

OUT-OF-CONTROL GATHERINGS LEGISLATION

**17. Mrs G.J. GODFREY to the Minister for Police:**

I read with interest in today's *The West Australian* about the success of the Liberal–National government's out-of-control parties laws. Could the minister please update the house on the history of this legislation and what has been achieved since its passage through Parliament? Members opposite might learn something.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:**

I thank the member for Belmont for her question and for her continued interest in law and order matters on behalf of the constituents of Belmont.

**Mr P.B. Watson** interjected.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I thank the member for Albany for his help; it is much appreciated! However, I am here to answer a question about our out-of-control parties legislation. Members in the house will be interested to know that in just over a year since that legislation was passed, there have been six convictions for hosting out-of-control parties in the state. Three of those six convictions have been subject to a cost recovery order.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** How many were in Peppermint Grove?

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Collie–Preston. It is a very interesting question; you can ask it later. I call you to order for the first time.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** The average value retrieved from the three cost recovery orders against those who have been charged with and successfully convicted of these offences is \$3 517. That is a good result. Twenty-eight parties have been declared as out-of-control gatherings since the legislation was passed. We are cautiously optimistic that we can call this legislation a success.

The state government also put a fair amount of funding towards ensuring that the police had the tools that they required to enforce the legislation when we introduced it. We put \$1.2 million towards training more general-purpose police dogs, which are the big dogs that are used for crowd control. We purchased two buses to remove 14 people at a time from out-of-control gatherings. We are nearly fully there in the delivery of training an additional nine police dogs. It takes some time to find police dogs that are suitable and have the right temperament to be used in this fashion.

Several members interjected.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I hear that those opposite are a little uncomfortable about this out-of-control parties legislation.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** Why don't you make a brief ministerial statement instead of wasting our time?

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Member for Girrawheen —

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Members opposite are very uncomfortable that I am talking about this legislation. Members will recall that when the legislation was debated in this house, all sorts of things were going to happen as a result of this legislation. Our fine professional police force was basically tarred by the opposition during the debate. The implication that was made was that police were going to be involved in some kind of jackboot parade through backyard barbecues. I have some quotes from the member for Midland. She said —

... this legislation will not solve all the problems we face with out-of-control parties. It will not necessarily stop the parties.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** We had two to three out-of-control gatherings a weekend before this legislation was passed. We are now down to 28 out-of-control parties being declared —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland, I call you to order for the first time!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** The accusation made by the member for Midland was that this was going to be an empty gesture unless it was backed up by proper police resourcing.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland, I call you to order for the second time! I have said before in the house that if a member refers to another member, that does not give that member the right to shout across the chamber.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I realise that those opposite are very uncomfortable. The member for Midland said —

The opposition does not oppose this bill. In doing so, we recognise and assert that the passage of this legislation will be an empty gesture unless it is backed up by proper police resourcing.

Guess what? We resourced police appropriately to implement this legislation. Whenever I talk to police, especially the regional operations group, which is often deployed to manage out-of-control gatherings, they repeatedly tell me that they love this legislation. This legislation gives the police a tool. When they declare a party an out-of-control gathering, they then give an order for the crowd to disperse. If the crowd does not disperse, the partygoers will be arrested. The word has gotten out that if people do not disperse, they will be arrested. We have given police the buses to take people away from the parties in large numbers. That part of it is working. If a person is arrested, charged and convicted under this legislation, there will be consequences. Prior to this legislation passing through the house, there were no consequences for anybody when they held an out-of-control gathering and caused disorder.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** Everybody is uncomfortable now.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Members can be uncomfortable —

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** We are, because of your performance.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Victoria Park, I call you to order for the first time. Minister, will you please wind this up.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I noticed that there was nothing notable to pull out of the member for Victoria Park's contribution to the debate. The member for Armadale wanted to know why we did not include religious gatherings as a category that could be declared an out-of-control gathering. Members in the house will be pleased to know that, believe it or not, no religious gatherings have managed to turn into out-of-control parties. Police have not had to use the legislation to police out-of-control religious gatherings. We did the right thing in not including that group in the legislation.

I am very pleased that the member for Belmont has highlighted this issue, which was affecting the constituents of many members in this house. People in the suburbs were totally fed up with having these out-of-control gatherings of young people rampaging through their areas and causing so much property damage. The legislation was passed and those opposite argued against it—the world was going to end, police were going to abuse the power, but none of that happened. The number of out-of-control gatherings in the community has been reduced. This legislation is acting as a deterrent and there are consequences for the offenders. This legislation is a success.