

ACTS AMENDMENT (WEAPONS) BILL

951. Mr J.M. FRANCIS to the Minister for Police:

It is great to be part of a Liberal-National government that has made it very clear —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, members!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: — that we have a zero-tolerance approach to antisocial —

Mr T.G. Stephens interjected.

The SPEAKER: I formally call the member for Pilbara for the second time.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: As I was saying, it is great to be part of a government that has a zero-tolerance approach to antisocial behaviour and a commitment —

Point of Order

Mr T.G. STEPHENS: Mr Speaker, you ruled my supplementary question out of order on the basis that it was a speech, and that was only my supplementary question. This member seems to be getting away with a speech for his initial question, and I ask that you ask him to conform to the standing orders that I have to conform to.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I am sure that the member will conform to the standing orders, though.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I refer the minister to the fact that last night the Acts Amendment (Weapons) Bill 2009, which is another key plank of the government's law and order agenda, passed through the Parliament. Can the minister advise what restrictions will apply under this new legislation and what the tough new penalties will be?

Mr R.F. JOHNSON replied:

What a great question, I must say. I thank the member for Jandakot for his very considered interest in law and order issues in this state.

I was delighted to hear that the Acts Amendment (Weapons) Bill passed through the upper house last night, so we await proclamation of that and then of course it will become law. It is quite clear that the government feels that the number of weapons on our streets is unacceptable. It is absolutely unacceptable! I say in passing that we need our stop-and-search powers to get those weapons off the streets, and members have seen classic examples of those weapons. People have the right to be able to walk our streets without fear of being attacked with a weapon, which is what I think this bill and other bills will achieve.

Under the legislation, anyone found with a weapon in or near a place of public entertainment could face up to five years in jail. These are very tough penalties from a tough government. I was also asked about various offences contained in the weapons bill. The legislation creates the following new offences in the Criminal Code that will attract a penalty of five years' imprisonment: being armed in or near places of public entertainment, as I have said; being armed in public in company; having —

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: — ready access to both weapons and a prescribed amount of cash; and having ready access to both weapons and illegal drugs. We will also impose some very strict penalties on those people who may sell or supply weapons to juveniles; they will face up to two years in jail and a maximum fine of \$24 000. This legislation is one part of the government's plank on law and order. It is a very important plank because, as I said earlier, we have to get those weapons off our streets, and we will make every endeavour to get those weapons off our streets. It is not acceptable for people to carry weapons anywhere in a public place in Western Australia, regardless of whether it is near a place of entertainment. If people are caught carrying a controlled weapon without lawful excuse, they will be arrested by the police and charged, and I hope that they will face either a term of imprisonment or, indeed, the very severe monetary penalty that will be in place. I applaud my colleagues and members in the upper house for passing this bill last night. I also hope that they will expedite the stop-and-search powers legislation in the same way.