are now finding that streets that were previously quiet have become busy. A lot of the riffraff appear to be exiting the foreshore area and running amok up and down Moorland Street. One of the residents of Moorland Street said last night that she is reporting at least twice a week to police about people trying to break into vehicles and jumping fences in Moorland Street, and that is very disturbing.

The other issue is that there is a lot of intimidation and violence by gangs of youths towards young people who are now frequenting the foreshore area at the skate bowl or the swimming pool. I will read a disturbing email from my constituent, Meagan. It is not the only email I have received, I might add. Meagan talks about an incident that happened around Christmas, and I quote —

Last Saturday evening my son Ben and two of his mates were surrounded by a group of intoxicated young men ... and were asked for the time and when Ben got his phone out to check the time they grabbed it out of his hand and returned it to him only when they saw that the phone is in disrepair, they then grabbed his friends phone out of his hand and would not return it. As things escalated and began to get physical, luckily for the boys, a group of local residents walked by and “saved the day” and the phone was returned. This happened at 8.30pm at night in front of the pool as the boys were walking from a parking spot to Cold Rock for an icecream. Ben —

And his friends —

will no longer go to the Basketball Court or the Skateboard areas due to a number of incidents that have happened over the past few months since the weather has got warmer.

I also am concerned about the blatant use of alcohol in the grassed areas at Brighton and next to the Whale playground particularly on a Saturday and Sunday. You just have to read the messages on the Scarborough Beach Community Noticeboard about the amount of rubbish down at the foreshore on a weekend, allot of it being alcohol bottles to get an idea that there is a lot of illegal public drinking going on.

...

It would be a shame after all of the work that went into redeveloping Scarborough and with future developments still planned that the reputation of Scarborough returns to that of the “bad old days” and that sense of vibrancy that us locals now have after waiting for so many years is taken away.

Minister, the police in Scarborough, led by Senior Sergeant Craig Wanstall, do a fantastic job. Every one of the constituents who had interaction with the police spoke very highly of that interaction. Now that the foreshore is really busy, I believe we really need a live camera feed from the 45 CCTV cameras on the foreshore back to the police station. Local police and the City of Stirling are currently working on that. I implore the minister to look favourably upon a grant application for such a program.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland — Minister for Police) [9.17 am]: Thank you, member for Scarborough, for your grievance. The advice I received was that the member wanted to grieve about the Scarborough beachfront today. I note that she has written a number of letters about that. I am not aware of her ever writing any letters to me about Innaloo or Doubleview crime, so that is new. In doing a bit of research for the grievance today, I came across an article by Phil Hickey from 21 October 2012. It seems that problems at Scarborough beachfront are, firstly, not new and, secondly, have been much worse in the past. This article reads —

SCARBOROUGH locals are fighting back against recent alcohol fuelled violence which has plagued the beachfront suburb.

This was in 2012 —

Some residents revealed today that they are too scared to go to the beach on hot days because they fear they will be assaulted by drunken thugs.

A community crime forum on the beachfront this morning, organised by City of Stirling councillors Jason Robbins and Bill Stewart, saw about 80 local residents descend on the beach keen to voice their concerns and ideas following a string of drunken and violent incidents at the beach in the past few months.

Among the incidents to hit the headlines recently have been several brawls involving dozens of drunken youths, while two men aged in their 30s were attacked with bricks and bottles by a gang of thugs just 12 days ago.

The article states further on —

Married couple Kellie and Josh Bannister and their baby son Taj —

They were at the forum —

... have lived in Scarborough for the past two years and said they no longer felt safe going to the beach on hot days.

“We are sick of it, we just won’t come down here on a hot Saturday afternoon anymore, it’s just too dangerous,”

A lot of other people are quoted in that article. I looked at the recent statistics for Scarborough and the advice that I have given the member in correspondence is that crime in January this year was down. The number of property offences is down against both the five-year average and compared with the same time last year. This year there were 72 property offences for the month; there were 86 offences in 2018 and the five-year average is 91 offences. It would be great if none of those 72 offences had occurred, but it is much lower than the five-year average. It is the same with burglaries. The number of burglaries is down compared with last year and down five per cent compared with the five-year average. The situation is similar with motor vehicle theft.

A key strategy that our government has put in place is to put a greater emphasis on smaller policing districts. The Scarborough Police Station has benefited from the changes made by this government. From July 2018, Scarborough became part of the newly formed Mirrabooka district. It was previously part of the very large north west metro district, which was established by the member for Scarborough when she was the Minister for Police during the Barnett government. As a result of the restructure that our government put in place, Scarborough Police Station has received additional resources to meet the area’s policing demands.

The Western Australia Police Force was very mindful of the redevelopment of the Scarborough foreshore and the issues that it may bring, so extra resources were allocated to Scarborough Police Station. In fact, the whole Mirrabooka district has been very mindful of that redevelopment. Not only has the Scarborough Police Station run special operations over the summer period, but the Mirrabooka district has also employed a number of initiatives to increase resourcing over the summer months. The Western Australia Police Force has also utilised the services of other organisations. It has established partnerships with the City of Stirling and has run some partnered activities with the traffic enforcement group, the liquor enforcement group and our regional operations group. I would very much welcome the initiative of establishing a Neighbourhood Watch system in Innaloo and Doubleview. I think that the police would be very happy to work with Neighbourhood Watch in a proactive way. The Mirrabooka

district has also run some special operations over the summer in Scarborough, Innaloo and Doubleview that have targeted high-harm offenders. It has been very proactive. Although I appreciate the concerns of individuals and there have been a couple of high-profile incidents, the fact remains that Scarborough now has a lower crime rates than when the previous government was in office.